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## EDITORIAL:

The study of risky or risk-seeking behaviour of young people, generally, has increased tremendously, especially, since the past ten years. This followed the attention and interest in the light of what effectively was increased reporting of anti-social behaviour in most countries in Europe, and, in the United States and continued concern about young people's health in many countries in Africa because of the spread of HIV/AIDS. As most of the studies show, risky behaviour is not only an expression of personal preferences but also has a symbolic meaning and may be a source of personal gratification and enjoyment. Lyng (2008)<sup>1</sup>, notes that risky behaviour as enjoyment has originally been studied in the context of extreme sports, but this perspective has since evolved to cover everyday activities and decisions such as occupational choices and drug taking. From this perspective, risky behaviour is driven by the need for excitement in light of an otherwise routine life, which offers little gratification outside self-constructed leisure time.

Another perspective is that risky behaviour is a source of social prestige and recognition. Social recognition, has, as a matter of course, long been considered to be an essential aspect of risky behaviour among young people who are seeking acceptance by their peers and or recognition into peer groups, most notably imitative behaviour as suggested by Coleman and Carter (2005).<sup>2</sup> The related research of how risk is perceived has similarly seen a surge with large volumes of such research validating Beck's claim that in late modernity, there is increasing individualisation and people's perception of risk. Numerous studies of risk perception among young people show that significant in this regard are peer pressure and what are considered desirable and acceptable norms. Taking a cue from this, the study by Asta Rau, Sarah Radloff, Jan K. Coetzee, Carlo Nardi, Ria Smit and Sethulego Z. Matebesi documents risk as perceived by students in three South African universities—it focuses on risk encountered in everyday choices such as sexual behaviour, alcohol use and freedom of association. The study builds upon a previous qualitative research conducted over two years (2008–2009) among Rhodes University (RU) Sociology students. A second—quantitative—phase began in 2010 when findings from the initial phase were used to guide students in designing and piloting a questionnaire. The question they asked is: To what degree do South African students from three different universities regard as being part of their lifeworlds risks associated with heavy drinking, sexual behaviours, racism, financial pressure and academic performance? In conclusion, they argue that post-apartheid South Africa is not different from other societies in late modernity where risk is seen as an ever-present reality that transcends social and geographical boundaries. This resonated in the perceptions of the young adults who participated in the study

*Olajide Oloyede*

Managing Editor

### (Endnotes)

- 1 Lyng, S (2008) *Edgework, risk and uncertainty*. In J. O. Zinn, *Social Theories of Risk and Uncertainty: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- 2 Coleman, L. and Carter, S. (2005) *Underage 'risky' drinking: motivations and outcomes* York: Rowntree Foundation

# The Politics of 'Hope' and 'Despair': Generational Dimensions to Igbo Nationalism in Post-Civil War Nigeria

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## Abstract:

*This paper examines the concept of "generations" as one of the key features of contemporary Igbo nationalism, and as one that has received relatively less or no attention in the literature on post-civil war Igbo nationalism in Nigeria. Drawing on the activities of Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo- the apex socio-political group in Igboland- and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) - a second-generation Igbo nationalist movement- this article examines the dynamics of generational tensions between youth-led and elite-led Igbo groups in Igboland. On the one hand, the political agency of Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo is traced genealogically to the imperatives of the patrimonial politics of the Nigerian state, the need to play the "politics of the centre" and re-integrate the Igbo into mainstream politics in the post-civil war era. On the other hand, the MASSOB project is rooted in the aborted secessionist war for Igbo self-determination between 1967 and 1970. It rejects a state-led process, seeks the realignment of the generational balance of power, and ultimately, an exit of the Igbo ethnic group into an alternative political and administrative arrangement. These generational differences and tensions offer insights into the transformation of local politics and the changing configurations of power and authority in present day Igboland, one that pits an emergent youth movement against an enduring Igbo establishment within the broader context of ethnic identity politics in Nigeria.*

**Key Words:** Nationalism, Igbo, War, patrimonial politics, Biafra, Nigeria, Generational differences

## Résumé:

*Cet article examine le concept de «générations» comme l'une des principales caractéristiques du nationalisme contemporain Igbo, et que celui qui a reçu relativement peu ou pas d'attention dans la littérature est l'après-guerre civile Igbo nationalisme au Nigeria. S'appuyant sur les activités de Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo- le groupe socio-politique sommet dans Igboland- et le Mouvement pour la réalisation de l'État souverain du Biafra (MASSOB) - une deuxième*

*génération du mouvement nationaliste Igbo, cet article examine la dynamique des tensions générationnelles entre les groupes Igbo dirigés par des jeunes et de l'élite dirigée dans Igbo. D'une part, l'agence politique de Obanaeze Ndi Igbo est tracée généalogique aux impératifs de la politique patrimoniale de l'Etat nigérian, le besoin de jouer la «politique du centre» et ré-intégrer les Igbo dans les grands courants politiques dans le post-tant civil époque de la guerre. D'autre part, le projet MASSOB est enracinée dans la Guerre de sécession avortée pour Igbo autodétermination entre 1967 et 1970 Il rejette un processus dirigé par l'État, vise la réorganisation de l'équilibre des générations du pouvoir, et, finalement, une sortie de l'ethnie Igbo dans un arrangement politique et administrative de remplacement. Ces différences générationnelles des tensions et offrir un aperçu de la transformation de la politique locale et l'évolution des configurations de pouvoir et d'autorité dans nos jours Igbo, qui oppose un mouvement de jeunesse émergente contre un établissement durable Igbo dans le contexte plus large de la politique de l'identité ethnique au Nigeria.*

**Mots clés:** *nationalisme, Igbo, la guerre, la politique patrimoniale, Biafra, au Nigeria, les différences entre générations*

## Introduction

One of the defining features of post-civil war Igbo nationalism is the prevalence of inter-generational struggles between youth-led and elite-led Igbo groups in Igboland. These struggles depict contending generational relations and are expressed in the social and political identities of each group. Given the unique situation of the Igbo after the Nigeria-Biafra war in 1970, and as a result of the changing configurations of power in present day Igboland, generational identities have become critical to the balance of power. Mobilizations and differences along generational lines remain a key marker of these identities, as the young(er) generation is perceived as the 'vanguard' generation while the old(er) generation is perceived as a 'client' generation. Yet, the concept of *generation* remain one of the least acknowledged or interrogated in the study of contemporary Igbo nationalism, as none of what has recently emerged as the major works on the Igbo especially since the post-civil war era consider the concept important enough to be a tool for analysis. The significance of this concept inheres in the insights it offers in understanding the emergence of radical youth movements like the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) who are currently upturning, recreating and challenging certain traditional norms of power and authority which are vested in elite-led Igbo organizations like the *Obanaeze Ndi Igbo*<sup>1</sup>. This in itself feeds into the broader Nigerian context where youth-based groups, youth revolt and agitations currently play a critical role in Nigeria's uncertain political process since the return to civilian rule in 1999, with far-reaching implications for the state, and its client elites who wield power and authority in different sections of the country.

The fact that youths are currently defying the traditional elders and their conservative agenda is reflective of the highly strained intergenerational relations between the young(er) and the old(er) generation leading to the transformation of the principle of authority, power and duty. While the old(er) generation seek to continuously hold on to their authority, power and status, the young(er) generation are radically redefining the status quo and exploiting the democratic conditions for potential gains. The young(er) generation align with ethnic militia groups and crime syndicates within the expanded 'democratic' space, one that is emerging as a reaction to the allegedly corrupt old(er) generation that wields authority and power. These tendencies reflect the continued (mis) management of the national question, but have now been linked to the broad current of claims, entitlements and the opening up of the democratic space which became very pronounced since Nigeria's return to democracy on 29 May 1999 (Akinyele 2001: 264-5; Nolte 2004: 61; Adebaniwi 2004; Agbu 2004).

Clearly, since 1999, MASSOB and *Ohanaeze* have undoubtedly undergone several transformations. While the former defines itself as a post-civil war second-generation nationalist movement that contests the marginalization of the Igbo since the end of the civil war in 1970, the latter defines itself as the pan-Igbo socio-cultural organization that represents the views of Igbo elites, governors of the five Igbo states and their coterie. Perhaps, the most telling aspect of these transformations is how these organizations have come to define themselves in opposition to each other, and as viable alternatives to each other in Igboland. In reality what has emerged in this phase of Igbo nationalism is a consequence of the intrusion of Igbo national aspirations for power and influence into the local balance of power in Igboland. At the risk of producing an ahistorical analysis, most studies on MASSOB tend to focus on youth as the sole object of investigation. What is critical is a rehistoricization of the MASSOB phenomenon as representing an extreme version of Igbo nationalism that co-exists with earlier and more "moderate" versions of Igbo nationalism in the current context. Inherent in contemporary Igbo nationalism are strains of contradictions and divisions, between (and within) popular/youth versus elite/elder positions, radical versus conservative, as well as, generational differences. This complexity renders the adoption of a binary logic that articulates the issue as one that primarily pits the centralist tendencies of the Nigerian state against the separatist inclinations of MASSOB to be of limited value. Rather, what is more appropriate is to glean the dynamics of the interplay of forces across class and inter-generational lines as the ascendancy of youth-based, radical, grassroots and popular forces and pressures from below, confront the elite-led, conservative and reactionary forces from above in the quest for Igbo self-determination in Nigeria.

Drawing on primary and secondary data, formal and informal interviews and interactions with some key actors, the central objective of this paper is to explore the ramifications of the involvement of popular/youth versus elite/elder positions in contemporary Igbo nationalism in Nigeria. In its current form, contemporary struggles



for Igbo self-determination has assumed a complex dimension, and has spawned new trends and contradictions which are yet to be addressed in the literature on Igbo nationalism. Essentially, it hinges upon elite-led Igbo groups like *Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo* (the apex Igbo organization) who are perceived to be uninspiring and unattractive to produce any change on one hand, and MASSOB as a grassroots based movement with a radical and timely philosophical anchorage and inspiration on the other hand. The former propagates an elitist, more moderate, less ideological brand of Igbo nationalism, while the latter positions itself as a movement that provides an alternative for disgruntled Igbo youths and the Igbo majority at the grassroots level. The analysis transcends the dominant discourse which attempts to criminalize MASSOB and its activities, and justify Igbo elite positions. Rather, it depicts MASSOB as a second-generation nationalist movement seeking to transform the inequitable post-civil war power relations between the Igbo ethnic group and the Nigerian state aided by its client elites in Igboland, and regain and reassert its position as the only viable alternative to the realization of Igbo self-determination in Nigeria. On this basis, it is important to note that the identity and consciousness of MASSOB vis-à-vis that of the Igbo elites is propelled by specific historical experiences and differing positions regarding the past and the present. With specific reference to MASSOB and *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo*, it is possible to discern complex interactions, forces and interests at play in a moderate Igbo elite group and political class as represented by *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo*, and grassroots opposition and youth ascendancy as encapsulated in MASSOB.

## **Conceptual Issues: Youth and Generational Categorizations**

The conceptual issues delve into the conceptualization of youth and generational issues on the one hand, and the linkages between inter-generational groups, positions and perspectives on the other hand. Generational preference, interests and perceptions are not viewed as purely inherent and intrinsic qualities of generations; rather they are viewed in conjunction with their broader social political and economic contexts. It is this relationship that helps us understand the ways in which traditional norms of power and authority are created, (re)created and upturned across historical periods in a specific context.

The proper conceptualization and definition of youth and generational issues is ultimately cultural, differs based on history and context, and is constantly shifting (Hansen et al 2008: 7), Definitions of youth is also influenced and shaped by the politics of time and place, and by who defines them (Hall and Montgomery 2000). The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child pegs the upper limit of childhood at age 18, and adopts the notion of youth to capture those between the range of 18 and 24 years, while the Commonwealth puts the upper limit at 29 years (Cited in Hansen 2008: 7; Obi 2006: 6). National legislation in some countries consider 18 years as the

commencement of the era of youth, while in other countries people in their late 30s and sometimes 40s are still considered as youths. Irrespective of context, youth as a concept, assumes meaning culturally and relationally, rather than chronologically (Hansen 2008: 8). Culturally children are distinguished from youth by their dependence (Hansen 2008: 8), while relationally, the term youth represents a social shifter in relation to others, and in space (Durham 2000: 116-117). As Durham (2004: 593) argues elsewhere,

“studies of youth must examine not only their experiences ... and their reactions to, and agency within a larger society, but also the political and pragmatic processes through which certain people can make claims to being youth or try to designate others as youth, for the very category itself is also under reconstruction in the context of such processes”

The analytical turn Gore and Pratten (2003: 216) adopts refer to youth as being defined “irrespective of actual age, through economic and social circumstance and little prospect for future advancement”. This analysis conceptualizes youth as being a very critical component of society and at the very centre of societal interactions and transformations. Youth as a social and demographic category is “characterized by considerable tensions and conflicts generated by the process of social and physical maturation and in the adjustment to social realities” (Osaghae et al 2007: 3). This lends credence to Wyn and White’s (1997: 25, cited in Obi 2006: 7) view on the importance of “rethinking youth” in “relational” rather than in terms of age, by focusing on “the ways young people are constructed through social institutions, and the ways in which they negotiate their transitions”. Youth then is constructed by social, political, economic and cultural specificities, and is not defined solely by age or the experience of being young alone (Obi 2006: 7).

In essence, youths are locked in a struggle for survival, identity and inclusion, these struggles shape how they “as a social group respond to, or more broadly relate to state and society in terms of engagement or disengagement, incorporation or alienation, rapprochement or resistance, integration or deviance” (Ikelegbe 2006: 88). As a critical constituency in society, youth shape structures, norms, rituals, and directions of society while also being shaped by them (Osaghae et al 2007: 3). Through inventive forms of self-realization and an ingenious politics of identity they create and recreate themselves (De Boeck 1999), and they shape society by acting as a political force and source of resistance and resilience (Honwana and De Boeck 2005). Therefore, as Osaghae et al (2007: 3) argue, “youth is a tension-filled, highly unstable category whose management is of crucial importance for societal stability and development as it is a zone of restlessness, anxiety and chaos for the youth and society”. This explains the articulation of youth culture as predominantly negative, and its association with “socio-environmental factors

like urban congestion, polygamy, disease, environmental stress and superficial religion which all lead to a creation of a new barbarism of crime and violence” (Kaplan 1994).

From a Nigerian perspective, the very definition of youth appears to be very flexible, susceptible and accommodates several categories of people. Nigeria’s National Youth Development Policy (National Youth Policy 2001: 3) defines the term “youth” as young persons between the ages of 18 and 35 who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This definition of youth is linked to objective conditions and realities, especially historical and contemporary socio-economic and political issues prevalent in Nigeria (National Youth Policy 2001: 3). This explains the adoption of different criteria in the definition of the term. Being a youth in Nigeria often translates into being the most active, most volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population socio-economically, emotionally and in other respects. The vulnerability of youth in Africa is captured in popular and academic literature, as “a social category in crisis, excluded, marginalized, threatened, victimized, abused and consequently angry, bitter, frustrated, desperate and violent”. The popular perception is that it is such alienated youths that drift into violence as they respond to alienation by “becoming uncontrollably aggressive and violent ... establishing societies, frightening the middle classes and reinforcing, if not justifying dictatorships” (El-Kenz, 1996, cited in Osaghae et al 2007: 4).

It is possible to see these tendencies about youths repeatedly finding expression in their status and location in the larger crisis of citizenship and state legitimacy in Nigeria. When it comes to mobilizing against the federal government either on issues of resource control in the Niger Delta, or when ethnic militias from different sections of the country mobilize against the state, or in situations when ethno-nationalist groups agitate for self-determination, it is the youth that are at the centre of these struggles. Broadly speaking, the struggle against the state by different constituencies is largely defined by a kind of politics that centers on youth. Participation in the struggle is undertaken either as a youth; if not a youth, an ally of the youth; or as an enemy of the youths and an ally of the state. This does not discount other forms of youth engagements, but the critical issue here is that youth is at the forefront of new forms of political participation and authority that either excludes or includes youth in novel ways, and the issues emanating from these new forms constitutes an important dimension of change which addresses the core of the political system, and include issues like the crisis of citizenship, state legitimacy, politics of representation, and the enduring need to resolve the national question in Nigeria (Durham 2000: 114; Olukoshi 2005: 5).

## **Inter-Generational Relations: Between the Young(er) and the Old(er)**

Alber et al (2008: 1-3) argue that the term “generation” has a “passive” and “active” voice. While the first conceptualizes generation as a category of people who belong to a certain period of time, social category, or position in descent line with specific rules and conventions; the second conceives generation in an active manner that generates creativity and agency, where people are not condemned to their cultural or societal positions, but are able to deploy their position to bring about new ideas and practices, and pursue their own interests within the historical circumstances in which they find themselves. Inter-generational relations are a key component of social change in Africa. The idea of generation was systematically conceptualized by Karl Mannheim (1952 [1927]) in his seminal essay, titled: “The Problem of Generations”. Mannheim’s concept of generation has been drawn upon by contemporary scholars to illuminate and analyze the historical circumstances and challenges of youth in contemporary Africa (Honwana and De Boeck 2005; Cole 2004; Vigh 2006). Some have focused on different aspects of these historical conditions which range from economic generations (Roth 2008), historical generations (Kertzer 1983), to political generations (Le Meur 2008; and Bellagamba 2008; Braumgart and Braumgart 1986: 217). However, it is apparent that generational relations conjures historical experiences and differing positions regarding the past and the present, without which changes in time, space and society cannot be adequately understood. As Obi (2006: 4) points out, generations are thus seen as “bearers of time” and “change”. When the relations between generations are placed in a national context they unveil the contradiction in the multiple forms of Igbo engagement with the Nigerian state, and the ways in which the flow of national resources and patronage from the centre distorts the basis for a viable platform in the articulation of a coherent Igbo agenda.

The relationship between youths and the elderly are sometimes conceptualized in terms of “struggle”, where youths see the older generation as symbols of oppression and injustice, or as those who have been co-opted by the hegemonic powers. Youth are subordinated to the power structures imposed upon them and controlled by the elites and elders in society to foster stability, cohesion and continuity, a situation which becomes apparent when projecting youth as symbols of future power, and relegating the elders as myth and history (Obi 2006: 5). This understanding places youth in a position where they seek to interrogate the prevailing or existing power relations in society, and reinforces their futuristic role as leaders of society, leaders of tomorrow or the successor generation (Mohiddin 2007: 27-33). Conflicts over control and authority are thus embedded in intergenerational relationships and are played out in a cycle of power relations. While the young(er) generation agitates for change and greater authority, the old(er) generation remains ultimately committed to retaining the prevailing power structures and status quo in society. Tensions between the young(er) and old(er)

generation has a unique character in certain contexts as these do not come across as tightly-knit homogenous categories, but harbor tendencies and elements of each other within the broader context of generational power in a specific national political context. This raises an interesting question, one which informs the analysis of inter-generational politics, and its impact on political relations and outcomes in a specific context.

Generations are crucial to the “making” and “remaking” of political, social and economic orders. The very idea of generations, in Le Meur’s (2008: 209) view, immediately suggests a sense of cyclical and sequential continuity, and provides the latitude for contention, rupture and change, and assumes the form of a distorted cycle with the potential for change through its interplay with broader contexts and specific events. The activities of the young(er) generation are always seen as attempting to supplant the old(er) generation, and provide ways in which marginalized young people can articulate their grievances and push for a project of “change” against the prevailing power configurations. The obvious position of youth, the gap between their aspirations and the reality is brought to the fore and is explicitly directed at the generational power hierarchy perceived to be responsible for their subordinate position in national politics. This makes the composition and constitution of the political sphere, and how it is being contested and reformulated critical to understanding the significance of this divide. This study links the emergence of youth agency in MASSOB to a group of disgruntled young Igbo who have mobilized arguments and resources to address the situation of the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria, and invariably question the relations of old(er) generations of Igbo and Igbo elites with the Nigerian state in a manner that is poised to dislodge the status quo. The ways in which generations subvert one another in the quest for survival and power may currently be playing out. But more importantly, it is the tendency for inter-generational secession and a radical social and political transformation that is at stake. In this connection, the concept of generation structures the analysis and unveils how the past is understood by the old(er) generation and how the future is envisioned and articulated by the young(er) generation. In other words, both are positioned as differently situated categories of subjects in specific and distinct historical categories. This paper uses the concept of generation in a relational sense to show that while the old(er) and young(er) exists, emphasis must be placed on the processes that produce and connect both categories as conflicting social categories in a specific historical context.

Based on formal and informal interactions in the field, the idea of youth and “who a youth is or not” has manifested itself in different ways and under different guises. This localized diversity is not specific to the Nigerian context as the idea of youth in Africa is flexible enough to accommodate all those younger than the elders. This is sufficiently echoed in Obi’s (2006: 7) observations that in Nigeria, “it is even possible to see instances of some individuals who vary their ‘elderhood’ and ‘youthood’ depending on expedient calculations of benefits and risks”. Given the peculiarities of the Igbo culture and tradition, being a youth in Igboland more often than not inheres in age

and status. Traditional Igbo communities are segmented and divided into different age-grades, men's societies, women's societies, and other prestige title societies. The complex nature of these groups precludes the concentration of power and authority in any single group, and the republican nature of most Igbo societies means that recognition, respect and upward mobility are not only accorded on the basis of age but also through achievements in society. Embedded in Igbo culture is the idea that change in society can stem from the transformation of the local arena in a manner that provide young(er) groups the opportunity to ascend the ladder and takeover the roles and duties of old(er) grades. Inter-generational local dynamics in Igboland are linked to broader changes in society, and is grounded or fuelled by specific decisive events. Therefore, in a culture that is largely characterised by dispersed authority, absence of any seat of executive authority, and an enduring republican temperament and tendencies from its earliest times, the ascendancy of "youth power" encapsulated in the activities of MASSOB does not merely interrogate the authority, power and control of *Obanaeze Ndi Igbo*, but it feeds into the existing revolutionary tendencies and pressures from below which has come to represent the contemporary phase of Igbo nationalism in Nigeria. There is empirical evidence to confirm that when it comes to grassroots mobilization against the state and its client groups in Igboland, there are elders age-wise, who consider themselves by virtue of their social status and politics to be youth. This does not deny the existence of other spheres of youth action or youth groups who are opposed to MASSOB and its activities. What is important in this context is how popular grassroots mobilization in Igboland is defined as youth-led or youth-allied, in opposition to the Nigerian state and its perceived client Igbo elite groups in Igboland.

### ***Ako-na-Uche: Obanaeze Ndi Igbo and Politics from Above***

A detailed reading of Nigeria's history since independence shows that virtually all ethnic groups in the country have a central ethnic organization committed to advancement of the collective interests and aspirations of each group. This provides the context within which the uneasy relations among Nigeria's 250 ethnic nationalities (or more) can be viewed. But the relations between the supposed 'mega ethnic-nationalities'- the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the West and the Igbo in the East- have been central to the tri-polar power struggle in Nigeria's post-independence politics. Based on the prevailing socio-political and economic contexts, and the emergence of new actors and forces in the Nigerian public space, mobilizations and manifestations of Igbo ethnic nationalism has undergone processes of change and renewal over the decades. Nascent forms of Igbo ethnic mobilization became evident in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as part of Igbo resistance to British colonial domination. But the decades of the 1920s and 1930s witnessed increased unsuccessful attempts in major Nigerian cities like

Lagos, Aba and Port-Harcourt to initiate a general or pan-Igbo union (Azikiwe 1970: 236-238; Ahanotu 1982: 166). In 1933, the quest for the establishment of an Igbo union was stated in a letter published in the *Nigerian Daily Telegraph* which voiced the “rebirth of the dying embers of Igbo national zeal” (Ota 1995: 75). In 1944, the Igbo Federal Union (IFU) was launched during an Igbo mass meeting, where Azikiwe<sup>2</sup> argued that “the Igbo had not been united because of superstition and ignorance, and that the Igbo, blessed as they were with natural resources, land and manpower, as well as a common language, could achieve a great deal if they would unite” (*West African Pilot* 19. 6. 1944 cited in Besselaar 1998: 267). The Union claimed to be pan-Nigerian, and even pan-African, but it had an Igbo national anthem, planned to establish an Igbo bank and an Igbo education scheme (*West African Pilot*, 23. 1. 1946 cited in Besselaar 1998: 268), and was closely aligned with the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). Its membership was mainly made up of the educated elites: professionals, businessmen and politicians. In 1949, the Igbo Federal Union (IFU) was converted into the Igbo State Union (ISU) with the aim of protecting and advancing the overall interests of the Igbo, home and abroad, politically, economically, socially, culturally and practically in every respect (Irukwu 2007: 12). By January 1966, with the abrupt end of Nigeria’s First Republic following a military coup, the Igbo state Union (ISU) and all other ethnic organizations and associations were proscribed by the new military administration. This meant that for almost a decade no ethnic organization existed in Nigeria until the military opened up the political space and unbanned political activities in the run-up to the 1979 federal elections.

From its inception in 1976, *Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo* was meant to serve as a unifying apex organization for the Igbo and also assume the role of the former Igbo State Union (ISU) in the post-civil war Nigerian public space. In the process of its evolution, issues began to emerge around its structure and management systems, and there were perceptions from the Igbo at the grassroots level that the organization was not only immersed in partisan politics, but was equally non-democratic and elitist in nature (Irukwu 2007: 13). With the opening up of the political space in 1979 which ushered in Nigeria’s Second Republic, Igbo expectations of *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo* failed to materialize due to the fact that it was hijacked by post-civil war Igbo elites who sought to align with the ruling hegemonic elite from other sections of the country and submit to a subordinate role in the prevailing power configuration. For strategic reasons, the leadership of *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo* became inclined to the ruling Shehu Shagari-led National Party of Nigeria (NPN) at the centre and was largely recognised by many as the “Igbo wing” of the NPN operating under a different name. As it seemed then, the leadership of *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo* saw the emergence of Dr. Alex Ekwueme (a fellow Igbo) as vice president under the Hausa-Fulani-led Shehu Shagari government, not only as a solution to the lack of leadership in Igboland, but as a means of re-connecting to mainstream politics at the national level. There was a rallying of Igbo positions behind Dr. Ekwueme, and *Ohanaeze*

*Ndi Igbo* became strongly opposed to the Igbo and Azikiwe-led Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), arguing that Azikiwe and other Igbo in NPP should accord recognition to Dr. Ekwueme as the highest elected official from Igboland, but the NPP dismissed Dr. Ekwueme, the NPN and *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo* and its leaders as stooges of the North.

*Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo* has however continued to grow and flourish since its inception, mainly driven and guided by the “*ako-na-uche*”<sup>3</sup> philosophy which is less confrontational, subtle, tactful and diplomatic. Irukwu (2007: 66) points out that “*ako-na-uche*” calls for sound judgement in dealing with issues and situations, but more importantly, it “symbolises the value of approaching issues with the ancient wisdom of (Igbo) ancestors, dressed up with a lot of tact, diplomacy and respect for the interests and intelligence of others”. This conciliatory tone has marked *Ohanaeze’s* stance on Nigerian politics and shaped its dealings with the state in post-transition Nigeria. In May 2004, the leadership of the organization visited the then president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as part of the bridge-building efforts to reconcile the Igbo with all segments of the Nigerian society. The delegation comprised the “cream” of Igbo elites, professionals and politicians from all spheres of life, including traditional rulers and prominent Igbo women. The President of the organization, Professor Joe Irukwu, raised a number of topical issues including the need for true federalism, power shift, democracy, and emphasis on the mutuality of Igbo and Nigerian interest, among others (Irukwu 2007: 58-65). For the first time since the end of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War, it appeared that the *Ohanaeze* leadership and the Igbo political elite began to link Igbo interests in Nigeria to the collective national interest. The newfound principle of “*ako-na-uche*” embodied the vision of the entire Igbo elite and defined the basis of Igbo relations with other ethnic groups at the national level, but it soon became the “Achilles heel” of the organization the following year at the National Political Reform Conference (NPRC) in 2005.

The National Political Reform Conference in 2005 was largely a response to the demand for a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) by different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. But the Obasanjo administration deliberately left out the word “sovereign” from the title and mandate of the conference. Although some Igbo groups and prominent ethnic and civil society organizations in the country called for the absolute sovereignty of the conference or nothing, *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo* as a body was quite prepared to settle for the national conference in the belief that “half bread is better than nothing” (Irukwu 2007: 67). This stance was informed by the organization’s belief that in any case, the Igbo still remains at the lowest wrung of the economic and political ladder in the country since the end of the war in 1970, a situation which it thinks can only improve, but not get worse after the NPRC. Unlike earlier conferences which were mainly concerned with addressing constitutional and political issues, the 2005 NPRC was charged with the responsibility of reforming all aspects of the country’s political, economic and social life, including its operational systems,



corporate behaviour and the conduct of people who direct and operate its institutions. Expectedly, different ethnic constituencies emerged with different agenda: “Yoruba Agenda”, “Arewa Schema”, “Middle Belt Outline”, “Itshekiri Chart”, “Urhobo Women Memo”, “National Women Schedule”, “Ijaw Position”, “Afenifere Arrangement”, and the “*Obanaeze Plan*” among others, which made the articulation of a common front virtually impossible.

For some strange reasons, the proposed *Obanaeze Plan* failed to address let alone resolve one of the most critical issues in post-war Igbo relations with Nigeria, the Igbo Presidency Project. Since the end of the civil war, the Igbo Presidency Project has been central to the resolution of the “Igbo Question” in Nigeria. While issues like power shift to the east, devolution of power from the centre to the periphery, true federalism, and equal access to resources and power all find expression under the “Igbo Question” in Nigeria, the “Igbo Presidency Project” seem to have become a cardinal negotiating point in Igbo quest for reinventing Nigeria. This assumption forms the basis of the tripod theory which holds that stability can only be achieved in the Nigerian federation when there is a balance between the three major ethnic groups (Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo). But the inability of the *Obanaeze Ndi Igbo* and the entire Igbo leadership to articulate a coherent Igbo agenda on this issue and produce a formidable presidential candidate underscored the ineffectiveness of the organization. These failures were evidenced during the 1989-1993 Babangida transition programme, and replicated during the post-transition presidential elections in 1999, 2003, 2007, and recently in 2011. The contradiction between *Obanaeze Ndi Igbo* position and the realisation of the Igbo presidency was further deepened at the NPRC in 2006. At the Abakaliki Zonal hearing of the Constitutional Review Committee, the then president of the organisation, Professor Joe Irukwu, reportedly endorsed the position of the governors from the region, most of whom favoured tenure extension for the president and other political office-holders. This was considered a tacit approval of the president’s third term agenda and a sell-out by the *Obanaeze* leadership on the “Igbo Presidency Project” for 2007. But remarkably, despite all the efforts invested in the NPRC, it failed to gain any legal status and remained largely inconclusive. President Obasanjo succeeded in fashioning out a heavily diluted version of the conference and attempted to use the conference to push for the amendment of the 1999 Constitution that would grant him a third term in office beyond the end of his tenure in 2007. His Third Term Project finally failed at the National Assembly in May 2006. But the alleged role of the *Obanaeze Ndi Igbo* leadership in this despicable project further served to discredit the organisation and its entire leadership.

## *Nzogbu Nzogbu Enyimba Enyi*<sup>4</sup>: MASSOB and Politics from Below

Spurred by a specific reading of Nigeria's political history, MASSOB was established in Lagos on 13 September 1999, barely four months after Nigeria's return to civil rule, to promote the interest of Igbo-speaking Nigerians (or Biafrans) who constitute one of the three main ethnic groups in the country. The advent of MASSOB was a direct response to the perceived failure of the Nigerian state and successive governments to address the Igbo predicament since the end of the civil war in 1970. Between 1970 when the civil war ended, and 1999 when the ghost of Biafra was publicly resuscitated with the founding of MASSOB, Igbo socio-cultural platforms like *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo*, *Aka Ikenga*, *Mkpoko Igbo*, Eastern Mandate Union (EMU), *Odenigbo Forum*, South East Movement (SEM), Igbo National Assembly (INA), Ndi Igbo Liberation Forum, Igbo Salvation Front (ISF), Igbo Redemption Council (IRC), Igbo Peoples Congress (IPC) and the Igbo Question Movement (IQM) existed,<sup>5</sup> but none of these groups espoused a radical or confrontational agenda. There were youth-dominated (but not exclusively made up of youths) Igbo groups that emerged in post-transition Nigeria like the Igbo Youth Council (IYC), Igbo Youth Movement (IYM), the Bakassi Boys, the Federated Council of Igbo Youths (FCIY). Though these are not inclined to separatism they exhibit a more vibrant form of Igbo ethnic nationalism in their approach for equity and justice in Nigeria. The third group comprises what is known as the "neo-Biafran" movement. This group includes MASSOB, the Biafra Youth Congress (BYC), MASSOB International, Biafran Liberation Council (BLC), and the Coalition of Biafra Liberation Groups (COBLIG) which claims to be an umbrella body comprising seven Igbo liberation groups in Nigeria and two in Diaspora.<sup>6</sup>

Led by Chief Ralph Uwazuruike, an Indian-trained lawyer, MASSOB emerged as a post-civil war second generation nationalist movement that does not only contest Igbo marginalization since the end of the civil war but intends to resuscitate Igbo ambitions for self-determination. Uwazuruike had been a member of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) and had supported the election of Olusegun Obasanjo in February 1999, but became disappointed when President Obasanjo made federal appointments which he claimed excluded the Igbo who massively voted for him.<sup>7</sup> In several newspaper interviews, Uwazuruike alludes on an ethnic conspiracy reached between the Hausa and Yoruba after the civil war in 1970, and claims that "the main issue that led to the formation of MASSOB is the marginalisation, discrimination, elimination, subjugation of Ndi Igbo in Nigeria" (Daily Champion 19. 11. 2007: 41; *The News* 10. 4. 2000). These views were also articulated in a petition submitted by *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo* to the Human Rights Violations Investigating Committee in 1999, in which the group lamented the continued marginalization and under-representation of Igbo in the federal government and its agencies, especially, in the armed forces; and

the discrimination in matters of revenue allocation, financial aids, federal government investments and other amenities (Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo 2001).

MASSOB claims that its main objectives include: the actualization of the independent state of Biafra; supporting all entities using peaceful means to bring about Biafra; encouraging sincere and honest dialogue with all ethnic nationalities in Nigeria aimed at peaceful separation of Biafra; and informing the world about the actualisation of Biafra.<sup>8</sup> These objectives are two-fold: the first entails pressuring federal, state and local authorities to convene a referendum in the Southeast in order to ascertain the willingness of the Igbo to secede or remain in the Nigerian project; the second involves the ultimate creation of an independent state of Biafra if the referendum says so. Uwazuruike further contends that the condition of the Igbo in Nigeria is unacceptable and calls for the disintegration of the country along ethnic lines, reminiscent of the Soviet experience (IRIN News 2005). Tacitly expressed, the crux of MASSOB's campaign is geared towards an arrangement promoting the peaceful and orderly "disengagement" of the Igbo nation from the Nigerian project into an alternative political and administrative arrangement. The movement's main concern with the plight of the Igbo ethnic group forecloses the participation of other ethnic groups in its quest for independence. MASSOB's "disengagement" effort has also latched on the deployment of ethnicity as a critical referent as a way of safeguarding Igbo interests and entrenching the self-help inclinations of the Nigerian public space.

MASSOB has an organizational structure which places the leader of the movement at the apex, and supported by National Representatives, National Co-ordinators, Ambassadors, Secretaries, Regional Administrators, Chief Area Administrators, Area Administrators, Provincial Officers, District Officers and ordinary members of the movement. In its early years, the membership of the movement was estimated to be about six million, eighty percent of which were based in Nigeria (Adekson 2004: 90). MASSOB has widespread influence in the former Eastern Region which it refers to as the 30 Regions of Biafra and the leadership of the movement has declared 25 stages in the struggle for the actualization of Biafra with each stage featuring a different strategy as the struggle intensifies. In contrast to the earlier brand of Igbo nationalism that led to the Biafran secession which had substantial consensus among the Igbo ethnic group at home and in the Diaspora, the present idea of secession is not popular with most of the older generation of the Igbo. MASSOB claims to be a peaceful movement and has unequivocally stated that the core philosophy in the realisation of its goal is the "principle of non-violence". However, in the bid to realise its goals and provide security for its members, the movement invariably denies other members of the public their right to security, and promotes an "ethnicization" of the public sphere as an autonomous space from the state and civic public.

On 22 May 2000, in a symbolic hoisting of the Biafran flag, the movement officially presented the Declaration of Demand for a Sovereign State of Biafra from the People and Government of Nigeria. The dynamics of MASSOB's struggle for self-determination subsequently assumed local salience with the emergence and proliferation of alternative state structures in South-eastern Nigeria. Apart from challenging the sovereignty of the Nigerian state over Igbo land, MASSOB evokes "counter-claims of sovereignty", enacts specific "regimes of security" and seeks to create alternative spaces of "power and influence" in the region. On 1 July 2009, as part of events to celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the movement launched the "Biafran International Passport" at the Freedom House in Okwe, Onuimo Local Government Area of Imo State. These developments challenge the "absolutist" posture of the Nigerian state as the main source of social rules guiding the day-to-day existence of the people in the region. It also calls into question the state-centric approaches to governance and empirically unveils alternative forms of social regulation and governance as a form of resistance against formal state control and sovereignty. The mobilisation of ethno-nationalist identities in territorial and spatial terms as springboards for claim-making is salient by virtue of its capacity to challenge the validity and territorial integrity of extant states.

It is within the scope of this paper to flag the nature of these developments and how they have played out in MASSOB's struggle for Igbo self-determination in Nigeria. In a bid to dismantle every infrastructure that is used to support the Nigerian government in the region, MASSOB has embarked on various forms of civil disobedience. Remarkable in this regard is the various successful and unsuccessful attempts to hoist the green-red-black Biafran flag in major roads, streets, bill boards and strategic places in the Southeast, a practice that has become a regular feature in marking the anniversary of the re-declaration of Biafra every May 30. The movement established the Biafran Security Agency (BSA) to take on board broader security issues in major cities in the Southeast and to engage in civic and communal functions like the enforcement of rules of residence in Igbo states (or what it refers to as Biafran territories) and pegging of rents where it is deemed to be exorbitant. Sanitation laws are also enforced in urban cities in the Southeast with punitive measures for defaulters; attempts are made to vend and enforce the official price of petroleum products in filling stations in Igbo states and there have been forceful seizure of fuel tankers moving from any part of the region to the Northern parts of the country as a sign of protest against the non-supply of adequate products to the Southeast (*The Guardian* 30. 11. 2000). On 26 August 2004, the movement rallied traders and civil servants of Igbo ethnic extraction to observe a sit-at-home order which was widely adhered to. Although, the last order on 28 August 2008 did not achieve much success the movement claims to be in control of the 30 regions of Biafra which comprises parts of the South-east and South-south Nigeria. The movement also mobilized for the boycott of the National Identity Card Scheme, and the last census exercise (in 2006) in Igbo states of the southeast on the grounds that these states are not part of Nigeria, but Biafran territory, and therefore, harassing and

intimidating those who participated (*Saturday Champion* 7. 7. 2007: 14; *Daily Sun* 1. 12. 2008: 19). In the 2007 national elections, MASSOB mobilised the Igbo ethnic group in the Southeast, Igbo political aspirants and office-holders through the use of handbills, posters and newspapers to boycott the elections since it perceives the region as a separate entity and not as a part of Nigeria.<sup>9</sup>

## **Inter-Generational Relations and the Dialectics of Contestations: MASSOB versus *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo***

At the inception of MASSOB in 1999, many prominent Igbo politicians, legislators, governors from the Southeast states, and the apex Igbo socio-cultural organization *Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo* quickly distanced themselves from the movement and reminded Uwazuruike that the dream of Biafra died in 1970 (Akinyele 2001: 633). While prominent elite Igbo groups like *Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo* and *Aka Ikenga*, and the Igbo political class all agree to the need to address the place of the Igbo in a post-civil war Nigerian project, their opposition to MASSOB is predicated largely on disagreements on the best strategies for pursuing a collective Igbo agenda. The uneasy relationship between MASSOB and the *Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo* is captured in the words of the former Secretary-General of *Ohanaeze*, Chief Joe Achuzia, who made the following remarks about MASSOB:

‘For me as an Ohanaeze chieftain, it (MASSOB) does not convey the type of meaning that should give me joy... That the youths, because of the severe hardship unleashed in the polity, now feel that they would rather pursue a separatist alternative should not give us joy, because we know the consequences of such a division.’ (Ejinkeonye 2005).

*Ohanaeze’s* disinclination to MASSOB activities was confirmed when the immediate past President-General of organization, Chief Ralph Uwechue, retorted that “things are generally bad for everyone in Nigeria and not just for the Igbo alone” and does not require anyone taking up arms (VOBI 2009), in response to recent killings of the Igbo in the Northern part of the country.

Closely aligned to *Ohanaeze* is a prominent Igbo group, known as *Aka Ikenga*. *Aka Ikenga* is an Igbo think-tank and is popularly referred to as the “intellectual wing” of *Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo*, and like *Ohanaeze* opposes the MASSOB agenda and proposes an alternative agenda for pursuing a collective Igbo agenda. Comprising of young thriving Igbo professionals from several works of life, *Aka Ikenga* was formed in 1988 in the throes of the structural adjustment crises and military dictatorship in Nigeria. Its main purpose was to act as a pressure group to agitate for the inclusion of the Igbo

in mainstream politics and to carve out its own share of the national patrimony. In recent times, the group has called on the Igbo to move away from regurgitating the memories of the civil war and Igbo marginalization in Nigeria, but to chart a new course for the future. Through the organization of periodic lectures, seminars and conferences, the group uses its contacts to influence decisions and engage the present crop of Igbo political leadership at the national, state and local levels to make a difference in their offices. Pressing home the need for a different strategy, the vice-president of the group, Chief Goddy Uwazurike, maintained that:

“Ojukwu (the former Biafran secessionist leader) fought at 34, he will not fight at 54. Now in his 70s, he merely advises. The message of MASSOB sinks in within the youths in Igboland who did not witness the civil war” (personal interview 15. 1. 2009).

The separatist alternative pursued by MASSOB contrasts with the moderate and conservative stance of *Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo and Aka Ikenga*. On several occasions, MASSOB has openly accused both groups of complicity in the subversion of the Igbo agenda, describing them as a group of “elderly cowards” who have aided the marginalization of the Igbo (Akinyele 2001: 634). On this basis, possibilities for constructive engagement between these opposing views have completely collapsed on many occasions and have sometimes led to open threats of attack on prominent Igbo elites by MASSOB members and an attempt to disrupt the Igbo Day celebrations in 2008 (*The Nation*, 30. 9. 2008; *Daily Punch* 22. 9. 2008).

In spite of its acclaimed pacifism and principle of non-violence, it was inevitable that MASSOB would clash with state security operatives in the course of its activities. Government official government position, at the national and state levels, is that the group is irresponsible and illegal (*Thisday* 11. 8. 2000). Various clashes between MASSOB and State Security Service (SSS) personnel have resulted in the clamp down of the movement and its members across the East and other parts of the country. With the tacit and open support of Igbo governors in the Southeast there have been several raids on the movement’s hideouts across the region leading to the discovery of Biafran flags, Biafran military uniforms, belts, umbrellas, currencies, stickers, pictures of Biafran soldiers in military uniforms in training camp, Biafran documents, sewing machines and almanacs of Biafran hierarchy (see *Daily Champion*, 17. 11. 2008; *personal interview* 26. 01. 2009). In previous census exercises and elections, while MASSOB mobilised the Igbo of the Southeast through the use of handbills, posters and newspapers to boycott the elections since it perceives the region as a separate entity and not as a part of Nigeria, the Igbo political class and Igbo office-holders have either dismissed or failed to heed MASSOB’s requests.

In view of these differences, *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo, Aka Ikenga*, and the entire Igbo political class (comprising governors, senators and members of the House of Representatives from the Southeast) reluctantly demonstrated their ability to safeguard “Igbo interests” when they unanimously called for Uwazuruike’s release while he was detained by the state. But the decision to release him took so long because the call for his release was not as popular as it seemed among the Igbo elites, compared to the strong agitation for his release expressed by most Igbo youths.<sup>10</sup> While MASSOB’s relations with the Igbo political class in the south-east remains strained, the case of Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State appears to be different. MASSOB supported the emergence of the governor as the candidate of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA). The Elections Petitions Tribunal ruled in Obi’s favour against the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Chris Ngige, in the rigged 2003 elections in the state. Relations between MASSOB and Governor Peter Obi soon deteriorated following a self-imposed responsibility by the former to evict the National Association of Road Transport Workers (NARTO) from motor parks and markets in the city of Onitsha, the violence which erupted prompted the governor to issue a shoot-at-sight order which resulted in the death of several MASSOB activists.<sup>11</sup>

The division between the popular/youth group on the one hand, and the elite/older generation of Igbo on the other hand, produces similar internal discourses and divergences over what an “authentic” Igbo “ideal” and “agenda” should be, and the legitimate manner for actualizing it. Between elite-led Igbo groups and MASSOB, there are appeals to “modern”, “enlightened” and educated “ideals” and “ideas” by the former; versus the “naïve”, “unenlightened” and “irrational” approach by the latter. The generational dimension of this divide is also prominent when it comes to who can best represent and defend the Igbo culture and interest in the Nigerian federation. The leadership of *Ohanaeze* and other elite-led Igbo groups espouse pro-Nigerian sentiments and claim to speak the mind of the Igbo in a manner that would benefit the Igbo and all Nigerians at large. MASSOB has, however, demonstrated its ability to rally Igbo youths, artisans and people at the grassroots level when it announced a sit-at-home order to commemorate the “Biafra Day” in 2004 which was widely observed and adhered to. *Ohanaeze* and other Igbo elites were surprised by the success of the event. But more importantly, the possibility that the *Ohanaeze* elitist agenda may be supplanted by youth power and enthusiasm led the organization to launch a less-divisive and controversial annual “Igbo National Day” celebration which has since undermined and subverted the MASSOB version.

One of prominent member of the Igbo elite who appears to straddle the divide between the MASSOB and *Ohanaeze* agenda is the erstwhile Biafran leader, Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. Though recognized as a member of the Igbo elite, Ojukwu’s relationship with *Ohanaeze* since he returned to the country in 1982 after twelve years in exile has always been uneasy. On his return from exile he compounded the political situation with his

unwillingness to accept and align with the extant political structures in Igboland which involved recognizing the pre-eminent leadership of Azikiwe in Igboland, the new leadership of Ekwueme in NPN and the political agenda of *Obanaeze*. Ojukwu was still intent on asserting his political leadership of the Igbo. In the bid to re-enact his leadership, Ojukwu founded the “Ikemba Front” in 1983 as partisan political organisation and tried to use his place in Igbo history to garner votes from his people and seek election into the Senate. This political project failed in 1983 when his own senatorial district rejected his candidacy. By May 1996, Ojukwu had another face-off with *Obanaeze* following his crowning as *Eze Igbo* (Igbo King). In its capacity as the apex Igbo socio-political organization, *Obanaeze* issued a full page newspaper advertisement rejecting Ojukwu’s claim, and also informed the Nigerian government and general public that the title, *Eze Igbo* does not exist (The Week 1996). Predictably, Ojukwu reacted by accusing the leaders of *Obanaeze* of being complicit in the marginalization and oppression of the Igbo, and thus, are incapable and unqualified of leading the Igbo (Tempo 1996).

With the advent of MASSOB, Ojukwu was initially reluctant to lend his support to MASSOB’s resuscitation of the Biafran dream. Ojukwu’s position swayed to the neo-Biafran cause when he attended the opening of the Biafra House in Washington D.C while on a medical checkup in the United States in September 2001. Since his return to Nigeria, Ojukwu has consistently maintained that given the situation at the time that the Biafran secession bid was justified and that he has no apologies to make for his actions. However, he maintains that the existence of Biafra as a political reality was in the past, and that what prevails at the moment is “Biafra of the mind” which must be rooted in principles like justice, civil liberty and opposition to genocide, the absence of which led to Biafran secession in 1967 (Tell 2001). Ojukwu still claims that Biafra represents an opinion which should be allowed to flourish in democratic society and that Uwazuruike is more courageous than many who claim to be Igbo leaders (Iheanacho 2004). Ojukwu has since participated actively in Nigerian politics, contested two presidential elections in 2003 and 2007, and headed an Igbo political party, known as, the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA). But he has never failed to warn the Nigerian authorities that he might lead a second secession if they continue to treat the Igbo with contempt (Insider Weekly 2001). Ojukwu enjoyed broad respect, admiration and adulation among the Igbo until his death on 26 November 2011 in a London hospital, and was given a state funeral with full military honours by the president and people of Nigeria.

## **“Betwixt” and “Between”: Contemporary Igbo Nationalism at a Crossroad**

This study draws on the notion of generations to offer insights into processes and events that have characterised Igbo nationalism since Nigeria’s return to civil rule in 1999. Apart from the age, class and milieu divide, the identity of the opposing generational groups



stem from an open debate on the failed legacy of the old(er) generation and capacity of the young(er) generation to construct the future. Based on history and time, different conceptions of superiority inform the political agency of both *Obanaeze* and MASSOB, and consequently, open up new spaces for social and political agenda. MASSOB depicts *Obanaeze* as representative of a generation of conservative elders who have been co-opted by state, silenced young people and prevented the development of a progressive Igbo political agenda, while *Obanaeze* sees MASSOB as a group of naïve, unenlightened, irrational and ill-informed cohort without respect for established authority in Igboland. Generational politics provides a veritable context that brings the fracture between these critical constituencies in contemporary Igbo nationalism to the fore.

Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999, after thirteen years of military rule, certainly relaxed the repressive nature of the state but opened up a paradoxical space for a host of hitherto suppressed and dormant ethnic forces, and a future vector for alternative social and political projects in the country. Thus, the abrupt projection of MASSOB on to the centre of the political space provides an alternative for radical politics in Igboland, while the future of *Obanaeze* boils down to its capacity to remain relevant and ensure that youth ascendancy does not destabilize or erode its power base. These contestations are particularly played out in relation to who has the authority to speak for the Igbo on issues regarding the safety of the Igbo in other parts of the country, and on the Igbo presidency project. MASSOB's quick reaction in providing buses to convey the Igbo in the North back to the southeast at the height of the ethnic and religious crises in region, and its reiteration for an Igbo presidency in 2015, led to *Obanaeze's* extension of similar gestures to the Igbo in the North and the issuing of a warning to MASSOB that it cannot speak for the Igbo on the latter. Thus, a generational perspective provides insights into understanding the transformation of local politics in Igboland, one that pits an emergent youth movement against an enduring Igbo establishment.

Indeed, the political agenda of MASSOB and *Obanaeze* reflect the dissensions and divisions that characterize most nationalist projects in contemporary Nigeria as they compete with other groups in the struggle for space, power and resources in Nigeria. As Mustapha (2004: 273) reminds us, "instead of having distinct identity blocks intent on dismembering the country, what we have are overlapping claims and counter-claims. Disentangling these is virtually impossible". Breaking decisively from almost forty years of perceived Igbo marginalization in post-civil war Nigeria, the emergence of MASSOB in 1999 constitutes a challenge to the entire Igbo political and elite class who are aligned with the state and owe their position to the ruling party at the centre. Given its current fragmentations, contradictions and challenges, it is apposite to state that the emancipatory potentials of contemporary Igbo nationalism, on both sides of the generational divide, still remain in question. Ruptured by conflicts and marked by a sense of lack of legitimacy, both MASSOB and *Obanaeze*, have witnessed rifts and factional in-fighting for positions and offices from which material benefit could be gained. Since

2006, *Obanaeze* has witnessed a protracted leadership crisis which has effectively robbed it of its status in Igboland, while the rift which emerged after Uwazuruike's incarceration in 2005 has led to the emergence of at least four splinter groups from MASSOB.

Caught betwixt and between, the search for the resolution of perceived Igbo marginalization in Nigeria continues in perpetuity. On the one hand, MASSOB believes it represents and defends Igbo culture and interest in a federation it perceives as structured against Igbo interest. This informs the movement's rejection of a state-led process, and explains why it latches on to ethnicity and a nationalist ideal to pursue the dream of a "New Biafra". On the other hand, *Obanaeze's* conciliatory stance with the state with emphasis on devolution of power from the centre to the periphery, true federalism, and equal access to resources and power, power shift to the east, and ultimately, an Igbo presidency is yet to yield any substantial outcome. Given this backdrop, there is a general perception that the Igbo are neither fully part of Nigeria nor are citizens of an alternative political and administrative arrangement. It is this dialectic between outright an "independence" from the Nigerian state and the possibility of realizing the "Igbo presidency" project within the Nigerian state that structures the political agenda of each generation. This inter-generational relationship is generating a sense of cyclical continuity in Igbo nationalism, one which is occasionally twisted or distorted by the eruption of events nationally or locally, and its insertion into each other.

*(Endnotes)*

- 1 *Obanaeze Ndi Igbo* means 'the people (entire community or nation) and the leaders of the Igbo people'.
- 2 Nnamdi Azikiwe, popularly known as "Zik", was a prominent Nigerian nationalist politician who was at the forefront of Nigeria's struggle for independence. He was also regarded as the pride and hope of the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria.
- 3 "Ako" means idea; "uche" means reason/reasoning
- 4 This is an Igbo war chant which means "stampede to death, stampede to death, expedition-bound elephants"
- 5 Some of these groups emerged in the early and mid-1990s and have either ceased to exist (or are dormant) or still remain active. Their existence and activities are gleaned from Nigerian newspapers, author's fieldwork and interviews.
- 6 See <<http://www.biafraland.com/NewsAnalysis2009/newsanalysis050809.htm>>.
- 7 See 'Nobody Can Stop Biafra', *The News*, 7 January 2000, p. 42.
- 8 Interview with Area Administrator (Lagos), MASSOB, 26 January 2009.
- 9 See the Report on the Election Boycott at: <<http://www.biafra.cwis.org/pdf/REPORT%20ON%20ELECTION.pdf>>, accessed on 27. 2. 2009.
- 10 'MASSOB: Why Senate Turned its Back on Uwazuruike', *Saturday Champion*, 7. 7. 2007: 14.
- 11 See Okey Maduforo 'Nigeria: Obi Betrayed MASSOB, Says Uwazuruike', *MASSOB News (Daily Independent, Lagos)*, <<http://massobnews.com/2009/08/08/nigeria-obi-betrayed-massob-says-uwazuruike>>, accessed 25.8.09.

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# Religious Citizenship: The Case of the Globalised Khoja

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## Abstract

*The African Khōjā are an Indic Muslim caste, which began migrating from Sindh and Gujarat to East Africa in the late 18th century. During the 19th and 20th centuries, their economic success in an institutionally underdeveloped region coupled with a strong religious impetus allowed them to build communal municipal institutions throughout the region that both mimicked and replaced the absent state. The insecurity of postcolonial East Africa, such as the 1964 revolution in Zanzibar and the 1972 Ugandan Asian exodus, forced the Khōjā to further expand their bureaucratic apparatus towards foreign policy- migration to Western Europe and North America and requisite institutionalization. In the 21st century, the Khōjā coordinate these communal networks from North America and Western Europe to Asia and Africa towards a religious-based economic development in emerging economies. Their primary identity is religious, defined from within and outwith, using the mechanisms of globalization to further communal aims internationally within a framework of religious nationalism insensible to state nationalism.*

**Key Words:** *The Khōjā, Religious citizenship, Islam, Madagascar, Diaspora, Identity, Imagined Community*

## Résumé

*Le Khoja africaine sont une caste musulmane Indic, qui a commencé la migration de Sindh et du Gujarat Afrique de l'Est à la fin du 18ème siècle. Au cours des 19e et 20e siècles, leur succès économique dans une région sous-développée sur le plan institutionnel couplé avec une forte impulsion religieuse leur a permis de construire des institutions municipales communales toute la région imité C'est Bothan et substitué à l'Etat absent. L'insécurité de l'Afrique post-coloniale de l'Est, tels que la révolution de 1964 à Zanzibar et 1972 ougandais asiatique exode, a forcé le Khoja à élargir leur appareil bureaucratique de la politique de la migration étrangère à l'Europe occidentale et l'Amérique du Nord et l'institutionnalisation nécessaire. Au 21e siècle, la Khoja coordonner Ces réseaux communautaires d'Amérique du Nord et en Europe occidentale à l'Asie et de l'Afrique vers un développement économique basé sur la religion dans les économies émergentes. Leur identité première est religieuse, définie à partir de l'intérieur et sont sortis, en utilisant les mécanismes de la mondialisation à d'autres objectifs communautaires l'échelle internationale dans le cadre de nationalisme religieux Insensible aux nationalisme d'Etat.*

**Mots clés:** *Le Khoja, citoyenneté Religieuse, l'islam, Madagascar, la diaspora, identité, communauté Imaginé*

## Introduction

The Khōjā are an Indic Muslim merchant caste whose early modern origins lie in geographic expanse stretching from Sindh to Gujarat. Permanent migration from India to parts of East Africa has been estimated as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century, such as in the case of Madagascar. (Campbell, 2008, p. 48) This study is focused on the contemporary community which has its origins beginning in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Khōjā religion was caste specific (*khōjāpanth*) which employed regional Indic practices and rituals that integrated eclectic Muslim theologies.

The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was witness to a fundamental transformation in Khōjā religion and caste identity with the arrival of Mahomed Hoosein Hoosanee to the province of Kacch in 1900 V.S. [1844 C.E.] (Nānjiānī, 1892, p. 251). In Bombay, he pursued a series of legal cases to acquire the communal property of the Khōjā caste through the claim of being their 'Imam'. In 1866 Aga Khan case (*Daya Mahomed, et. al. v. Mahomed Hoosein Hoosanee, et. al.*), also known as the 'The Khojah Case', was argued in the High Court of Bombay between the elders of the Khōjā caste and supporters of this Persian exile known also as the 'Aga Khan'; at stake was access to the caste's extensive trading networks and control over its considerable financial resources. In essence, the plaintiffs argued that Hoosanee's claim to be the exiled Imam of the Khōjā caste was spurious. Eventually, the case was decided for the defendant, the results of which ultimately fractured the modern caste into three Islamic creeds—Isma'īlī, Ithnā 'Asharī, and Sunni. (Purohit, 2012) His forceful insertion into the internal affairs of the Khōjā is a nexus point in modern Khōjā history, which set into motion a series of events eventually leading to the fracture of the Khōjā caste and resulting in three distinct modern Khōjā reactions to Western modernity.

It can be argued that the Khōjā are at the vanguard of modern Indic Islamic identities in our age of globalization.<sup>1</sup> The most famous Khōjā in the colonial period was Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. The diasporic communal networks of the Khōjā, utterly disconnected from their ancestral homeland, can be seen as an example *par excellence* of 'deterritorialized Islam'. (Roy, 2006, p. 158) The Khōjā believe that they can be purely 'Muslim' in religion and culture, 'Isma'īlī' for the Āgākāhānī Khōjā

<sup>1</sup> *The term 'globalization' as employed in this study references what Held refers to as the 'transformationalist perspective', which "conceives globalisation as being a process whereby various forms of human activity are increasingly traversing the world and connecting people in differing parts of the world more densely and more quickly than in previous times." (Hudson & Slaughter, 2007, p. 2) From this perspective, there is no single cause or outcome of globalization. For this study, the economic and intellectual effects of liberal economic policies in Tanzania beginning in the 1990s, affordable intercontinental human transportation, and the flow of identity discourses from South Asia and the Near East to East Africa are some of the specific impacts of globalization that have helped to radically transform Khōjā identity in the twentieth century and continue to do so.*



and 'Shia' for Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā. This reified and idealized vision of Islam is inherently in conflict with Khōjā identity, for 'Muslim' is functionally defined here as Arab and Persian in form leaving little room for their ancestral Indic heritage. All aspects of Indic culture are measured against this idea of a 'pure Islam' and those aspects of culture which do not further this ideological goal are contested and usually discarded. There is no irreconcilable duality of the Prophet as a man of 7<sup>th</sup> century Arabia and a universalist prophet. The impact of the lack of this duality can be seen in the discourses of Muslim societies in existential turmoil, such as Pakistan. The *jamāt* of the Āgākhānī and Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā function as networks of *poleis* overlaid modern nation-states facilitating transnational movement and a supranational identity in which loyalty to the *sāhēba jhamāna* ('Imam of the Age') precedes and outweighs that of the state. The Khōjā, as a bellwether of globalized Islam, provide an important case study of this emergent 'religious citizenship'.

## Religious Identities

Discourses on the theme of 'religious citizenship' are starting to emerge and can be classified in somewhat overlapping categories. For Antiquity, this phrase refers to religious life in the Greek *polis* and the extent to which this constituted politics. From this perspective, female inclusion in the religious life of the city-state could be seen as form of political inclusion and thus citizenship. (Borgers, 2008) For the contemporary period, there are two overlapping discourses with regard to religious identity and ethnic minorities in the West. The first focuses on how citizenship is inculcated within religious education and the challenges presented in teaching a secular civic identity within a religious framework. (Miedema, 2006) (Hemming, 2011) Relatedly, the second more extensive body of research focuses on how religious minorities, particularly Muslims, are challenging established notions of citizenship in a pluralistic West. (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000) (Ryder, 2006) (Modood, et al., 2006) (Hudson, 2003) (March, 2009)

This article defines 'religious citizenship' in a different and narrower context from the existing literature, focusing on the political evolution the African Khōjā. Just as modern Western notions of citizenship are the result of the political evolution of state through distinct junctures from the Greek *polis* to the modern nation-state, the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century represents a similar nexus for the African Khōjā, from a circumscribed caste to a self-defined transnational nation. It was in this period through the colonial experience, (Mamdani, 2006) that the Khōjā transformed from a caste organization to a liberal welfare state parallel to the nation-state structure to deliver goods, services, or security which the postcolonial state could or would not provide in a political environment in which Asians were politically marginalized. (Olinga, 2010)

The transformation of the *jamāt* into a modern political body continues, particularly in the Western diaspora. The organization of the early modern Khōjā *jñāti* ('caste structure') was plutocratic, relying almost exclusively on *ṣeṭhā'i* ('the authority of the merchant elite'). For the Āgākhānī Khōjā in the early nineteenth century, this changed with the arrival of Mahomed Hoosain Hoosanee (Aga Khan I) who introduced an autocratic hierarchy which functioned as a constitutional divine monarchy over the Khōjā by the twentieth century, as evidenced by the theological discourses which surrounded his grandson in the *dhu'ā* ('central prayer') and the creation of a law-book in 1905 for the Zanzibar community that evolved into the 1961 constitution. (Anon., Sapṭēambar 1905/ Rajab 1323) (Māstar, 1909) (Janmohamed, 2011) Significantly, for the Āgākhānī Khōjā the 'Aga Khan' of the day remains the ultimate spiritual and temporal head of the community within a highly hierarchical transnational power structure.

With their official recasting in 1899, the Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā took a radically different approach to democratize their community by creating a constitutional democracy in which all male men could vote in elections each term. These autonomous communities in Africa are loosely affiliated through the creation of the The Africa Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaats of Africa created in 1946 allowed for a bureaucratization of the *jamāt* structure. (Anon., 1992) For much for Eastern and Central Africa until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, to be Khōjā and Ithnā 'Asharī was synonomous. The tension of Khōjā identity as both *jñāti* ('caste') and *jamāt* ('community') began to be challenged in the second half of the twentieth century with the growth of the community as seen in the 1956 case of *vakaph* ('religious endowment') trusteeship of an Ithnā 'Asharī of Memon ancestry in Zanzibar. (M.D. Kermali, et. al. v. Mussa G. Dhalla, et. al., 1956) Saeed Akhtar Rizvi's development of the Bilal Muslim Mission in 1964 (Dārēsālām khōjā ṣī'ā ithanā'asārī jamāt, 1969) further blurred the established racial association between the Ithnā 'Asharī faith and Asiatic peoples. The full realization of this *ummatī* ideal of religious nationhood manifests itself among the Anglophone African Khōjā diaspora in Western Europe and North America wherein some new religious centers established by these Khōjā eliminate the term 'Khōjā' entirely in their naming and membership requirements.

Aside from a shared sense of purpose, religious identities are inherently about inclusion and exclusion (Kabeer, 2006). For both the Āgākhānī and Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā, religion allowed for an expansion of ethnic membership on religious terms, being 'Isma'ili' or 'Shia' respectively. Modern Khōjā communities have had their caste identities subsumed within larger globalized Islamic identity constructs based on Near Eastern authorities, such as pan-Shiism or pan-Ismailism. (Kassam-Remtulla, 1999) Islam has become the exclusive *dīn* ('religion') of the Khōjā. This transformative development has allowed non-Khōjā attendees full membership within a Khōjā-majority *jamāt*. For this globalized community, each *jamāt* functions as the sovereign territory of the Khōjā nation in which its own definition of religious citizenship functions as a primary civic identity and

demands a loyalty above and beyond the nation-state. To illustrate these points, take the following encounter in Miami with Āgākḥānī Khōjā students and visitors in the spring of 2013.

Q: How do you primarily identify yourself? Do you consider yourself Khōjā?

A: *No, not really. I am Khōjā but I think of myself as Ismā'īlī. I'm having this issue with my children, trying to explain to them who we are. I have [Sunni] Muslim friends who don't consider us Muslim because we don't go to the mosque or pray and fast like other [Muslims]. What should I tell them? Are we Ismā'īlī or Muslim? It's hard to explain...*

Q: In terms of loyalty, is your first loyalty to America or Hazur Imam [Aga Khan IV]? If you had to choose between one and the other, which would you choose?

A: *Of course, maulā bāpā. We are loyal Americans but if we had to choose it's him.*

This nationalistic loyalty as distinct from that of the nation-state is further illustrated in the Preamble (§D) of the 1987 Ismaili constitution which states:

The authority of the Imam in the Ismaili Tariqah [‘faith’] is testified by Bay’ah [‘oath of alliance’] by the murid [‘devotee’] to the Imam which is the act of acceptance by the murid of the permanent spiritual bond between the Imam and the murid. This allegiance unites all Ismaili Muslims worldwide in their loyalty, devotion and obedience to the Imam within the Islamic concept of universal brotherhood. It is distinct from the allegiance of the individual murid to his land of abode, (Hasnani, 1987)

## Citizenship

The idea of citizenship is defined by the relationship of the citizen to the *polis* (Heater 1999) or the state to the globalized citizen. (Sassen 2009) Citizenship invokes languages of social and political rights demanded of the state as well the responsibilities of citizens to it. These constructs are being increasingly challenged by the mobility of citizens, (Beiner 1994) particularly Muslim migrants into Western Europe and North America. (Soysal 1997) Both Heater and Beiner call for call for a ‘world’ or ‘universal’ citizenship respectively based on notions of universal human rights and civics education that broadens the hitherto narrow focus of nationalist agendas towards a global political

identity that embraces diversity and allows for points of global political convergence, such as the International Court of Justice.

The modern notion of citizenship is the evolution of more than 2,000 years of Western political thought whereby the evolution from *poleis* to the nation-state created modern ideologies which finally bound the identities of peoples through civil religion to the structures of political power in which they resided. The Khōjā had begun to leave the Subcontinent before the nationalist project began in earnest in their ancestral home and by virtue of their position as economic intermediaries were isolated from the nationalist discourses of Africanism in East Africa. The African Khōjā evolved a primary loyalty and identification to their local *jamāt*, which functioned as a *polis* and the *imāmvaādō* as *agora*.

While the Khōjā in Africa were becoming alienated by the majority, the Khōjā who migrated northwards into Western Europe and North America became fully deterritorialized and were forced into a process of an 'Islamic' identity formation based on differentiation, relativization, and socialization amongst their minority ethnic neighbors. (Robertson 1992) This new trans-local culture bore an imagined world (Appadurai 1996) that connected the worldwide Khōjā *jamāt* based on an idealized Near Eastern Shiism through the cultural experience of Africa. As a diasporic community, the African Khōjā leaped from the *polis* to global citizenship without a firm sense of state nationalism. The use of dual and triple citizenship by many members of the Khōjā community can be understood through Ong's 'flexible citizenship' in an era defined by Soysal as 'postnationalism'. And yet, the state is not politically irrelevant as people from the Global South do not flow northward quite as freely as do their manufactured goods. (Jacobson 2009) The African Khōjā have been able to maintain the economic advantage of caste kin networks through the *jamāt* while reimagining their identity to engage the discourses of global Shiism. The national is understood either in relation to the local or the global. It is possible that the Khōjā represent a new facet of Muslim global citizenship through the continuing evolution of the *jamāt* as an aggregator of the community's socio-economic resources directed towards local and global religious aspirations.

Employed heuristically, the phrase 'religious citizenship' endeavors to capture the changing political identity of the Khōjā in the age of globalization as inexorably linked to the transnationalism of global capitalism (Barber & Lem, 2012) yet quite apart from being a 'rootless cosmopolitan' or Kantian 'world citizen'. (Beiner, 1994, p. 17) One could argue that this is not citizenship at all, simply membership in an organization. In the literal sense that is true, the Khōjā cannot construct citizenship as they have no sovereign territory from which to project power within the nation-state system. And yet, they have created a latticed network which overlays the nation-state system by which expertise, money, power, and authority are transferred along these vertical axes, while grounded in North America and Western Europe.

In East Africa, the Khōjā community has ability to issue birth and death certificates, marriage licenses, and legal arbitration in matters of personal law. Additionally, in Dar es Salaam, the official Khōjā membership card provides discounts at community institutions such as pharmacies and for the destitute social welfare in the form of monthly payments of rent, utilities, and food. In its most state-like function, the Khōjā conduct foreign affairs directly with heads of state bypassing the nation-state apparatus. The most vivid example of this is seen through the leader of the Āgākḥānī Khōjā, Karim al-Husayni,

All this has only accentuated the Imamate's state-like form, given its efforts to standardise Ismaili practices globally as if in a nation-state, claim ambassadorial status for the Imam's representatives in parts of Asia, Africa and even Europe or North America, and lend the Aga Khan the perquisites of a head of state by having him sign protocols of cooperation with kings, presidents and prime ministers. Indeed the community has its own constitution, flag and even, in the case of the Khojas, an anthem. (Devji, 2009, p. xiii)

In the same way that the multi-national corporation, such as Coke or Nestlé, have used globalization of the national-state system to set up transnational networks facilitating the flow of goods and services through affiliated companies throughout the world, so too the Khōjā have exported their corporate organization worldwide with independent local franchises (*jamāt*) linked by confederation. Khōjā 'religious citizenship' can thus be envisaged as a possible next iteration of communal citizenship and religious organization in the age of globalization.

What is argued here is the ideological impact of a civic identity, how one participates in national and transnational power structures which gives identity and allows participatory inclusion within a group that has real political ramifications across subsystems within the world system. (Balibar & Wallerstein, 2011) When Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) or World Federation (WF) offices in countries function as *de facto* embassies negotiating directly with a host country for passports and visas for its members or political and economic dispensations, something qualitatively different is occurring beyond the non-governmental organization model. That level of coordination between Africa, Asia, and Europe allows tightly organized Khōjā communities to acquire Western citizenships and traverse global political foundries to fulfill religio-political agendas that are expressed by their respective leaderships. (Steinberg, 2011)


Modern ideas of citizenship and nationalism are intimately tied to the evolution of the nation-state, so too is Khōjā nationhood tied to its diasporic reality in the age of globalization. For example, the creation of an 'Ismā'īlī nation' creates a social contract to those who accede to its requirements of membership, thus providing its 'citizens' a narrative of place in history and purpose of being as well as the full resources of a

developed welfare state apparatus, such as in Tanzania. Herein the boundaries between a secular civil religion and faith are blurred. This transnational political construct goes far beyond other similar communal Muslim development programmes such as the Gülen or Ahmadiyya movements, both in sheer scope and ideology. Whereas those programmes are embedded within particular cultural and national milieus, Turkish and Pakistani respectively, both the Āgākhānī and Ithnā ‘Asharī Khōjā communities aspire to and are inclusive of Muslim communities from around the world who embrace their religious creed, albeit with some reluctance. It is the synthesis of modern nationalism and political realization of the Islamic ideal of the *umma* (Kruse, 1971) through particular discourses of pan-Islamism that has its origins in 19<sup>th</sup> century South Asian literature. (Naeem, 1980) For both the Āgākhānī and Ithnā ‘Asharī Khōjā, the African experience was critical and determinant in the development of their contemporary transnational ‘religious citizenship’ construct. It is in historicizing these stages of Khōjā institutional development in East Africa that have led to the contemporary transnational political networks with which this article is primarily focused.

## Constitution

In the nineteenth century, the Khōjā caste became more than an ethnic community and voluntary organization. Interaction with the British in India and Zanzibar allowed a gradual transformation of the Khōjā *jamāt* into a constitutional body. For the Ithnā ‘Asharī Khōjā, the constitution is essential to local *polis* organization as well for each international organizational body, such as the Africa Federation. Each constitution lays out rules of membership, bylaws, membership dues, election rules and terms, administrative positions, etc... So internalized has this form of organization been among the Khōjā that mid to late nineteenth century communal religious endowments (*vakaph*) were bequeathed through trust deeds and corporate wills/probate rather than with the traditional Islamic writ of endowment (*vakaphnāmū*).

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૧૧૦



ખોજા શીઆ ઇસ્નાઅશરી કુવ્વતુલ ઇસલામ જમાત  
જંગબાર.

બુધવાર તા. ૨૬મી મે, ૧૯૫૪

ખાસ જનરલ સભા

ખોજા શીઆ ઇસ્નાઅશરી કુવ્વતુલ ઇસલામ જમાતની ખાસ જનરલ સભા બુધવાર તા. ૨૬મી મે, ૧૯૫૪ના રાતના ઇમામવાડામાં મજલ્સીસ ખાદ રમાં. ૯-૦૦ વાગે મળી તેમાં હાજરી આપવા જમાતના સર્વે સભ્યોને અરજ કરવામાં આવે છે.

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કાર્યક્રમ:—

- (૧) છેલ્લી બે જનરલ સભાઓની મીનીટ્સ.
- (૨) આપણી જમાત માટેના તૈયાર કરવામાં આવેલા બંધારણના ખરડા ઉપરે ચર્ચા કરી તેને પસાર કરવો. (બંધારણનો ખરડો આ અરકબુલર સાથે અંગ્રેજી અને શુક્રવાતીમાં છાપીને સભ્યોની બધી માટે વહેંચવામાં આવે છે.)
- (૩) પ્રમુખની રબથી અન્ય કામકાજ

તા. ક:-બે આમે મોટી 'મુ' કામકાજ બુધવાર તા. ૧૦-૬-૫૪ના પુર ન થાય તો પછી આઠી રહેલા કામકાજ માટે સભા શનિવાર તા. ૧૨-૬-૫૪ના રાતના ઇમામવાડામાં મજલ્સીસ ખાદ આજુ રહેશે.

શેરઅલી આહમદ લઘા  
એન. સેક્રેટરી.

Figure 5: General body minutes/constitutional changes by the Khōjā Kuwwatul Islam jamāt in Zanzibar, 1954

## Translation

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Khōjā Shia Ithnā ‘Asharī Kuvvatul Isalām *jamāt* of Zanzibar  
 Wednesday 26 May 1954  
 Special General Body Meeting

The Khōjā Shia Ithnā ‘Asharī Kuvvatul Isalām *jamāt* will have a special general body meeting in the evening at 9.00h on Thursday 10 June 1954 in the *imāmṡvādō* after the *majalīs*. All community members are invited to attend.

### Programme:

[A reading] of the minutes from the previous two general body meetings

Our *jamāt* is ready to submit the constitutional bill to be passed by the church. (The [proposed] constitutional bill is attached to this circular printed in English and Gujarati for all to read.)

President’s other business

Postscript: If all of the proposed business is not completed on Thursday 10 June 1954, then the remaining items will be reviewed at the next meeting on the evening of Saturday 12 June 1954 in the *imāmṡvādō* after the *majalīs*.

Śēra’alī Āhamad Ladhā  
 Hon. Secretary

Contemporary Khōjā identity is based upon these institutions and constitutional forms of organization as both immutable and essential to corporate organization. Wherever the Khōjā settle, a *jamāt* is immediately formed to organize the community and build institutions to support it. The normal offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer are present in all Khōjā constitutions each with a limited term and carefully bounded powers.

The republican nature of the Ithnā ‘Asharī Khōjā *jamāt* is critical to their identity and, within the caste, a means of identifying themselves against their Āgākhānī brethren. As the African Khōjā began to experiment with higher levels of organization, they exported



their local and regional republican models of organization back to India, helping to establish such regional organizations as the Kutch Federation and the Council of Gujarat. The consolidation of the original Africa Federation has itself been contentious. Each 'triennial conference' and 'extra-ordinary conference' of the Federation is beset with conflicts by various communities couched in the language of parliamentary procedure; the main issue being a balance of power.<sup>2</sup>

At the onset of the twenty-first century, the Dar es Salaam Khōjā community is the largest and wealthiest in Africa. Its interests tend to dominate to the consternation of smaller communities. Because it is organized through a system of proportional representation<sup>3</sup> (The Africa Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats, 1993–2003), smaller and relatively poorer communities must form alliances and use parliamentary procedures to ensure their interests are accounted for in final deliberations. Aside from power and wealth, other cleavages within the Federation can be found such as language and culture. For instance, there is a distinct separation between the mainland communities and the Francophone islands of the Western Indian Ocean. The mainland communities send individuals representing their particular community whereas the Francophone communities of Madagascar, Mayotte, and Réunion have formed a 'Conseil Régional Des Khojas Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamates De L'océan Indien' have a separate council apart from the Anglophone Africa Federation. (Anon., 2011) The Francophone insistence on the use of Gujarati is a pronounced difference from the Anglophone mainland transition to English in Khōjā affairs. The political complexity and intrigues found within the Federation rival that of any international governmental organization.

While *jamāt* constitutional parliamentary procedure is modeled after British practice, Khōjā constitutions are a composite of Khōjā organizational history. The medieval organizational remnants present in all Khōjā constitutions in Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa are the appointed posts of chief (*mukhī*) and accountant (*kamāḍīyā*).<sup>4</sup> The remit of these two posts are largely ceremonial and limited to the institutions of the caste hall, shrines, and mosque. To conceptualize their role in *jamāt* organization, the chief and accountant have had authority to maintain the religious traditions and cultural rituals for the Khōjā since time immemorial. The larger modern Khōjā welfare state apparatus which has emerged in the twentieth century is organized and executed through the elected leadership to which the chief and accountant ultimately report. The retention of these two positions allows for a continuity of medieval identity in the modern Khōjā *polis*.

2 A full fifth of the total Gujarati and English archival correspondence housed in the Africa Federation Archives in Dar es Salaam deal with issues related to parliamentary procedure and constitutional matters of the Federation.

3 The proportional representation is one representative for each one-hundred members of the particular community (*jamāt*).

4 While the Ithnā Asharī Khōjā have adopted a republican form of communal organization which has limited the remit of the chief and accountant, the Āgākhānī Khōjā have allowed the chief and accountant to retain their medieval power and authority within the caste hall.

## Taxation

There are three funding streams for the Dar es Salaam Khōjā *polis*- the subscription, tithing, and personal donations. The first funding stream is the yearly subscription (*lavājam*), the smallest share of overall funding. It is levied on each adult male within the community as an acceding of the individual's membership within the community. In 2008, the subscription rate in Dar es Salaam was TZS 100,000 (65 USD) per year and payment entitles the Khōjā male to voting, custody, finance, management, and leadership rights within the Khōjā community of particular locale. (Census Committee- Dar es Salaam, 2008) Any major movement of an individual within the communal hierarchy necessitates payment of the subscription. Poorer members of the community, as with taxation, are exempt and become recipients of this funding after a detailed financial assessment by the Welfare/Social Services Subcommittee of the *jamāt*.

The second funding stream is the one-fifth tithing incumbent upon the Shia (*khums*). The Khōjā observe the nineteenth century practice of remitting their tithing to an ayatollah deemed to be the source of emulation (*marja'ē taklīd*). This fifth can be further divided into two parts, the portion for the Imam (*sahmē imām*) and the portion for the Prophet's descendants (*sahmē sadāt*). The current source of emulation for the Dar es Salaam Khōjā is Ayatollah Sistani in Iraq. Each Khōjā community collects the tithing from their respective communities; these funds are pooled by region and presented to the ayatollah yearly. The Khōjā have received a dispensation for the portion of the Imam such that half of the total tithing remains with each community. These funds are then reinvested in community projects such as infrastructure development, education, healthcare initiatives, etc... This funding and allegiance to the ayatollah serves to enhance and reinforce the Near Eastern element of contemporary Khōjā Islamic identity.

The third and final funding stream is personal donations to the community. The communal nature of the Khōjā society encourages the private funding of communal projects from which status is derived. Wealthy members of the community are expected to be patrons of the community and donate for communal welfare. The ancient Khōjā ritual of the communal feast (*jama'ana*) is seen as central to communal identity and its funding, particularly during the first ten days of Muharram, is seen as particularly meritorious. Funding community building projects are a means for attaining immortality within the communal consciousness as inscriptions bear the names of their benefactors and their deeds are recorded for posterity and periodically disseminated throughout the community in its periodicals, and now on listserv. Historically, Khōjā donations to the community were made in two areas- communal feasts and building construction projects. As the Khōjā community has evolved into an efficient *polis* and sectors of the Tanzanian economy are developing into a service oriented fields, a shift is needed in personal donations towards investing in human capital.<sup>5</sup> This is challenging for a

5 Interview with Ithnā 33 Asharī Khōjā male professional and members of the Dar es Salaam Khōjā Higher Education Board in his early-sixties, Dar es Salaam 7 February 2008.

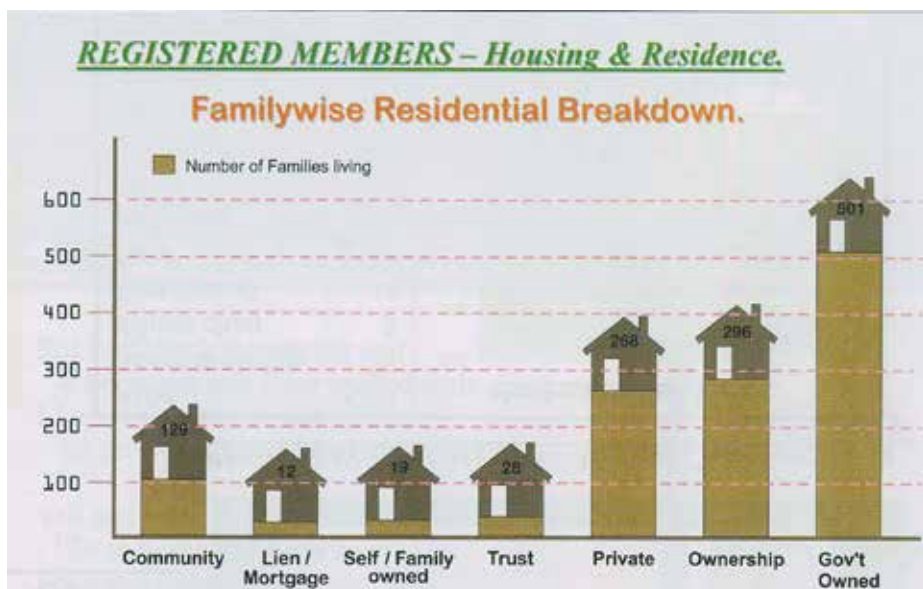
mercantile caste whose historical conception of communal identity and endowments was expressed in tangible terms, now a transition to the intangibility of investing in the intellectual development of the caste and its members.

## Social Welfare

In the absence of a functioning modern welfare state in Tanzania, (Prince & Marsland, 2013) combined with multinational corporate organizational and bureaucratic skills learnt from European colonization, the Khōjā over time developed all of the institutions needed to replicate the modern welfare state for its members. Some of the institutions developed are open to the public, such as the Ebrahim Haji Charitable Dispensary, while allowing its own members reduced or free access to services. Other services, such as subsidized housing, are exclusive for the community's economically disadvantaged membership. Within Khōjā caste identity, there is the concept of communal rights (*jamāti'ā'i*). Because it was the reinvestment of communal funds which built these institutions, community members believe they have a right to its use. An illustrative example of this belief in communal right and challenges to the social welfare function of the *polis* is the current 'housing crisis'.

To understand the contemporary 'housing crisis' in Dar es Salaam, its necessary to reflect upon the economic changes which have affected the Khōjā of Tanzania. The Arusha Declaration of 1967 ushered in a period of Nyerere's socialist policy (*ujamaa*) which hit the Asian trading class particularly hard in its nationalization of property and key sectors of the economy. For about three decades, the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam stagnated economically. Unable to conduct licit trade, some Khōjā participated in the burgeoning black market bringing goods, such as basics like bath soap and toothbrushes, from the port of Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam. It shook the confidence of the Khōjā to have lost their wealth and unable to require it.

During this socialist period, the majority of Khōjā living in central Dar es Salaam lived in Asian built tenements which had been nationalized and administered by the *Shirika La Nyumba La Taifa* (National Housing Corporation or 'NHC'). The NHC imposed rent control on these properties artificially allowing the tenants, mainly Asian, to be insulated from rising rents in the city over three decades. With the economic collapse of Tanzania in the 1990s and opening of the nation to global capitalism through policies of economic liberalization during the presidency of Ali Hassan Mwinyi (1985-1995), the class divide among the Khōjā began to become more pronounced.



**Figure 6: Survey data of housing breakdown by ownership status of the Dar es Salaam Khōjā, 2008. (Census Committee- Dar es Salaam, 2008)**

The opening of markets was initially beneficial to the Khōjā as they had maintained their transnational links with other Khōjā communities in the region, such as Dubai. They imported manufactured goods by the container. According to a respondent, “in those times were able to buy a thing for \$10 from Dubai and sell in Dar for \$100.”<sup>6</sup> The profit margin was so high and the need of Tanzania so great for manufactured goods that an entire generation of Khōjā boys did not complete higher secondary education and/or university and instead worked at the family business importing and exporting goods. With the demand satiated, the economy stabilized in the late 1990s and competition from African merchants meant that an entire generation of Khōjā men without higher education qualifications or technical skill was unable to compete in the emerging service economy of Dar es Salaam. This ‘container culture’<sup>7</sup> generation of men and their families has slipped from the middle-class to upper lower class in the matter of a decade and are routinely in need of the community’s welfare assistance.

This economic challenge of a whole generation of Khōjā men was compounded by a policy of the NHC to sell nationalized houses for demolition. The new rent in a newly constructed building without rent control (1,500 USD) is approximately ten times the original rent controlled cost (150 USD) making it almost impossible for poor and lower

6 Interview with *Ithnā’ Ashari Khōjā* male merchant in his mid-forties, central Dar es Salaam 1 August 2008.

7 *Ibid.*

middle income families to live in the city. Only three months' notice is given to each family living in the building before the demolition of these houses and, of course, no viable legal recourse is available. The rapid rate of demolitions in central Dar es Salaam in the late twentieth and early twenty first century has exacerbated this 'housing crisis', for which impoverished members of the community have turned to the *jamāt* leadership to solve. (Anon., n.d.) (Abizer, 2009)

The combined 'housing crisis' and 'container culture' generation have put a strain on communal resources. It is estimated that of the remaining 3,100 Khōjā households living in continental East Africa, 600 are completely dependent on communal welfare funds. (Daya, 1433 A.H./ 2012 C.E.) Initiatives to build cheap community housing for those losing their property and updating skills, such as vocational training in technology, are slow processes beset by bureaucratic hurdles and also due to a shortage of competencies within the community. Other salient social issues have recently affected the community for which the leadership has taken bold and swift action. The rise of HIV-AIDS epidemic in Tanzania in 1990s was quickly responded to by imposing a mandatory HIV-AIDS and thalassemia test on all Khōjā couples before marriage. (Daya, 1996/1416) The social and economic policies of the *jamāt* are responses to the Khōjā expectation that the community leadership respond to all manner of social, economic, and political change in Dar es Salaam. For many Khōjā, personal identity is intimately tied to the community and the *polis*; it allows a ceding of personal autonomy and agency to the *polis* to enact policies for the preservation and advancement of the community.

## Foreign Policy

The strongest argument for the Khōjā *jamāt* to be understood as a *polis* is its ability to conduct direct negotiation with nation states and extract concessions for the community. Two examples of this in the late twentieth century exemplify this acquisition of foreign policy power, generally for the nation state- Uganda in 1972 and Somalia in 1991.

The expulsion order of Idi Amin of Asians from Uganda on 7 August 1972 meant all Asian communities had to find a way to exit the country within ninety days. It was unclear until towards end of the deadline that indeed the UK government would allow Asians with British Protectorate passports and stateless Asians to relocate to the United Kingdom. (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1972) In the interim, the Āgākhānī Khōjā took the step to migrate westward to Canada (Valpy, 2002), the Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā looked eastward towards Pakistan.

It begs the question, why choose Pakistan if the ancestral home of the African Khōjā was located in contemporary India? For the African Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā in the aftermath of Partition, Pakistan came to be viewed as a Muslim homeland for

Asians. The escalating violence against Muslims and rise in Hindu nationalism in Gujarat was perceived to be inhospitable for Muslim émigrés. Additionally, Pakistan was established by a converted Ithnā ‘Asharī Khōjā, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and Karachi was home to wealthy Khōjā industrialists such as the Habib Kansara (Habib Bank Ltd.) and Jetha Gokal clans. They would be instrumental in helping émigrés to integrate through establishing initiatives such as the Panjetani Welfare Society in Karachi. (Ramji, 1971) (Anon., 1971)

Because it was the Ugandan state itself which functioned as the instrument of oppression, the Khōjā used the Africa Federation and transnational caste connections in Pakistan to bypass the postcolonial nation-state to directly secure immigration waivers and visas for their 3,500 brethren trapped in Uganda (Secretariat, 1970) (High Commission for Pakistan, 1971). The majority of African Khōjā who migrated to Pakistan did so before the 1972 expulsion order, at most this represented only 300 people. The majority of African Khōjā eventually opted to migrate to Western Europe and North America as those avenues rapidly opened to the Ugandan Asian population towards the end of Idi Amin’s deadline. While Pakistan ended up not being the main destination for the Ugandan Khōjā, its preparation was instrumental for the Khōjā Federation in developing experience and negotiating at the nation-state level to achieve its objectives and be able to bring to bear its weight through other Khōjā communities, in this case- Karachi.

### **‘Operation Ghadeer’**

The development of the Khōjā community’s foreign policy interventions has emerged out of necessity in the instability of postcolonial Africa. An example of coordinating international humanitarian assistance by the Africa Federation, organized by the Khōjā communities of Mombasa, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, is ‘Operation Ghadeer’ which evacuated the entire Mogadishu Khōjā community to Kenya and Tanzania between 10 and 15 January 1991. (Rashid & Rashid, 1411 A.H./1991 C.E.)

With the deterioration of the Somali political situation leading to the final ouster of Mohamed Siad Barre in January of 1991, the Khōjā Africa Federation embarked upon a final evacuation of the entire Khōjā community. The Federation had been monitoring the political situation since 1989 when Hashim Okera of Mogadishu visited the Dar es Salam community to discuss evacuation of unmarried girls and prepare current passports of all community members for possible exodus. By December 1990, the situation had deteriorated quickly and those Mogadishu Khōjā members wanting to voluntarily relocate, particularly women and children, were offered free travel to Nairobi by the Supreme Council of the Africa Federation. (Daya & Chagani, 1411 A.H./1991 C.E.) With the fall of the capital in January 1991 and the evacuation of all major embassies,

a four-man committee comprising of Sajjad M. Rashid, Chairman of Mombasa Jamaat; Ashiqhussein M. Rashid, Chairman of Nairobi Jamaat; Raza A. Mooraj, a former resident of Mogadicio domiciled in Nairobi and Hassan A. M. Jaffer, a Councilor of Africa and the World Federation was formed. (Jaffer, 1991, p. 33)

The committee decided to act by hiring a ship captained by Khōjā Sajjad Rashid and, with a small contingent, embarked from Mombasa to Mogadishu to evacuate the Khōjā of Somalia. Coordination was needed in order to achieve safe passage and cross international boundaries. Initially it was with the Italian government that the committee was working, but with the evacuation of the Italian ambassador from the capital, Pakistani naval support was needed. Captain Rashid records in his log that they arrived in Mogadishu on 12 January 1991 at 1145. At which point they realized the situation has deteriorated further since their last communication and sent a seven man advance party, from the 13 onboard, to assess the situation of the community on the ground. Matters took a precarious turn when the two lifeboats broke down on shore upon arrival of the party and the committee was forced to negotiate with militants for safe passage of the evacuees onboard the *M/S Ambassador I*. A total of 1,053 evacuees were finally brought safely to Mombasa, of which 780 were Ithnā ‘Asharī Khōjā. (Datoo, 1426 A.H./ 2005 C.E.) Coordination with the Kenyan government provided for legal status to reside in the country as refugees coordinated by the UNHCR, there was a dispersal of the community as many sought refuge in Dar es Salaam. The leadership of the Khōjā *jamāt* in Dar es Salaam, Alhaj Anverbhai Rajabali Dharamsi and Alhaj Azim Dewji, and chairman of the Africa Federation, Alhaj Ramadhan Bhai Nanji, eventually arranged Tanzanian citizenship for the Mogadishu Khōjā who wished to reside in Tanzania. (Datoo, 1426 A.H./ 2005 C.E.)

The case also illustrates interconnected nature of Khōjā religious identity and foreign policy. This navigation of international borders, appropriating the foreign policy power of the state, and navigating national bureaucracy was motivated and executed through devout belief in the mission and its divine sanction. This is most clearly recorded in the log of the captain’s wife, Tahera Rashid, who recounts that in ‘the darkest hour of the mission when the seven men were on shore, no boats available, and gunfire heard throughout the night of the first day in Mogadishu’, she and six other female volunteers from the community on board held an all-night vigil,

I remember that Monday night when after all effort- leaving no stone unturned- there were no signs of slightest success, we did not sleep that whole night. We did Amale Ashura in the dark under the open sky. We recited 'Amaan Yujibu' several thousand times. We called 'Ya Ali' 125,000 times. We besought Allah to have mercy on His suffering humanity; our community, and our seven volunteers. We prayed to forgive our sins if those stood in the way of our success of the rescue mission. We beseeched him to deliver our people for the sake of Masumeen A.S. I feel Allah replied our Duas, for which we shall always be grateful to Him. (Rashid & Rashid, 1411 A.H./1991 C.E., p. 7)

## Conclusion

The African experience was transformative for the Khōjā of Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa. Without realizing it, they had become diasporic without the ability to return 'home' as was made clear to the Ugandan Asians by Indira Gandhi (Gupte, 2012, pp. 5-6) after Idi Amin's expulsion order on 9 August 1972. Particularly for the Zanzibari community, their working closely with the colonial administration and the social milieu of the Sultanate meant that the Khōjā both adopted modern bureaucracy and ideas of representational government as well as imbibed the 'Islamic' ethos of the island at a point when the caste schism forced a reevaluation of caste identity and the boundaries of inclusion. The indigenization of the Zanzibari community and their later exodus to the mainland and to Western Europe and North America transformed the Dar es Salaam community and set the stage for international coordination, based in London, of Khōjā communities worldwide. Their small numbers, shared experiences, and intimate knowledge of the intricacies of citizenship and nation-state system have allowed them to achieve what Olson termed 'the logic of collective action' (Olson, 1971) in negotiating the international system to the aid of their communities worldwide within a strengthening *ummatī* identity of an illusory pan-Shiism.



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# Can We Speak of African Agency?: APRM and Africa's Agenda 2063

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## Abstract

*In marking the golden jubilee of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now the African Union (AU), the African Union Commission announced its intended objective of having a document that would be a vision for Africa's integration, peace and development in the coming 50 years. Currently, a draft AU Agenda 2063 is in circulation with an invitation to key stakeholders to input into its objectives of outlining a broad framework of transformation of the continent.*

*This paper is borne with this in mind. The main argument that is advanced is that the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), adopted as a programme of the African Union in March 2003, demonstrates African agency in tackling political, economic, corporate and social-economic governance deficiencies. Through exploring 'best practices' in certain select countries the main thrust of the paper will be to showcase this African agency. It is argued that the AU's Agenda 2063 would certainly hold greater legitimacy in strategically positioning itself in global geopolitics by demonstrating that existing African initiated institutions aimed at the transformation of society, for example the APRM, have indeed provided African solutions to Africa's problems'. The processes that have brought about progress thus far should not only be reflected in the AU's Agenda 2063, these should further be supported both regionally and internationally as Africa continues to pursue its vision of an African Renaissance and showcasing African agency in regional and global transformations.*

**Key words** *African Renaissance, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, best practices, African agency, governance, Afro-centricity*

## Résumé

*En marquant le jubilé d'or de l'Organisation de l'unité africaine (OUA) maintenant l'Union africaine (UA), la Commission de l'Union africaine a annoncé son objectif prévu de disposer d'un document qui serait une vision pour l'intégration, la paix et le développement de l'Afrique dans l'entrée 50 ans. Actuellement, un projet de l'ordre du jour de l'UA 2063 est en circulation avec une invitation aux intervenants clés à l'entrée dans ses objectifs. Le Mode Plan d'un large cadre de la transformation du continent.*

*Ce document est à la charge avec cela à l'esprit. Le principal argument avancé C'est Est-ce que le Mécanisme d'évaluation par les pairs (MAEP), adopté en tant que programme de l'Union africaine en Mars 2003, démontre agence africaine dans la lutte contre politiques, les carences en matière de gouvernance économique, sociale et d'entreprise-économiques En explorant les «meilleures pratiques «dans certains pays, sélectionnez l'essentiel du document sera de mettre en valeur cette agence africaine. Il est soutenu que l'ordre du jour de l'UA 2063 serait certainement tenir une plus grande légitimité stratégique de se positionner dans la géopolitique mondiale en démontrant que existant dans les institutions a été lancé africains visant à la transformation de la société, par exemple le MAEP, ont en effet fourni «des solutions africaines aux problèmes africains». Les processus thathave brought sur les progrès que jusqu'à présent ne doit pas seulement se refléter dans l'ordre du jour de l'UA 2063, ceux-ci doivent en outre être pris en charge Bothan régional et international que l'Afrique poursuit sa vision d'une renaissance africaine et montrer boitier de l'agence de l'Afrique dans les transformations régionales et mondiales .*

**Mots clés** Renaissance africaine, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), l'Union africaine (UA), l'ordre du jour 2063, les meilleures pratiques, l'agence de l'Afrique, la gouvernance, Afro-Centricity

## Introduction

In this paper, I posit that the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) demonstrates African agency in changing political, economic, corporate and social economic structures that were repressing the people of Africa. I argue that as the continent continues to grapple with its developmental trajectory, it is imperative to continue to utilize this African agency in interlinking emerging policy to already existing ones and in this manner continuously restructure societal institutions for effective structural transformation.

The paper is organised as follows: I first start with a brief conceptual explanation of the term agency, wherein I argue that African agency cannot be removed from the general theoretical thrust of the notion of agency. What distinguishes African agency, I posit, is the *positionality* of the subject and object of investigation. This *positionality* does not only include the narrow confines of territory/geography, it goes beyond the aforementioned to explore the mind-set in handling social problems emergent of the context- Africa. I problematize my assertion by offering a brief presentation of the APRM, where I argue a case of appreciating the mechanism as an illustration of African agency. The paper then goes on to give a synopsis of AU's Agenda 2063 as the current policy document aimed at addressing some of the structural challenges facing the African continent and the proposals that have been put across to bring about change to the impending situation. I thereafter build a case for interlinking the APRM in the current discussions on the AU's agenda for the transformation of the continent. I argue that the AU's Agenda 2063 can benefit from understanding some of the best practices that the APRM has enabled in the four pillars of governance. Such a stance will serve the purpose of not only

preventing a reinvention of the wheel but more so it will build on practices and processes that have brought about change in certain contexts. This is with the aim of transferring this knowledge to other contexts that are still struggling to play catch up and rectify the discrepancies that they face.

I conclude by positing that such an adoption and adaptation of policy/policies will not only bring about the much needed policy coherency for structural transformation, it will also greatly enhance AU's strategic legitimacy in articulating common positions for the continent in the global geopolitics through showcasing that Africans, through their agency, have instituted processes and mechanisms that can well be appreciated as African solutions to Africa's problems. Indeed, such an articulation of African agency is what the Afrocentric paradigm (Asante: 2007) has long been advocating for.

## **Explaining African Agency**

In a provocative article that challenges the status quo of several standpoint positions on agency as a concept, Hitlin and Elder, Jr. (2007:170) note that whereas the term agency has been central to theorists throughout sociology's history, it is used differently depending on the epistemological roots and goals of the sociological scholars who employ it. The authors, albeit dismissingly, provide the different strands in sociology that utilise the concept agency and the way they use it. They contend that the concept is grounded in the western conception of the actor where individuals are the locus of social action in traditions focused on individual freedom (Hitlin and Elder, Jr. 2007:171). In this conception, individual freedoms and how they interact with the social structure is key. For some sociologists, the authors posit, the temporal-relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination and judgement, both reproduces and transforms structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations, is privileged (Hitlin and Elder, Jr. 2007:171). For others, it is rules and resources that hold the central interest in agency-structure discussions, whilst for many more, actions and intentions and/or life course studies become their foci of analysis (Hitlin and Elder, Jr. 2007:172). The study of the self and identity, a phenomenon that allows for both choice and constraint, individual spontaneity and social patterning, individuality and group and social identification, the authors contend, is fundamental to but missing from debates about the nature of agency (Hitlin and Elder, Jr. 2007:173). They continue their discussion by providing a theoretical model of the social-psychological reading of agency through an analysis of four types of agency, that is, existential, identity, pragmatic and life course (Hitlin and Elder, Jr. 2007: 173 -191).

Interestingly, Clegg (2006), another author who problematizes the concept of agency as it is read in feminism, asserts that agency straddles different divides depending on the school of thought that adapts it. Presenting her arguments in the form of a debate,

Clegg (2006:317- 322) explores the different paradigmatic positions – from humanism, structuralism, post-structuralism and critical realism that the concept has found usage. For the purposes of our discussion, I have adopted a sociological understanding of the concept of agency that refers to an individual's ability to make choices and change the structure of society (Giddens 2009: 89). What is significant to point out is that such a change in structure, what Giddens (2009: 89) calls structuration of society, is the work of an individual in interaction with other individuals, especially in African societies (*my own emphasis*).

In adopting such a definition of the concept of agency, I argue that African agency cannot be removed from the general understanding of the concept. However, the uniqueness of African agency lies in its qualification 'African' which is both self and place bound. African agency is how people, who identify themselves as African (the self and identity), have managed, through making conscious choices, to change their structures. These are especially contextual structures that confine/oppress them.

Perhaps the most convincing conceptualization of African agency thus far are the writings of Mazama (2003) and Asante (2007). Couched in what he (Asante 2007) calls the Afrocentric paradigm, the author states that Afrocentricity is:

‘...a consciousness, quality of thought, mode of analysis and an actionable perspective where Africans seek, from agency, to assert subject place within the context of African history.’ (Asante 2007, p15)

Quoting Mazama (2003), Asante (2007, p8) attunes that the Afrocentric paradigm is not merely a worldview nor even a theory as such. He contends that the afro-centric paradigm results in the reconceptualization of the social and historical reality of African people. The afro-centric paradigm is a revolutionary shift in thinking and constructural adjustment to black disorientation, de-centeredness and lack of agency. Furthermore, the Afrocentric paradigm or Afrocentricity is revolutionary because it casts ideas, concepts, events, personalities, political and economic processes in the context of black people as subjects and not as objects (Asante 2007, p15).

What is critical in Asante's definition of Afrocentricity is the view that African people must see themselves as agents rather than spectators to historical revolution and change. Afrocentricity emerges as a methodology that consciously operates within African ways of knowing and existence and results in the implementation of principles, methods, concepts and ideas that are derived from our own African cultural experiences (Mazama 2003, p5). It is on this score, I argue, that the African Peer Review Mechanism captures the very essence of the Afrocentric methodology by showcasing not only 'epistemic centeredness' but also African agency



Incidentally, Landsberg (2013) provides another illustration of African agency. Writing on what he terms the golden decade (1998-2008) of former President's Thabo Mbeki's South Africa's foreign policy as Pan-African agency in world affairs, he neatly summarized a similar view of African agency as demonstrated in what he calls Afro-centric diplomacy thus:

*'...the idea of Afro-centric diplomacy is borrowed from the theory of Afro-centricity and is based on the notion that "Africa cannot (,the author could have meant can – my own emphasis) advance intellectually or spiritually from the colonial legacy that it has been given", and is described by the high-priest of the concept, Molefe Asante as "the theory of African agency"'*... Landsberg (2013:3)

This theory of African agency, the author asserts, is demonstrated by the decade 1998-2008, which the author attunes:

*'...The decade 1998-2008 will go down as the golden decade of African agency and diplomacy in world affairs, a period that was certainly on par with the height of decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s. A combination of moral imperatives- decolonisation, apartheid, genocide- and strategic aims- political and economic- and Afrocentric diplomatic stratagems, propelled the case for a new continental regime in Africans, crafted in the main by Africans...'* Landsberg (2013:3)

The author concludes his paragraph by stating that

*'...During this decade (of African agency in continental and world affairs-my own emphasis) we saw a revival of African attempts to strengthen their voice, greater influence and attention, and a world order that would be more favourable to them...'* Landsberg (2013:3)

With certitude, one of the stratagems that placed Africa on a different pedestal in its developmental path was the institutionalization of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) with its governance instrument, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM): An Example of African Agency

The idea that drove the birth of the APRM was that Africans and African leaders had for a long time relied on Western donors to dictate their development priorities, to fund their own transformation and to sustain such transformed institutions. Busia

1 The author quotes from Asante, Molefe (2013), *Afro-centricity: Imagination and Action, Dissenting knowledges Pamphlet Series, NO.12, Multiversity, Malaysia*

(2010:37) notes that against this background, the most pressing issue on African leaders' minds in formulating NEPAD/APRM was Africa's long and painful experience with the donor community, both in terms of economic and political conditionality. This was expressed in two decades of structural adjustment and stabilisation policies inclusive of poverty reduction strategies, which hardly benefitted the continent but rather drove it deeper into an abyss of squalor, disease, violent conflicts, environmental degradation, unemployment and brain drain. He (Busia) quotes the former South African president and one of the architects of the NEPAD initiative thus:

*"...NEPAD reflected a consensus and a common determination among African leaders and peoples to change the destiny of the continent and redefine the paradigms of their relationships with the outside world in a positive and mutually beneficial way..."* (Mbeki 2002, NEPAD 2001, Paragraphs 148-149) in Busia 2010:37

The aim was to realise an African rebirth commonly known as the African Renaissance or the golden age of Africa's social economic and political institution building through good governance and improved state-society relations (Busia 2010:37).

The APRM is a mutually agreed-upon instrument for self-monitoring by participating member States of the African Union (AU). The primary purpose of the APRM is to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration through the sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practices, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building (APRM Base Document Paragraph 6)

Déme (2005:16) explains that the APRM is a tool designed to help reinforce good governance in Africa and assess member States' level of socio-economic development. This tool, he explicates, sets out the framework for continuous reviews of the four pillars of governance that have been identified as forming the key areas for analysis. These core themes are democratic governance, economic governance, corporate governance and socio-economic governance. It is mandatory that a review is followed by an action plan that engages the countries in a dynamic way to resolve the problems that have been identified. These action plans are named National Plans of Action (NPOA).

## **The Critical Structures of the APRM**

The function of the APRM is managed and administered at four critical levels. The overall body is the APR Forum. The forum is a committee comprising of participating Heads of State of the African Union who have voluntarily chosen to accede to the

mechanism<sup>2</sup>. There is a panel of eminent person with an oversight role of the APR process ensuring its independence, professionalism and credibility. This structure is called the APR Panel. The National APRM focal Points is a structure at the national level comprised of the Ministers of high level government ministries who report directly to the Head of State or Government. The structure is supposed to liaise with the National Governing Councils (NGCs). The last structure is the APRM Secretariat, which is responsible for the day to day running of the mechanism. Source: <http://new.uneca.org/aprm/StagesAPRM.aspx> and [http://saiia.org.za/aprmtoolkit/docs/APRM\\_basics/atkt\\_herbert\\_apr\\_overview\\_2007\\_en.pdf](http://saiia.org.za/aprmtoolkit/docs/APRM_basics/atkt_herbert_apr_overview_2007_en.pdf).

## The Process

The APR process is divided into five broad phases or stages of activity

**Stage One** involves a study of the political, economic, corporate governance and socio- development, environment in the country to be reviewed (initial consultation). This preliminary consultation is based principally on an up-to-date background documentation prepared by the APRM Secretariat and material provided by national, sub-regional, regional and international institutions. The country under review is required to create an APR Focal Point to co-ordinate with the APR Secretariat. The focal points gather relevant laws, treaty ratifications, budgets and development plans and forward these to the APR Secretariat. At the same time, the country must complete the APR self-assessment questionnaire and gather broad input from civil society. In addition, the government must also draft a paper outlining the nation's big issues and draft a National Programme of Action that should contain clear steps and deadlines for how the country intends to bring itself into conformance.

**Stage Two** is when the Review Team visits the country concerned; its priority order of business is to carry out the widest possible range of consultations with the Government, officials, political parties, parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organizations (including the media, academia, trade unions, business and professional bodies). The country visit lasts three weeks. The visiting team consists of one member of the panel of eminent persons, one administrative person and four experts drawn from partner institutions, including the UN Development Programme, UN Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and African Union bodies.

**Stage Three** is the preparation of the Team's report. The report is prepared on the basis of the briefing material prepared by the APRM Secretariat and the information provided in-country by official and unofficial sources during the wide-ranging consultations and interactions with all stakeholders. The report must be measured against the applicable

<sup>2</sup> *At the time of writing this paper, the Chairperson of the APR forum was H.E. President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson whilst the chairperson of the panel of eminent persons was Barrister Akere Tabeng Muna. Both assumed office in 2013.*

political, economic, corporate and socio-economic governance commitments made and the Programme of Action.

The Team's draft report is first discussed with the Government concerned. Those discussions are designed to ensure the accuracy of the information and to provide the Government with an opportunity both to react to the Team's findings and to put forward its own views on how the identified shortcomings may be addressed. These responses of the Government are appended to the Team's report.

The Team's report needs to be clear in instances where problems are identified. For example, is there the will on the part of the Government to take the necessary decisions and measures to put right what is identified to be amiss? What resources are necessary to take corrective measures? How much of these can the Government itself provide and how much is to come from external sources? Given the necessary resources, how long will the process of rectification take?

The **Fourth Stage** begins when the Team's report is submitted to the participating Heads of State and Government through the APRM Secretariat. The consideration and adoption of the final report by the participating Heads of State and Government, including their decision in this regard, marks the end of this stage. If the Government of the country in question shows a demonstrable will to rectify the identified shortcomings, then it will be incumbent upon participating Governments to provide the assistance that they can, as well as to urge donor governments and agencies to come to the assistance of the country reviewed. However, if the necessary political will is not forthcoming from the Government, the participating States are required to do everything practicable to engage the 'unwilling government' in constructive dialogue, offering in the process technical and other appropriate assistance. *This is the process of peering and peer advice (my own emphasis)*. If dialogue proves unavailing, the participating Heads of State and Government may wish to put the Government on notice of their collective intention to proceed with appropriate measures by a given date. The interval is supposed to afford the 'unwilling government' opportunity for addressing the identified shortcomings under a process of constructive dialogue.

Six months after the report has been considered by the Heads of State and Government of the participating member countries, it should be formally and publicly tabled in key regional and sub-regional structures such as the Pan- African Parliament, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Peace and Security Council and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union. This constitutes the Fifth and final stage of the process (Adapted from <http://new.uneca.org/aprm/StagesAPRM.aspx>).

The process outlined above leads to the production of three important documents:

The *Country Self-assessment Report (CSAR)* prepared by the country concerned on the basis of the APRM questionnaire. The CSAR is only published at the discretion of the State concerned.

The independent *Country Review Report* (CRR) is prepared by the APRM secretariat and its technical partners, under the supervision of the APRM panel. It is finalised in consultation with the respective government. The eminent person assigned responsibility for the country review presents the report to the APR forum. The *National Programme of Action* (NPOA) is prepared at country level based on the self-assessment report. It addresses the problems identified.

**The most important instrument of the African Peer Review is the questionnaire.**

The APR questionnaire is divided into four sections: Democracy and Good Political Governance, Economic Governance and Management, Corporate Governance and Socio-Economic Governance. Each section of the draft questionnaire includes a list of relevant standards, major objectives, questions under each objective and indicators, which help flesh out the intent of the questions. Broadly the questionnaire looks at five areas:

- a. The extent of ratification and compliance with agreements, treaties and declarations adopted by the African Union or internationally accepted standards and declarations endorsed by the AU.
- b. Weaknesses in systems, laws and institutions.
- c. Compliance with such systems, laws or institutional requirements.
- d. Early warning indicators that point toward areas requiring action.
- e. The extent to which the country has implemented its agreed action plans.

The questionnaire, borne out of the need to gather information from a wide range of different stakeholder, provides an invaluable data base for the search of 'solutions' to the identified problems in the four pillars of governance. Indeed, the 'solutions' flowing out from several processes of consultation are captured in the Country Review Reports (CRRs) replete with National Programmes of Action (NPOA). Most of the CRRs showcase some of the 'best practices' a country has been involved in, in addressing some of the political, social or economic discrepancies a country faces. It is to these that I now turn, taking the examples of a select countries in the West, East, South and North Africa. Conclusively, however, one can authoritatively assert that a uniquely African agency is exemplified by the APRM process.

### **Further Notes on African Agency: Discussing Some APRM Practices**

As already indicated, whereas the primary purpose of the APRM is to foster appropriate adoption of laws, policies, standards and practices that lead to good political, economic, social and corporate governance, the mechanism also places emphasis on sharing of experiences and reinforcing best practices. It is on this latter point that many countries that have acceded to the APRM, have had their countries reviewed and made proposals in the form of national programmes of action, have dismally failed! Apart from Ghana and Uganda that have managed to pay each other country visits with the

aim of learning from each other (APRM 2011:8), hardly any other APRM country has demonstrated the will to learn from the other. This could partly be due to a lack of information, limited capacity to think and act strategically, yet again ignoring the rich context specific evidence for forlorn and unworkable solutions, not fully appreciating the wealth of knowledge that the APRM has generated and how this knowledge can be put to use, unwillingness to appreciate African agency in finding African solutions for Africa's problems. The profoundness of these assertions is summarized in the APRM write up on best practices: evidence from Thirteen Countries (2011) thus:

*'... The sharing of these achievements is the most effective way of fast-tracking economic, social and political development as it enables countries to apply new ideas and technologies that have proven to be successful on the continent. The principle of best-practice sharing also reinforces the APRM principle of ownership because it allows for Africans to take pride in their home-grown ideas and solutions, share these innovative feats with the world and showcase positive aspects of good governance in Africa, which are seldom publicised in the international arena...'*  
(APRM 2011:7)

Indeed, the emphasis of this paper is to highlight some of these best practices as an appreciation of workable solutions that the APRM process has brought to the fore. The point is to investigate how these solutions can be integrated into current policy options being discussed at a continental level, that is, Africa's Agenda 2063.

'Best Practice' is defined in the APRM write-up on evidence from Thirteen African Countries (2011) as

*'... A best practice is a technique, method, process, or activity that has proven to be most effective at delivering a particular outcome. Best practices can also be defined as the most efficient (least amount of effort) and effective (best results) way of accomplishing an objective. In the APRM reports, best practices are identified by first and foremost by the outcome of a process (es) to address serious challenges in democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development. These outcomes must be outstanding and offer lessons for the continent. In successfully addressing this challenge, the country's achievement can serve as a model to be emulated by other countries in Africa and world-wide...'*  
(APRM 2011:7)

The APRM report identifies 107<sup>3</sup> good governance practices in the four pillars of

<sup>3</sup> I have made a technical correction in this regard. The report has identified 104 good practices, whilst the

governance. Thirty-Nine (39) of these are in the Democracy and Political Governance, Twenty-Five (25) are in Economic Governance and Management, Fifteen (15) are in Corporate Governance, whilst Twenty- Eight (28) are in Socio-Economic Development (APRM 2011:68). The document highlights some of the very best practices in the four pillars of governance and the countries that have exercised these practices. These are as follows.

In Democracy and Political Governance, the write-up points out the best practice in curbing down threats in intrastate and interstate conflicts that countries such as Mozambique, Mali, South Africa and Benin have demonstrated. In the Economic and management pillar of governance, mention is made of South Africa and its outstanding record of continued independence from multilateral and bilateral loans and donations. The report points out that the country receives only 0.4% of its development expenditure from foreign donors (APRM 2011:68). Kenya, has also been highlighted as one of the countries that is doing well in domestic revenue collection. The field of Corporate Governance did not record as many best practices; however, the King Reports<sup>4</sup> that South Africa pioneered and concertededly worked on, was the most attractive (APRM 2011:68). In the area of socio-economic development, the write-up highlights best practices in free primary and secondary education that almost all of the APRM countries have adopted, best practices in the fight against HIV/Aids that Kenya and Uganda have demonstrated the promotion of gender equality and affirmative action that Rwanda and South Africa, respectively, have instituted. (APRM 2011: 68 – 69).

For the purposes of the topic at hand, I will zero in on best practices in the fourth pillar of governance, that is, socio-economic governance. This is especially for the reason that whereas Africa's Agenda 2063 has emphasised the importance of political governance, the document underscores the need for concerted thinking on the socio-economic and developmental trajectory of the continent that will place it on another pedestal 50 years to come.

Lessons from the APRM for AGENDA 2063 – Socio-economic Development

Closely linked to the APRM in demonstrating African agency for structural transformation is AU's Agenda 2063. As its introduction, Agenda 2063 states that

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*calculations of the practices outlined adds-up to 107.*

<sup>4</sup> *The King report is a code of corporate governance issued by a committee called the King committee after its leader retired judge Mervyn E. King. The code is based on principles and practices of leadership, sustainability and good corporate citizenship. Compliance with the King Reports is a requirement for companies listed on the Johannesburg stock exchange.*

*“... Agenda 2063 provides the opportunity for Africa to break away from the syndrome of “always coming up with new ideas but no significant achievements” and set in motion high levels of productivity, growth, entrepreneurship and transformation. Agenda 2063 is an approach to how the continent should effectively learn from the lessons of the past, build on the progress now underway and strategically exploit all possible opportunities available in the immediate and medium term, so as to ensure positive socioeconomic transformation within the next 50 years. Agenda 2063 is both a Vision and an Action Plan to achieve the African Union’s vision of an Integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. It is a call for action to all segments of African society to work together to build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny. Agenda 2063 will put in place a results-based approach with concrete targets that are measurable and can be tracked and monitored. This is with a view to capacitating Africa to do things differently and take advantage of the current momentum towards 2063.....” (www.agenda2063.au.int)*

It is on this commitment to a results-based approach with concrete targets that are measurable, and can be tracked and monitored as it pertains to social- economic development, that I argue a case for learning from the APRM best practices on social-economic development. I present the study on Benin’s Songhai Project as is articulated in the APRM report on evidence of best practices from thirteen (13) select countries (APRM 2011: 63). The aim of such a presentation is to draw lessons that can feed into some of the milestones related to prosperity and to science, innovation and technology that Agenda 2063 outlines (Draft Agenda 2063: 24). The assertion is that in developing the monitoring and evaluation instrument, some of the lessons outlined could form the basis for targets and outcomes based on these.

### **Benin: Songhai – an Alternative Model of Development**

The APRM report on best practices singles out Benin’s Songhai Centre. This is a Non- Governmental Organisation (NGO) that promotes home grown alternatives for a holistic sustainable development that is based on a careful interface of environmental, human organisational technical/informational and financial components.

The report states



*...The Songhai Centre, created in 1985, aims at improving the standard of living of the people of Africa. Its objective is to ensure the organisation of networks of excellence, competitiveness and growth for the balanced economic development of the provinces... (APRM 2011:63)*

The Songhai centre is mainly an agricultural centre. It is unique in its alternative logic of action that encourages science and innovation based on local knowledge with an openness but careful selection of outside resources, utilisation of local resources, encouragement of entrepreneurship through skills training and augmenting on technical and organisational capacities of the people. The logic is that of combining industry and trade. This is through strengthening capacities by creating space to popularise the entrepreneurial culture as a catalyst for economic initiatives. It has models of agro-biological production systems (for environmental sustainability), popularising a culture of success (human development), making agriculture attractive to young people (human development) through the promotion of agri-business and entrepreneurial activities around agricultural production (social-economic development). Adapted from Benin Country Review Report 2008: 231

As the report underscores

*'...Songhai works to change mentalities and see a new breed of development entrepreneurs emerge. This is achieved by promoting social-economic development mechanisms, which have, as ultimate goals, the creation of a reservoir of human resources, capable of taking charge of, and leading lives...'* (APRM 2011:63)

Africa's Agenda 2063 has set forth certain milestones related to integration, prosperity, and African ownership of its development programmes. Further milestones are related to structural transformation, human development, good governance and on innovation and technology transfer. For the purposes of the discussion at hand, I have singled out milestones in prosperity and on innovation and technology transfer that the Agenda postulates. The milestones on prosperity directly pertaining to the issues being explored herein include a highly productive and profitable agricultural sector based on value chains by 2020, the modernization and transformation of agriculture into a highly diversified and productive sector by 2023. Meanwhile, the milestones on innovation and technology transfer that are of significance to our paper are building a better infrastructure, engineering and manufacturing base that shows significant increase in local content and input, increased science, technology and innovation (STI) output at national and regional levels and increased human capacity for science and technology and stimulating entrepreneurship through an increased number of added value products and services.

Reading through these select milestones and comparing the outcomes to what Benin's Songhai project has managed to achieve, one cannot help but remark that Agenda 2063 will be ill served if it did not draw lessons from the best practice in social-economic development that the Songhai project has managed to institute. This is especially taking into account that the Agenda not only positions itself as Africa's vision and action plan for the next 50 years, the document wants to set out measurable outcomes to indeed showcase to the rest of the world that Africa has made a gradual transformation in its political, economic and social development through adopting common positions, attaining policy coherency and implementing ideas and innovations that have brought success within the continent.

In this regard and in setting forth its monitoring and evaluation logical framework, Agenda 2063 can borrow lessons from Benin's Songhai project in terms of articulating a. the issues to be addressed in monitoring the implementation of Agenda 2063. For example, the Agenda speaks of turning the demographic shift into a demographic dividend. An issue that should clearly be pointed out is how young people are to be integrated into the developmental discourse. Taking lessons from Benin's Songhai project, one could single out the mechanisms through which young people's mind-sets towards agriculture were changed. The point here is to draw on concrete ways of doing that could be adopted to other contexts and thereafter monitoring the implementation, successes and draw-backs against an outlined set of desired outcomes

The aforementioned also holds in the clear identification of problems to be handled. As Benin's Songhai project manifests, the problems to be handled were manifold but intertwined or their interconnectedness logically thought through. These included making agriculture attractive and an enterprising project, using local skills and innovations, carving out a market not only locally but also regionally and in this manner making the activities around agriculture productive and the deliberate inscription of a particular group in society. The main lesson that Agenda 2063 could draw from the Songhai project is the *embeddedness* in the identification of problems and outlining their interconnectedness. That is, Songhai outlined problems that were being faced on a day to day basis and changed this situation to an advantage using solutions that local (young) people came up with. This meant that local people owned the processes as they could identify with these. Thus in drawing up the monitoring and evaluation framework of the Agenda, contexts should be identified, concrete problems outlined and people within those contexts who are to put forward processes for change identified. Agenda 2063 could also borrow lessons from the Songhai project on how indicators of success that feed into each other (i.e. offer solutions to a set of interrelated problems) are to be drawn up, the setting up of outcomes against a time frame and medium term remedial measures as one goes along in the achievement of set goals. The Agenda, and especially the monitoring and evaluation component, it is proposed, should be a logically, well thought out document that is embedded in people's everyday realities

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have argued that the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), adopted as a programme of the African Union, demonstrates African agency. Through exploring 'best practices' in social economic development and privileging Benin's Songhai project, I have shown this African agency. I have, in the write-up, posited that AU's Agenda 2063 to be adopted as Africa's vision and action plan for economic emancipation in the next 50 years has a lot of lessons to learn from APRM's best practices. These, I posit, hold greater currency in the development of a monitoring and evaluation logical framework to track the implementation of the Agenda and the progress recorded over time. Consequently, the underlying thesis that I have defended in this treatise is that AU's Agenda 2063 would hold greater legitimacy in not only offering common positions and policy coherency but more so in strategically positioning itself in regional and global geopolitics by demonstrating that existing African initiated institutions aimed at the transformation of society, for example the APRM, show case a uniquely African agency in the sharing of best practices. Indeed, peer learning as a distinctive component of this African agency is underscored and should form a research agenda item in the near future.

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## WEB RESOURCES

- The APRM Base Document, [www.aprm.org](http://www.aprm.org) accessed on a continuous basis
- NEPAD base document [http://www.dfa.gov.za/au.nepad/nepad\\_overview.htm](http://www.dfa.gov.za/au.nepad/nepad_overview.htm) accessed on 30/08/2012
- <http://new.uneca.org/aprm/StagesAPRM.aspx> accessed on a continuous basis - February 2013
- [http://saiia.org.za/aprmtoolkit/docs/APRM\\_basics/atkt\\_herbert\\_apr\\_overview\\_2007\\_en.pdf](http://saiia.org.za/aprmtoolkit/docs/APRM_basics/atkt_herbert_apr_overview_2007_en.pdf) accessed on a continuous basis - February 2013

# Students perceiving risk: a quantitative assessment on three South African university campuses

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## Abstract

*This paper documents risk as perceived by students in three South African universities—it focuses on risk encountered in everyday choices such as sexual behaviour, alcohol use and freedom of association. The project originated in qualitative research conducted over two years (2008–2009) among Rhodes University (RU) Sociology students. A second—quantitative—phase began in 2010 when findings from the initial phase were used to guide students in designing and piloting a questionnaire. Pilot results then informed a final research iteration in which a*

*second questionnaire was designed and administered at three universities. The final questionnaire proved robust and performed very well. Among the 1694 valid cases included in analyses, strong associations were found between the universities, respondents' sex and their worldview.*

*Exploratory factor analysis revealed four latent constructs underlying all responses: The existential experience of risk; Stress and pressure resulting from exposure to financial and emotional risk; Risks attached to the everyday university culture; and Promiscuity. These constructs explained 59.8% of the total variance in all observed cases (all respondents in all universities).*

*Students' perception of risk in their lives is complex and multi-dimensional. The research found considerable evidence for Beck's claim that in late modernity there is increasing individualisation in people's perception of risk. Also, the degrees to which specific risks resonate in student consciousness demonstrate that risk is—as Zinn claims—both constructed and real.*

**Key Words:** risk, student behaviour, existential experience, sexual violence, South Africa

## Résumé

*Cet article documente le risque perçu par les étudiants dans trois universités sud-africaines concentre-il un risque rencontré dans les choix de tous les jours tels que le comportement sexuel, la consommation d'alcool et la liberté de projet association. The origine dans la recherche qualitative Menée sur deux ans (2008-2009) entre Les étudiants de l'Université de Rhodes (RU) sociologie. Une deuxième phase quantitative a commencé en 2010 lorsque les résultats de la première phase ont été utilisés pour guider les élèves dans la conception et le pilotage d'un questionnaire. Résultats de pilote informe alors une itération de recherche final dans lequel un second questionnaire a été conçu et administré à trois universités. The questionnaire final s'est avéré robuste et très bien performé. Parmi les 1 694 cas valides incluses dans les analyses, de fortes associations ont été trouvées entre les universités, le sexe des répondants et de leur vision du monde.*

*L'analyse factorielle exploratoire a révélé quatre construits latents sous-jacents toutes les réponses: L'expérience existentielle de risque; Le stress et la pression résultant de l'exposition au risque financier et émotionnel; Risques liés à la culture universitaire de tous les jours; et la promiscuité. Ces constructions ont expliqué 59,8% de la variance totale dans tous les-cas observés (tous les répondants dans toutes les universités). La perception du risque dans leur vie des étudiants est complexe et multidimensionnelle. La recherche a trouvé des preuves considérables pour la demande de Beck C'est à la fin de la modernité, il ya augmentation de l'individualisation dans la perception des gens de risque. En outre, les degrés dans laquelle les risques spécifiques résonnent dans la conscience des étudiants démontrent C'est le risque que les créances Zinn appliquées Bothan-construit et réel.*

**Mots clés:** risque, le comportement des élèves, l'expérience existentielle, la violence sexuelle, l'Afrique du Sud

## 1. Introducing and conceptualising risk

Shortly after the Chernobyl nuclear accident in the Ukraine in April 1986, German theorist Ulrich Beck's groundbreaking book *The Risk Society* was published. According to Beck's (1992 [1986]) pioneering conceptualisation, sociologists identify risk as a characterising trait of contemporary societies. Rather than assuming risk to be a result of modernity, or assuming a general increase of risk factors in modern society, Beck (*ibid.*) argues that particular ways of perceiving and managing risk are an effect of how societies organise themselves: and that with the breakdown of traditional forms of association—such as social classes, the family and political groupings—an increasing trend to individualisation has emerged (87 *et seq.*). In late modernity this trend often leads to risks being viewed as 'supra-national and non-class-specific *global hazards*' (13). Increasing individualisation and the resultant accumulation of interdependent decisions of individuals contribute largely to the systemic uncertainty of late modernity: individualisation, Bauman argues, 'is a fate, not a choice' (Bauman 2000, 34). In this regard Giddens (1994: 78, 97) uses the concept of 'manufactured uncertainty' implying that risk, as an effect of human activities, is a structural consequence of industrial modernisation. The modern citizen in the modern world is increasingly confronted with man-made rather than natural risk (Giddens 1999; 1990). And in their everyday lifeworld people are compelled to deal with these 'new' risks (Giddens 1990).

Furlong and Cartmel (2007) explore how risk is experienced at the individual level among British youths from the mid-1970s. Specifically, they suggest that changes in education, labour market, family and leisure have significantly affected the way young people experience their lives. In particular, risk, while being generated by ungovernable social forces, is ultimately managed individually:

[L]ife in late modernity revolves around an epistemological fallacy: although social structures, such as class, continue to shape life chances, these structures tend to become increasingly obscure as collectivist traditions weaken and individualist values intensify. As a consequence of these changes, people come to regard the social world as unpredictable and filled with risks which can only be negotiated on an individual level, even though chains of human interdependence [...] remain intact (*ibid.*: 2-3).

Risk is manifested in the constantly increasing consequences for individuals and so there is a growing perception of risk being unavoidable. But there is also a growing recognition that risk should be anticipated and managed. This poses fundamental questions about the epistemological status of risk: does risk exist outside the fact that individuals do or do not

acknowledge it? Can subjective risk assessments be considered as more or less accurate on an objective scale? The concept of risk perception, Jackson *et al.* (2006) argue, implies that differences exist between objective risk assessments made by experts and 'soft judgments' made by ordinary people. Hawkes and Rowe (2008: 617) point out that '[I]t is now generally recognised that laypersons perceive risk in a more complex, multi-dimensional way than do risk assessors, who base their assessments of risk on the likelihood of human harm'.

Although it is now widely accepted within sociological theory that risk is both constructed *and* real (Zinn 2006), what varies is the way this duality is articulated at the conceptual level. Avena and Renn (2009: 3) warn that,

[b]y granting risk an ontological status, debates between risk paradigms are placed into an arena of disagreement over questions of knowledge, about our perceptions and understandings of risk, and about our understanding of how groups and societies choose to be concerned with some risks while ignoring others'.

They suggest a different approach: embedding risk within the world of social actors, rather than considering it 'a state of the world independent of our knowledge and perceptions' (*ibid.*:2). In this view '[r]isk refers to uncertainty about and severity of the consequences (or outcomes) of an activity with respect to something that humans value' (*ibid.*). Jackson *et al.* (2006) point out a paradox of late modernity, namely that more knowledge produces more risk: 'Attention and judgement create a risk in this sense: modern systems of risk assessment classify, select and respond, bringing attention to bear on a danger or opportunity, giving a newly formed risk meaning and technical precision' (sec. 3, par. 1). While less knowledge can still be a source of greater risk for issues such as STDs (see Kalichman *et al.* 2005), a focus on the domain of risk perception and conceptualisation within a context of higher risk awareness is revealing of how risk is recognised and dealt with in contemporary society. University students, whose lives are daily involved in knowledge exchange and communication practices, offer a privileged standpoint from which to observe such new reflexivity of risk.

Wall and Olofsson (2008: 432) focus on young people's 'sensemaking' of risk, or 'how risk is put in the social context of young people's everyday life'. According to them sensemaking is defined 'as the way people materialize meanings of risk within a social context' (*ibid.*). This draws attention to the role that social interaction plays—with its norms, values, pressures and roles—in forming individuals' understanding of risk. The cultural nature of risk becomes evident once we take into consideration voluntary risk, where risk is inextricably and simultaneously tied to issues of constraints, choice and control (Douglas & Wildavsky 1983). In instances such as binge drinking, which is high amongst South African university students (HEAIDS 2010: xii), risk can operate as a discouragement but can also be a substantial incentive.



Moore and Burgess (2010)—comparing drinking and drug-related behaviour to religious and community rituals in the US—argue that risk taking in relation to substances is better understood as functional rather than irrational. They conclude that ‘[t]he public perception of risk [...] is symbolic of social processes, dispositions, and deep cultural structures, and suggestive of the contemporary relationship between the individual and society’ (112). Similarly, recent studies (e.g., Leve *et al.* 2011; Seear 2009; Adam 2005) linking risk with everyday practical morality, contend that active and conscious risk taking is not necessarily an act of rebellion, nor the outcome of lack of information, but can even be read as an expression of the political ethos of neoliberalism. We interpret neoliberalism in keeping with Hayek’s view (in Thorsen & Lie 2006: 13) of a ‘...“spontaneous order” of social life, which is better than any kind of artificially created order when it comes down to securing individual liberty and well-being.’ Regarding risk, Thorsen and Lie (*ibid.*: 15) add that in a neoliberal ethos, ‘[i]ndividuals are also seen as being solely responsible for the consequences of the choices and decisions they freely make.’ It has even been claimed that ‘the new “borderlessness” of some risks, and the process of reflexive modernization in neoliberal regimes, have been linked to the apparent disappearance of class [...] the reflexive individual negotiation of risk has replaced traditional “class consciousness”’ (Threadgold & Nilan 2009: 50–51).

Cebulla (2007:130), among others, contends that the overrepresentation of risk in contemporary societies overlooks the continued influence of class and other traditional structures. However, while class, education, gender and other traditional dimensions of social life still affect the kind and level of risk that is experienced, the paradigm of individualisation imposes that the consequences of risk are mostly dealt with at the individual level. According to Bauman, contemporary consumerist societies are ‘characterized by a far advanced deregulation and de-routinization of human conduct, directly related to a weakening and/or crumbling of human bonds’ (Bauman 2007: 49). In this frame, the individualising process ‘consists of transforming human identity from a given into a task and charging the actors with the responsibility for performing that task and for the consequences (also the side-effects) of their performance’ (Bauman 2000: 31–32).

Hayenhjelm (2006) notices that risk taking is not necessarily the result of a rational calculation of costs and benefits, or a misinterpretation of possible negative outcomes—risk taking can also be understood as a choice that offers an element of hope for an individual with limited options or in a vulnerable position. Hayenhjelm defines this (high) risk taking as ‘risk from vulnerability’ (192). This blurs borders between voluntary and involuntary risk taking, thus pointing to the influence of context and of social norms. The issue of social norms is closely related to the ethos of neo-liberalism and to dominant cultures in communities such as university campuses.

Risk perceptions and judgements among young people are shaped to some extent by peer pressure and notions of what is desirable to those within their own generations (Mudhovozi, Ramaruma & Sodi 2012); this is also found to be the case among South

African university students (Rau, Coetzee & Vice 2010). In pursuing the desirable, and the normative in terms of social acceptance, it is not unusual for students to be unrealistically optimistic when judging their susceptibility to negative consequences of risk taking (*ibid.*). The study of sexual behaviour is an area in which sociocultural formulations of risk have proven especially fruitful. The inequitable balance of power between women and men in sexual relationships of South African youth and the gendered nature of HIV infection are well established facts; these are also vectors of risk in university contexts (Gordon & Collins 2013; Rau, Coetzee & Vice 2010). There is also a dense network of cultural norms and values linking alcohol, risky sexual behaviour, and exposure to violence in sub-Saharan Africa (Woolf-King & Maisto 2009), and more specifically, as experienced by South African students (Pengpid *et al.* 2013). It is not only in their wider social settings that students feel at risk: as a national study of higher education institutions in South Africa found:

[T]here was not a strong sense among students that they were safe from physical harm at the institution, with only 61% agreeing with the statement. Perceptions that physical injury through violent crime was a problem were held by 17% of students, while only just over a third (38%) agreed that female students were safe from sexual harassment at the institution' (HEAIDS 2010: xiii).

Regarding the psychological wellbeing of South African university students, Young and Campbell (2014) find high levels of anxiety regarding academic performance—particularly amongst students who are the first generation of their families to attend university. The latter are more vulnerable than usual to the ordinary pressures of university studies because they must cope with huge family expectations as well as financial pressures resulting from families who still live in an apartheid legacy of poverty. An additional vulnerability is that students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds are often educationally under-prepared (Coetzee, Elliker & Rau 2013). Transformation of and in higher education is a key goal in South Africa (Thaver & Thaver 2010), but to what extent do students still perceive racism as being part of everyday university culture? These are some of the social and cultural factors related to risk that motivated our study.

The social actors in this article are students from three South African universities—one institution in a small city, one in a medium sized city, and one in a large city. We ask students about their perceptions of risk as anticipated and experienced in their everyday life. Rather than focusing on macro-level natural, structural and technological risks, we examine risk at the individual level where students need to anticipate and manage risk in relation to everyday human choices such as sexual behaviour, alcohol use and freedom of association. Literature and earlier research findings point to a further two issues that we also investigate: financial challenges and pressure to perform academically.

Another factor of interest to us is students' anticipation of the untoward outcomes of violence, which is a pervasive social force in South Africa. Gaskell *et al.* (2004) stress that, while risk involves loss and benefit, the vast majority of research focuses on loss. From the discussion of literature so far it is clear that there are many different ways of understanding and defining risk—our emphasis is also more focused on the loss rather than benefit of risk. For this research we broadly defined risk as uncertainty manifested in the perceptions, judgements and actions of students in response to situations involving exposure to danger and the possibility of negative consequences. Our research question is: To what degree do South African students from three different universities regard as being part of their lifeworlds risks associated with heavy drinking, sexual behaviours, racism, financial pressure and academic performance?

## 2. Methodological account

### 2.1 The prelude to the survey

This project originated in qualitative research conducted over two years (2008-2009) among students at Rhodes University, in Grahamstown, South Africa. The aim of this first stage of the research was to deepen understandings of how students experience and negotiate risk (Rau, Coetzee & Vice 2010: 82). Data were gathered by students, from students, in twenty focus group discussions that explored seven themes: (1) Exposure to crime and violence; (2) Potential conflicts related to racism; (3) Financial constraints and uncertainties; (4) Emotional stress and pressures; (5) Environmental factors; (6) Exposure to health risks including HIV-infection; and (7) Dangers of substance use. In a series of discussions on research design student researchers *themselves* identified these themes as being pertinent to risk perceptions and experiences in the wider student community. These seven themes formed the basis for formulating items on the questionnaire used in the study which is the focus of this article.

In 2010, following the analysis of the twenty focus group transcriptions, a second—quantitative—phase of the research began. Sociology II students undertaking a course in research methodology at Rhodes University were guided in constructing a questionnaire that drew on findings from the rich data collected in the 2008-2009 focus groups. The questionnaire went through different phases of refinement regarding item choice and wording (validity) and formatting (layout and construction), before the students administered it on campus. This initial survey became a pilot study for the wider survey on which this article is based.

Given the scope and intensity of the initial research, the principal researchers decided to extend the research to the campuses of the University of Johannesburg and

the University of the Free State. In this way a comparative analysis was possible. The project is not funded by any grant but the respective Departments of Sociology at the 3 universities carried the cost of printing, stationary and limited research assistance on their respective campuses.

## 2.2 The final survey instrument administered at three universities

Conscious of the fact that the format of a questionnaire would affect the response rate and response quality in student populations, we decided to restrict the number of items measuring student perceptions of risk in the final instrument to ten. Based on results of the 2010 pilot, ten questionnaire items—which best represented the spread of themes as well as the strength of statistical correlations—were identified and their wording refined.

The three South African universities that participated in this survey were specifically selected because they represent different kinds of institutions: Rhodes University (RU) in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape is a small residential university in a small city; the University of the Free State (UFS) in the Free State in Bloemfontein is a big residential university in a medium-sized city; and the University of Johannesburg (UJ) in Gauteng is a big residential university in a big city. A small number of independent variables were included in the final survey: University (UJ or UFS or RU); sex; study direction; place of origin (rural or small town or city); worldview (self-classification of political stance as being left or centre or right); and class (self-classification into upper or middle or lower class—with respondents explaining their choice). Three of these independent variables (study direction, place of origin and class) did not yield significant and although we present a table showing basic descriptive statistics for them, they are not expanded on in the analysis.

The theme of environmental risk was dropped because in the pilot responses it displayed limited variability. The pilot found the following two themes to be of particular importance: perceived exposure to health risks, notably sexual health risks; and perceived dangers posed by substance use, notably the excessive consumption of alcohol. Thus in the newest survey instrument we decided to allocate more than one item to these issues (two items on health and three on alcohol abuse).

Researchers have long been in agreement that response effects in surveys increase as questions become more personal, controversial, sensitive, or threatening (cf. Blair *et al.* 1977: 316-321). For this reason the ten questionnaire items measuring perceptions of risk do not attempt to measure 'how much' or 'how many'. They also do not ask respondents to report directly on their own behaviours and activities, particularly regarding drinking and sexuality.

## 2.3 Sampling

Although sampling was not designed to yield a classic probability sample, where each member of the sampling frame has a known probability of being selected, the stratified sampling as described in the data collection section below ensured that broadly representative groups of students on each participating campus were included. In total 1732 questionnaires were administered: 515 at UJ, 662 at UFS, and 555 at RU. There were more female respondents ( $n = 1052, 60.8\%$ ) than male respondents ( $n = 677, 39.2\%$ ): these proportions are slightly more than the norm on South African campuses, where more females are registered. The distribution in terms of study direction is: Humanities and Education ( $n = 739, 42.7\%$ ); Commerce, Business, and Law ( $n = 578, 33.4\%$ ); and Science—including Health, Pharmacy, and Agriculture ( $n = 414, 23.9\%$ ); these numbers roughly coincide with student numbers in these faculties.

## 2.4 Ethics

There were several ethical provisos for recruiting respondents: (1) Student fieldworkers should inform potential participants about the aims and processes of the research using a standardised cover letter. (2) Participation should be voluntary. (3) On the last page of the questionnaire respondents were required to provide their student number. Student fieldworkers explained to potential respondents that this identifier was only needed for quality control of the data (spot checks to verify the existence of the student and to verify the legitimacy of the distribution process). Fieldworkers assured potential respondents that their information would be kept confidential and that at no stage would student numbers be used to link respondents personally to the information they provided.

## 2.5 Data collection

Data collection for this third stage of research on students' perception of risk occurred at all three universities during the second half of 2011. In the cases of UJ and UFS, 3rd-year Sociology students conducted the fieldwork, while at RU 2nd-year Sociology and Industrial Sociology students collected data. Each student had to administer three questionnaires. Representativity of different sexes and study directions were sought via several procedural provisos for recruiting participants: (1) No Sociology students should fill in a questionnaire. (2) One questionnaire had to be completed by a student from each of three faculty groupings: Humanities and Education; Commerce, Business, and Law; and Science (including Health, Pharmacy, and Agriculture). (3) Because there were slightly more female students registered for Sociology at all of the participating universities, each student had to administer at least one questionnaire to a student of

the same sex, while the remaining two questionnaires could be administered to students of any sex. (4) Questionnaires had to be distributed to students registered for their final year of undergraduate study (3rd- or 4th-year). (5) Each questionnaire was handed out with an envelope in which respondents sealed their completed questionnaires. Student fieldworkers had to write their own student number on the envelopes they collected (for spot checks of the distribution process).

## **2.6 Data analysis**

All statistical analyses were performed using the SPSS software programme version 20. In addition to analysing data to generate descriptive and inferential statistics, multivariate statistical techniques were employed. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were tested using Cronbach's Alpha, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test, and exploratory factor analysis was used to identify underlying constructs/dimensions. Chi-square tests of independence were used to test for significant effects of selected independent variables on the responses to the 10 items. Analyses of variance (ANOVA) and independent *t*-tests were conducted to identify any significant effects of selected independent variables on the identified dimensions.

## **2.7 Validity, reliability and other measures of quality**

Although the questionnaire comprises only ten items, statistical tests were used to confirm that it measures what it was designed to measure and it addresses the purpose and central research question: To what degree do South African students from three different universities regard as being part of their lifeworlds, risks associated with heavy drinking, sexual behaviours, racism, financial pressure and academic performance? Moreover, the succinct page layout resulted in an instrument that was brief and manageable for respondents. Construct validity was obtained by successive iterations of the research: by first identifying various domains of students' risk experience and perceptions, then identifying priority areas of risk experience and perceptions from focus group discussions, and finally, synthesising the findings into key questions for the final questionnaire.

Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the degree to which the items on each scale are measuring the same underlying dimension—in other words, to examine internal consistency—based on the average of inter-item correlation. The internal consistency of our questionnaire was measured using all the items. The mean and variance of each of the items were calculated as well as the covariances between all of the possible pairs of items (Knapp & Mueller 2010: 339). Inter-item correlation between the 10 items in each and every fully completed questionnaire was examined: a total of 1694 valid

cases were included. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 is normally regarded as a good indication of reliability. In our questionnaire the value is 0.60. Given that our instrument comprises only 10 items, this value can be regarded as a sufficient indication of reliability, reflecting a high level of relationship between the individual items.

When subjecting the data to exploratory factor analysis a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measurement of 0.68 of sampling adequacy is attained, indicating that the 10 items in the questionnaire can be grouped into constructs or dimensions. The Bartlett's Test compared the correlation matrix of all 10 items to an identity matrix (where there is no correlation) and shows clearly a significant correlation among the 10 items (Chi-square = 2155.3,  $df = 45$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) thus also confirming that the items can be grouped into constructs/dimensions.

### 3. Results and discussion

In presenting the findings on students' perceptions of risk attention will fall on the following:

- Results of analyses of categorical data using Chi-square tests
- Results of exploratory factor analysis and identified dimensions
- Results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent  $t$ -tests indicating any significant effects of selected independent variables on the identified dimensions

#### 3.1 Descriptive and inferential analyses

Table 1 below summarises the results of the cross tabulation of categorical data from all the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics for each of the 10 questionnaire items are categorised according to the university (UJ, UFS, RU), sex (F/M), and the respondents' worldview (self- classification of political stance as left or centre or right). The three remaining independent variables (study direction; place of origin; and self-classification into upper or middle or lower class) delivered insignificant relationships.

That class was not a significant variable in students' perceptions of risk concurs with Furlong and Cartmel's (2007: 2-3) insight that social structures such as class '... tend to become increasingly obscure as collectivist traditions weaken and individualist values intensify.' As result people see the social world as permeated by risks that they must negotiate as individuals (*ibid.*). Thorsen and Lie (2006) agree that for people living in a time of neoliberal ethos, risks are increasingly seen as having to be managed at the individual level. In conclusion we draw on Threadgold and Nilan's (2009: 2-3) observation that '...the reflexive individual negotiation of risk has replaced traditional "class consciousness"'.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of item response percentages by selected independent variables**

Statement		University				Sex				Worldview			
		UJ		UFS RU		F		M		Left		Centre Right	
		Percentage	n	Percentage	n	Percentage	n	Percentage	n	Percentage	n		
1 To be a victim of a violent attack is a real risk in my life	Agree	70.2	71.0	55.5	1136	68.2	62.1	1134	62.1	67.1	69.1	1117	
	Uncertain	15.6	13.1	19.0	271	16.0	15.2	270	17.1	16.2	13.0	264	
	Disagree	14.2	15.9	25.5	319	15.9	22.6	319	20.8	16.6	17.9	308	
	Pearson Chi-Square Significance	42.04 (4df) <0.001				12.62 (2df) 0.002				7.70 (4df) 0.103			
2 Heavy drinking is part of everyday university culture	Agree	37.7	35.0	75.5	844	49.6	47.4	842	53.0	46.8	47.2	827	
	Uncertain	28.0	24.8	9.2	359	20.4	21.4	359	19.2	20.3	23.4	352	
	Disagree	34.2	40.2	15.3	527	30.0	31.2	526	27.8	32.9	29.4	515	
	Pearson Chi-Square Significance	237.54 (4df) <0.001				0.81 (2df) 0.668				7.62 (4df) 0.106			
3 Racism is part of the everyday university culture	Agree	29.3	54.1	24.7	643	37.7	36.4	641	34.4	36.4	41.9	629	
	Uncertain	34.4	25.8	28.1	502	27.6	31.5	502	27.8	30.8	28.7	495	
	Disagree	36.3	20.1	47.2	581	34.7	32.1	580	37.9	32.8	29.4	565	
	Pearson Chi-Square Significance	156.97 (4df) <0.001				3.15 (2df) 0.207				10.21 (4df) 0.037			
4 Contracting a sexually transmitted infection is a real risk for me	Agree	50.1	49.8	35.1	780	43.0	48.5	778	41.9	44.3	51.4	769	
	Uncertain	7.2	11.4	11.4	175	8.9	12.0	174	9.5	10.3	10.5	171	
	Disagree	42.7	38.8	53.5	772	48.2	39.5	772	48.6	45.4	38.1	752	
	Pearson Chi-Square Significance	39.71 (4df) <0.001				13.86 (2df) 0.001				11.79 (4df) 0.019			
5 Heavy drinking adds to my risks in everyday life	Agree	50.0	51.0	45.7	846	47.4	51.3	843	46.7	48.3	53.8	833	
	Uncertain	9.2	10.0	13.7	189	9.8	12.7	189	10.5	12.9	8.0	184	
	Disagree	40.8	39.0	40.6	692	42.8	36.0	692	42.8	38.8	38.2	674	
	Pearson Chi-Square Significance	8.09 (4df) 0.088				9.20 (2df) 0.010				10.59 (4df) 0.032			
6 Heavy drinking is more risky for female students than for male students	Agree	58.4	62.1	69.3	1096	61.6	65.9	1093	62.0	64.7	62.1	1070	
	Uncertain	9.9	12.1	10.6	190	10.8	11.4	190	10.9	10.3	12.9	189	
	Disagree	31.7	25.8	20.0	445	27.7	22.7	445	27.1	25.1	25.0	435	
	Pearson Chi-Square Significance	20.58 (4df) <0.001				5.26 (2df) 0.072				2.90 (4df) 0.572			
7 Being young justifies having multiple sexual partners	Agree	5.8	7.4	8.8	128	3.6	13.3	128	8.6	8.2	4.9	126	
	Uncertain	6.2	5.8	7.0	109	3.4	10.7	108	7.8	5.3	5.6	104	
	Disagree	88.0	86.8	84.1	1492	93.0	76.0	1490	83.7	86.4	89.5	1462	
	Pearson Chi-Square Significance	4.57 (4df) 0.334				100.03 (2df) <0.001				9.50 (4df) 0.050			
8 To fall victim to an act of crime is a real risk in my life	Agree	69.5	64.6	61.7	1122	66.0	63.8	1120	63.9	65.5	67.1	1104	
	Uncertain	13.2	16.0	17.5	270	15.4	16.0	269	16.2	16.1	14.5	265	
	Disagree	17.3	19.4	20.8	331	18.6	20.2	331	19.9	18.4	18.3	318	
	Pearson Chi-Square Significance	7.34 (4df) 0.118				0.90 (2df) 0.637				1.32 (4df) 0.859			
9 My financial situation puts me under stress	Agree	50.2	55.1	38.8	837	47.2	50.1	834	49.4	48.9	46.5	819	
	Uncertain	10.9	11.6	13.4	207	10.8	13.9	207	12.0	12.4	12.0	206	
	Disagree	38.9	33.2	47.8	684	42.0	35.9	684	38.6	38.7	41.4	666	
	Pearson Chi-Square Significance	34.90 (4df) <0.001				7.96 (2df) 0.019				1.16 (4df) 0.884			
10 I am under pressure to make a success of my studies	Agree	79.2	79.5	86.7	1414	84.6	77.1	1411	83.7	81.9	78.8	1383	
	Uncertain	4.3	5.0	5.8	87	4.5	5.9	87	5.2	4.9	4.9	85	
	Disagree	16.5	15.6	7.6	230	10.9	17.0	230	11.0	13.2	16.3	226	
	Pearson Chi-Square Significance	23.98 (4df) <0.001				15.81 (2df) <0.001				5.70 (4df) 0.223			



### 3.1.1 Associations with ‘University’ UJ (University of Johannesburg); UFS (University of the Free State); RU (Rhodes University):

No fewer than 7 out of 10 questionnaire items, when crosstabulated with the categorical variable ‘university’ yield high Pearson Chi-square values and levels of significance of  $p < 0.001$  indicating very strong associations with the variables: 1 (To be a victim of a violent attack is a real risk in my life); 2 (Heavy drinking is part of everyday university culture); 3 (Racism is part of the everyday university culture); 4 (Contracting a sexually transmitted infection is a real risk for me); 6 (Heavy drinking is more risky for female students than for male students); 9 (My financial situation puts me under stress); and 10 (I am under pressure to make a success of my studies). Of these significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) associations:

- The highest Chi-square value is found in the association between the three universities and item 2, ‘Heavy drinking is part of everyday university culture’. Three out of four RU students (75.5%) agree with this statement. Life as a RU student in a small university ‘town’ revolves around activities in and around campus; at RU drinking is a popular form of recreation (Rau, Coetzee & Vice 2010). This is not to say that students from UFS and UJ drink less—as pointed out earlier, research finds very high drinking levels in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa (Woolf-King & Maisto 2009) as well as among South African university students (HEAIDS 2010; Pengpid et al. 2013). It is just that at UJ and UFS drinking is not perceived by students as part of everyday university culture—we surmise that because these students live in larger cities they have many more spaces in which to do their drinking, more off-campus friends, as well as more recreational options than at RU.
- The second highest Chi-square value relates to item 3, ‘Racism is part of the everyday university culture’, with almost half of RU students disagreeing with this statement. Processes of transformation have been more difficult and fraught with reversals on traditionally more conservative campuses (Thaver & Thaver 2010). Traditionally RU is an English-medium liberal university with a strong history of anti-apartheid activism—clearly many current students continue a culture of tolerance: 47.2 % disagree that racism is a part of university culture. UFS and UJ both share a history of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction, and before the transformation of higher education gained momentum, were more aligned with the pre-democratic conservative government norms. UJ was the first of the two campuses to shift its ethos when the university changed its name from RAU (Rand Afrikaans University) to its present University of Johannesburg after which the intake of English speaking students began to rise. The degree to which UJ students disagreed that racism is a part of everyday culture (36.3%) indicates

that transformation processes have taken hold. Transformation on the UFS campus has been the slowest to begin, and although great strides are being made, change has been challenging, no doubt this is why so many students from the campus (54.1% ) agree that racism is a part of everyday culture at the university.

- Significantly more students at universities in the big city (UJ=70.2%) and medium-sized city (UFS=71.0%) report that 'To be a victim of a violent attack is a real risk in my life' compared to students in the small city (RU=55.5%). Notwithstanding differences between universities, fear of being victim of a violent attack is unacceptably high in all three cases, pointing to students' awareness of the high rates of violence in South Africa. As pointed out in the introductory section, almost a third of South African students do not feel safe from physical harm *on their own campuses* (HEAIDS 2010: xiii).

More students in the big city (UJ=50.1%) and medium-sized city (UFS=49.8%) are of the opinion that 'Contracting a sexually transmitted infection is a real risk for me' compared to students at the small town university (RU=35.1%). It seems that students estimate their risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI) higher than the number of self-reported STIs among students found in a national HIV sero-prevalence survey of all higher education institutions in South Africa: a total of 20% [CI: 8,8%–39,5%] of men and 6,5% [CI:2,8%–14,2%] of women reported STI symptoms in the year preceding the survey (HEAIDS 2010: xiv). Although the survey points out the wide disparity in HIV prevalence across different university sites, the overall HIV prevalence among South African university students was 3.4% [CI: 2,7%— 4.4%] (HEAIDS 2010: xi). Regarding risk factors for contracting an STI, the HEAIDS report (*ibid.*: xv) notes that male and female students report that they had 'casual sex with no condoms in the context of alcohol intake when first coming to varsity'. It is interesting that risk at population level of all students is *in fact* lower than *perceptions* of risk found in our study; we wonder if this is not a manifestation of the systematic uncertainty of late modernity postulated by Giddens (1999, 1990). As Zinn (2006) observes, risk is both constructed and real. Perhaps students' overestimation of the risks of contracting an STI is an indication of how much they construct this risk as unavoidable and in need of management (Furlong & Cartmel 2007).

Students in the big city (UJ=50.2%) and medium-sized city (UFS=55.1%) agree more with the statement, 'My financial situation puts me under stress' than do their counterparts in the small city (RU=38.8%). RU draws most of its students from outside Grahamstown where it is situated: families who send their children to Rhodes tend towards being quite affluent. Having said that, 38.8% is still high; it may be linked to concerted efforts at RU to increase the intake of students from historically disadvantaged homes, where families are not always able to provide really solid financial support as Young and Campbell (2014) note.

- The majority of students feel 'I am under pressure to make a success of my studies' (UJ=79.2%; UFS=79.5%), although significantly more students from the small city university agree with this statement (RU=86.7%). In South Africa RU is regarded as one of the top five universities in terms of academic standards as well as levels of student achievement—students are indeed under pressure to succeed in their studies.
- More students from RU (69.3%) than from UJ (58.4%) and UFS (62.1%) are of the opinion that 'Heavy drinking is more risky for female students than for male students'. A high proportion of students on all three campuses agree with this statement. But there is a significantly higher awareness among RU students, therefore more should be done on UJ and UFS campuses to raise students' awareness that levels of vigilance, safety, and risk perception diminish when under the influence of alcohol, that females are at higher risk of gender-based violence, and that it is vital to understand that these vectors combine to make heavy drinking more risky for female students than for males (Gordon & Collins 2013; Pengpid *et al.* 2013; Woolf-King & Maisto 2009).

### 3.1.2 Associations with sex (M/F):

The views of female and male students differ significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) with regards to four of the ten questionnaire items.

- The highest level of significance is found in the correlation with item 7, 'Being young justifies having multiple sex partners'. More than 9/10 female students (93%) disagree with this statement, compared to 76% of male students. It is encouraging to see that males as well as females disagree with this statement because having multiple sexual partners is one of the key vectors for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and in the context of low condom use is considered to be a key driver of HIV (Rau, Coetzee & Vice 2010). That more females than men disagree with the statement makes sense given that women are more vulnerable socially and biologically to sexually transmitted infections, particularly HIV (Gordon & Collins 2013; Rau, Coetzee & Vice 2010). This is no doubt one of the reasons why qualitative research finds that women tend to be more conservative regarding sexual behaviours than men (HEAIDS 2010).
- More male students (48.5%) than females (43.0%) agree with item 4, 'Contracting a sexually transmitted infection is a real risk for me'. This makes sense in the light of the HEAIDS (2010: xi) national study of university students, which found that '[m]en tended to report more sexual partners in the past month (19%) than women did (6%).'

Items 7 and 4 are the only two on the questionnaire that ask about sexual perceptions, and in both cases female students differ significantly from male students. Both items indicate that males are more likely to have perceptions that put them at higher risk of sexually transmitted infections.

- More female students (84.6%) agree with the statement 'I am under pressure to make a success of my studies' than do their male counterparts (77.1%).
- Men and women also differ significantly regarding the statement, 'To be a victim of a violent attack is a real risk in my life', with more female students agreeing (68.2%) than male students (62.1%). In South Africa, violence against women (and children) is extreme (UNICEF 2012:11). Our results show that female students are well aware of this fact, but that too many male students are not correctly informed of the gendered nature of violence in South Africa.

### **3.1.3 Associations with worldview (Self-classification of political stance being left or centre or right):**

The association is significant ( $p = 0.019$ ) between worldview and 'Contracting a sexually transmitted infection is a real risk for me': of respondents who declare a right-oriented worldview (conservative) 51.4% agree with the statement, of those who declare a centre-oriented worldview 44.3% agree with the statement, and 41.9% of respondents who declare a left-oriented (liberal) worldview agree with the statement. It is difficult to interpret this result, except to note that across all universities, and whether male or female, students who proclaim themselves to be politically conservative perceive themselves to be at higher risk of suffering a negative outcome of sexual activity. We wonder if politically conservative students also tend to hold sexually conservative views and if this is accompanied by more fear surrounding sexual activity.

As will be seen in the section on multivariate analysis (sub-section 3.2 below), the most significant underlying construct/dimension is the existential experience of risk.

## **3.2 Multivariate analysis**

### **3.2.1 Factor analysis**

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to establish to what extent the questionnaire reveals the presence of dimensions or constructs that are latent—i.e. not explicitly formulated in the questionnaire—and to what extent these constructs can be reliably identified. The identified constructs are theoretically defensible factors or dimensions that are not directly observable (Bandalos & Finney 2010: 93) but which link together those questionnaire items that share an implicit, broader idea or theme. Factor analysis models the covariation among observed variables (the 10 questionnaire items) as a function of these latent constructs (*ibid.*). And the latent constructs identified by the exploratory factor analysis indicate the existence of discriminant validity of the questionnaire—in other words the ability of the questionnaire to model the covariance of a number of items into one dimension. Thus the factor analysis indicates instances of shared variance found in the questionnaire.

## Applying factor analysis to the entire number of observed cases (all 3 universities)

When applying factor analysis to the entire number of observations (1694 complete questionnaires) four components (constructs/dimensions) with eigenvalues greater than 1 were isolated. Construct 1 accounted for 24.4% of the variation; Construct 2 accounted for 13.8% of the variation; Construct 3 accounted for 11.6% of the variation and Construct 4 accounted for 10.0% of the variation. Thus 59.8% of the total variance in the entire number of observed cases (the total number of respondents from all 3 universities) can be explained by the four components/constructs/dimensions as identified in the varimax rotated component matrix regarding all 3 the universities (Table 2).

The four dimensions identified in relation to the 3 universities consist of the following items:

Construct 1: ***The existential experience of risk***. By existential experience we mean the hard reality experienced by individuals *in their lives*. This construct is made up of 4 questionnaire items:

- To be a victim of a violent attack is a real risk in my life
- Contracting a sexually transmitted infection is a real risk for me
- Heavy drinking adds to my risks in everyday life
- To fall victim to an act of crime is a real risk in my life

Construct 2: ***Stress and pressure resulting from exposure to financial and emotional risk*** comprises 2 questionnaire items:

- My financial situation puts me under stress
- I am under pressure to make a success of my studies

Construct 3: ***Risks attached to the everyday university culture*** consists of 3 questionnaire items:

- Heavy drinking is part of the everyday University culture
- Racism is part of the everyday University culture
- Heavy drinking is more risky for female students than for male students

Construct 4: ***Promiscuity*** consists of a single item in the questionnaire:

- Being young justifies having multiple sexual partners

**Table 2: Rotated component matrix with regard to all observed cases (Varimax rotation is used)**

Items	Constructs			
	1	2	3	4
To be a victim of a violent attack is a real risk in my life	.686	.177	.079	-.340
Contracting a sexually transmitted infection is a real risk for me	.810	-.009	-.009	.171
Heavy drinking adds to my risks in everyday life	.746	-.058	.036	.200
To fall victim to an act of crime is a real risk in my life	.696	.244	.036	-.203
My financial situation puts me under stress	.223	.757	.008	.155
I am under pressure to make a success of my studies	-.035	.813	.100	-.089
Heavy drinking is part of the everyday University culture	-.075	.056	.726	.051
Racism is part of the everyday University culture	.151	.103	.649	-.126
Heavy drinking is more risky for female students than for male students	.020	-.029	.553	.157
Being young justifies having multiple sexual partners	.026	.065	.111	.890

The most important single dimension/construct among the 10 items is *the existential experience of risk* (made up of four items: To be a victim of a violent attack is a real risk in my life; Contracting a sexually transmitted infection is a real risk for me; Heavy drinking adds to my risks in everyday life; To fall victim to an act of crime is a real risk in my life). The four items constituting this construct are all specifically related to the notion of being 'a real risk in my life'. This construct explains 24.4% of the total variance in the data. It is interesting to note that the four items which make up this construct is a mix of, on the one hand, risk students have little control over (e.g. being the victims of violence and crime) and, on the other hand, risky behaviour students presumably do have more control over (contracting an STI, and heavy drinking adding to everyday risks). Nonetheless the factor analysis clearly shows that one underlying construct orders these into a single factor. The strong presence of *the existential experience of risk* as a construct might be related to the acceptance that 'ungovernable social forces' (Furlong & Cartmel 2007: 2-3) generate risk, but that the risk needs to be managed by the individual himself or herself. Hayenhjelm (2006) speaks of the blurring of borders between voluntary and involuntary risk being influenced by context and social norms; and although he speaks of it in relation to risk taking by vulnerable people out of hope and lack of alternative options, the idea is also relevant to the integration of the two apparently different origins of risk—exogenous and endogenous—that we find in the construct of *the existential experience of risk*. Thus while the existential dimension of risk suggests that risk is managed first of all at the individual level, it also involves the negotiation of students' roles, peer pressure and social control. These apparently conflicting issues are reconciled in the individualization process as theorised by Beck (1992 [1986]). We also note that all the items that combine in this factor endanger the individual's life and result in negative, and arguably severe, consequences that are generally feared.

The second most important dimension/construct among the 10 items is *stress and pressure resulting from exposure to financial and emotional risk* (made up of 2 items: My financial situation puts me under stress; I am under pressure to make a success of my studies). This construct explains 13.8% of the total variance in the data. As noted before, Young and Campbell's (2014) research on the psychological wellbeing of university students found high anxiety about academic performance. This was exacerbated by financial worries, when students struggle to make ends meet, particularly those from poor households.

The third most important dimension among the 10 items is *risks attached to the everyday university culture*. It is made up of 3 items: Heavy drinking is part of the everyday university culture; Racism is part of the everyday university culture; Heavy drinking is more risky for female students than for male students. This construct explains 11.6% of the variance. These items all speak of voluntary risk, where the risks are closely woven with issues of constraints, choice and control (Douglas & Wildavsky 1983).

The fourth most important dimension among the 10 items is *promiscuity* (being young justifies having multiple sexual partners). This single item explains 10.0% of the variance. Here risk is linked closely with morality: exercising choice, when that choice is an agreement with the statement, may best be thought of an expression of the political ethos of neoliberalism (Leve *et al.* 2011; Seear 2009; Adam 2005) where individual choice is enshrined. This construct also emphasises the fact that there is recognition that risk should be anticipated and managed. Because of their greater susceptibility to negative consequences of having multiple sexual partners—including contraction of STIs and emotional difficulties attending partner infidelity—female students are more inclined to reject the notion that being young justifies having multiple sexual partners.

The cumulative proportion of the total variance explained by the 4 most important dimensions/constructs is 59.8%; so almost 60% of the shared variance in the data from all three universities can be ascribed to these 4 underlying constructs.

### 3.2.2 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent *t*-tests

In order to determine whether the independent variables in this research (universities; sex; worldviews—as shown earlier in Table 1) significantly affect the variation in the four identified constructs, an analysis of variance or independent *t*-test was applied. In this way it could be established if a non-random relationship exists between the independent variables and the four constructs identified by the factor analysis (Klockars 2010: 1).

## The three universities

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results reported in Table 3 point to a significant effect between the three universities for all four underlying constructs. Tukey multiple comparisons tests indicate that the significant differences between the universities are mainly to be found between UJ and RU, and between UFS and RU (Table 3).

**Table 3: Mean ( $\pm$  sd) dimension scores for independent variables (university; sex; worldviews) and analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent t-tests results**

Dimensions	University			Sex		Worldview			
		mean $\pm$ sd	<i>F</i> ( <i>df</i> ) <i>p</i>		mean $\pm$ sd	<i>t</i> ( <i>df</i> ) <i>p</i>		x $\pm$ sd	<i>F</i> ( <i>df</i> ) <i>p</i>
1	UJ	2.51 $\pm$ 1.03 <sup>a†</sup>	15.3 (2,1706)<0.001	F	2.62 $\pm$ 1.02	0.88 (1704) 0.377	Left	2.68 $\pm$ 0.97 <sup>a</sup>	3.37 (2,1672) 0.035
	UFS	2.51 $\pm$ 0.99 <sup>a</sup>		M	2.57 $\pm$ 0.97		Centre	2.59 $\pm$ 0.98 <sup>a</sup>	
	RU	2.80 $\pm$ 0.95 <sup>b</sup>					Right	2.51 $\pm$ 1.04 <sup>b</sup>	
2	UJ	2.38 $\pm$ 1.04 <sup>ab</sup>	3.8 (2,1724)0.023	F	2.34 $\pm$ 0.95	0.87 (1722) 0.377	Left	2.31 $\pm$ 0.94	1.79 (2,1687) 0.166
	UFS	2.29 $\pm$ 1.00 <sup>a</sup>		M	2.38 $\pm$ 1.00		Centre	2.36 $\pm$ 0.95	
	RU	2.44 $\pm$ 0.87 <sup>b</sup>					Right	2.43 $\pm$ 1.03	
3	UJ	2.87 $\pm$ 0.84 <sup>a</sup>	20.9 (2,1720)<0.001	F	2.70 $\pm$ 0.79	0.55 (1718) 0.377	Left	2.71 $\pm$ 0.83	0.90 (2,1684) 0.407
	UFS	2.65 $\pm$ 0.80 <sup>b</sup>		M	2.67 $\pm$ 0.81		Centre	2.70 $\pm$ 0.79	
	RU	2.57 $\pm$ 0.73 <sup>c</sup>					Right	2.64 $\pm$ 0.78	
4	UJ	4.51 $\pm$ 0.95 <sup>a</sup>	7.9 (2,1726)<0.001	F	4.64 $\pm$ 0.75	12.86 (1724)<0.001	Left	4.33 $\pm$ 1.02	2.47 (2,1689) 0.085
	UFS	4.43 $\pm$ 0.98 <sup>a</sup>		M	4.04 $\pm$ 1.17		Centre	4.41 $\pm$ 1.02	
	RU	4.28 $\pm$ 1.00 <sup>b</sup>					Right	4.47 $\pm$ 0.87	

**\*Different superscript letters indicate significant differences within the dimension (Tukey:  $p < 0.01$ )**

Construct 1: There is no significant difference in *the existential experience of risk* between UJ and UFS. But there are significant differences between RU and the other two universities: student respondents at RU show significantly less existential experience of risk.

Construct 2: There is no significant difference between UJ and UFS in relation to *stress and pressure resulting from exposure to financial and emotional risk*. There is also no significant difference between UJ and RU. But UFS and RU are significantly different: more UFS student respondents say their financial situation puts them under risk than do RU students. And RU students are significantly more under pressure for doing well academically than students from the UFS.

Construct 3: RU is significantly different to UJ and UFS regarding *risks attached to the everyday university culture*, with RU student respondents relating significantly



more to the construct: in RU university culture they perceive more heavy drinking, this heavy drinking is thought of as being more risky for female students (probably because in a context of heavy drinking it is more likely that the effects of heavy drinking on female students is actually witnessed) and RU students perceive less racism in everyday university culture.

Construct 4: There is no significant difference between UFS and UJ in relation to *promiscuity*. However, compared to UJ and UFS, student respondents at RU relate significantly less strongly to the notion that being young justifies having multiple sexual partners.

## Sex of students and political worldviews

In as far as the other two independent variables in Table 3 are concerned (namely the sex of students and their political worldview), in only two dimensions are significant differences found between sex of students and their worldviews. This confirms the views expressed in the literature that risks in modern society are seldom neatly associated with social classes, sex, or political groupings, rather these combine in complex ways so that students' social world is unpredictable and filled with uncertainties.

There is a significant sex effect on responses to the dimension *promiscuity* (being young justifies having multiple sexual partners); female students disagreeing more strongly than male students (Table 3). This was discussed earlier.

There is a significant political worldview effect on the responses to the dimension *existential experience of risk*; students who declare a right-oriented worldview (conservative) agree more strongly than those with centre- or left-oriented (liberal) political worldviews (Table 3). We speculate that students who are more conservative are more prone to perceiving their world as dangerous, so that they relate more strongly to *the existential experience of risk*.

## 4. Conclusions

Not unlike other societies in late modernity where risk is seen as an ever-present reality that transcends social and geographical boundaries (Beck 1992 [1986]; Giddens, 1990), post-apartheid South Africa is a society fraught with risk (Nuttall and McGregor 2007). This resonated in the perceptions of a group of young adults who participated in our study among students at three universities in South Africa. In measuring the perceptions of these students it was evident that they were acutely aware of risk as part of their everyday lives.

For the purposes of our study we operationalised *risk* as uncertainty manifested in the perceptions, judgements and actions of students in response to situations involving

exposure to danger and the possibility of negative consequences. An instrument, which was specially designed for the research, proved robust and performed very well. This achievement points to the value of using a mixed methods approach in construct development (Flick 2014). It also underscores the value of developing an instrument in iterative phases. Our instrument was shaped over a period of two years: it began with qualitative focus group discussions out of which different themes emerged (Rau, Coetzee & Vice 2010), two quantitative iterations followed—a comprehensive pilot study that allowed us to weed out less relevant as well as insignificant items, which led into the formulation of the final instrument on which this article is based.

Students' subjective risk assessments highlight the complex and multi-dimensional nature of risk in their lives. Some of these risks were of their own doing and can be viewed as forms of active and conscious risk taking. Voluntary risk is often associated with a cultural dimension of risk where social pressure to conform to norms in a peer group settings lead some individuals – particularly young people – take risks (see Mudhovozi et al. 2012; Rau et al. 2010; Wall and Olofsson 2008). Although risky behaviour such as heavy drinking was considered by many of the students (particularly on the RU campus) as part of university culture, the fact that they defined binge drinking and practicing in unsafe sex as putting themselves at risk show that they recognise the consequences of such behaviour. Not dismissing the role of social pressure, we argue nonetheless that voluntary risk testifies to active agency on the part of the individual. This speaks to Thorsen and Lie's (2006) remarks that a neoliberal ethos is associated with the view that individuals are accountable for the consequences of their choices.

Whereas some risks can be anticipated, managed and even avoided, other forms of risk seem beyond the individual's control. Many students in the study scored high on their assessment of what could be described as 'risk from vulnerability' (see Hayenhjelm 2006). For example, students across all three campuses defined themselves as being at risk of becoming victims of violent attacks. This was of particular concern to the female students, who clearly saw themselves as vulnerable because of their sex. Results show that more could be done to raise awareness among male university students of the gendered nature of sexual risk and gender-based violence in South Africa.

In the attempt to deepen our understanding of risk we applied multivariate analysis, which revealed that 59.8% of the total variance in the entire number of observed cases (the total number of respondents from all three universities) can be explained by four overarching constructs/dimensions of risk. The four constructs identified in exploratory factor analysis are: 1) *The existential experience of risk*—by which is meant the hard reality experienced by individuals in their lives; 2) *Stress and pressure resulting from exposure to financial and emotional risk*; 3) *Risks attached to the everyday university culture*; and 4) *Promiscuity*. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) results indicate a significant effect between the three universities for all four underlying constructs, with Rhodes University—the small institution in a small city—differing from the other universities on all four constructs.

The research found considerable evidence for Beck's (1992 [1986]) claim that in late modernity there is increasing individualisation in people's perception of risk. Also, the degrees to which specific risks resonate in student consciousness demonstrate that risk is—as Zinn (2006) claims—both constructed and real. It thus seems that student identity is all but a carefree state of mind. Instead, students—at least those in our study—consider risk (both of a voluntary and involuntary nature) as being part of their lifeworlds and a significant contributor to their experience of emotional stress. This is most evident in students' over-estimation of their risk of being infected with an STI, including HIV infection, which is far lower in reality (HEAIDS 2010) than students in this research anticipate.

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# Deprivation, HIV and AIDS in Northern Uganda

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## Abstract

*This study focuses on HIV infection within the context of poverty and deprivation. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods from a stratified random sample of 98 respondents, Key Informant Interviews and six Focus Group discussions, to investigate risk of HIV infection in Paimol Internally Displaced People's camp in Pader district, Uganda between 2008 and 2009. This district in Northern Uganda was characterised by war and insecurity physical aggression, deprivation, hunger and family separation, among others, for over twenty years. The Study shows that in spite of the relatively high levels of HIV/AIDS awareness, some people are at risk to HIV infection as a result of these. Significantly, with resettlement after the war, most people are still deprived of basic source of livelihood, which still continues as a factor in the spread of HIV infection.*

**Key Words:** *HIV & AIDS, Deprivation, Susceptibility, Vulnerability, Deaths, IDP camps, Northern Uganda, Paimol, Pader*

## Résumé

*Cette étude se concentre infection par le VIH est dans le contexte de la pauvreté et de la privation. L'étude a utilisé des méthodes quantitatives et qualitatives bothans partir d'un échantillon aléatoire stratifié de 98 répondants, Entrevues avec des informateurs clés et des groupes de discussions de six, pour évaluer le risque d'infection à VIH dans Paimol déplacées à l'intérieur du camp de personnes dans le district de Pader, en Ouganda entre 2008 et 2009, ce quartier dans le nord de l'Ouganda a été marquée par la guerre et l'insécurité agression physique, la privation, de la faim et de la séparation de la famille, entre autres, depuis plus de vingt ans. L'étude montre que, en dépit des niveaux relativement élevés de sensibilisation au VIH / SIDA, certaines personnes sont plus à risque d'infection par le VIH à la suite de ceux-ci. De manière significative, à la réinstallation après la guerre, la plupart des gens sont encore privés de la source de base des moyens de subsistance, qui continue encore comme un facteur dans la propagation de l'infection à VIH.*

**Mots-clés:** *VIH et le SIDA, la privation, la sensibilité, la vulnérabilité, Décès, camps de personnes déplacées, dans le nord de l'Ouganda*

## Introduction

There seems to be a consensus that HIV infection has stabilized since 2006 following a UNAIDS report of global infection of the virus (UNAIDS 2006). While this might probably be the case, Sub-Saharan Africa still accounts for almost 69% of HIV/AIDS despite having 10% of the world population. As for those dying from the AIDS disease and AIDS-related illnesses, there is also a reported decline. Death from the latter is said to have dropped by 32% between 2005 and 2011. This has been attributed to the scaling-up of antiretroviral therapy, the robust focus on saving lives and preventing new infections through various programmes and strategies (UNAIDS 2012:4). In Uganda, which is the focus of this paper, the reverse seems to be the case: there is an increase in HIV/AIDS. Figures from the Uganda AIDS Indicator Survey show a rise in prevalence of HIV from 6.4% in 2005 to 7.3% in 2011. This rise shows regional and gender differences: there is a rise in prevalence of HIV among women from 7.5% in 2005 to 8.3% in 2011 compared to the rise in prevalence among men. High HIV prevalence remains concentrated more in mid-northern and central Uganda compared to other regions. This rising trend was first reported in 2008 (Shefer et. al. 2008). What accounts for the reported reversal and increase in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Uganda? This is the key question in this paper. The paper focuses on one noted district in Northern Uganda to examine the rise in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. The paper is structured as follows: it starts with the general explanation for the spread of HIV followed by a brief discussion of HIV/AIDS in Northern Uganda. This is then followed by the examination of the rise in prevalence in this part of the country. A district chosen for this purpose and the rationale and method for the examination are provided before the discussion of the findings.

## Established reasons for the spread of HIV/AIDS

The literature provides many reasons for HIV infection and prevalence. Poverty, civil strife and family disintegration are among these reasons and in addition to these factors, there are attitudinal and perception factors that further fuel the increase in HIV infections among various age groups in different societies. These factors include having multiple-sexual partners especially in relation to the attitude to and type of partners (Ntozi 1995; RoU/UAC 2006; UAC 2006). This seems to have strong cultural base. Infidelity and inability to negotiate safe sex by most female partners also contribute to the rate of HIV infection. Several studies of poverty and HIV point to survival strategies which particularly make women and girls vulnerable to unsafe sex and hence have higher exposure to HIV infection than men and boys (UAC 2005). There is also peer pressure coupled with sexual curiosity among young people that make them engage in risky sexual behaviour without due regard for the consequences. These are further aggravated



by various types of sexual crimes of rape (including marital rape), defilement and child abuse, prostitution and/or survival sex (Swart-Kruger and Richter 1997).

A highly significant factor in the prevalence of HIV in most conservative societies in Africa is sexual regulation. According to Atekyereza (2011), sexual regulation among various cultures traces its origin from sex education. Traditionally, boys and girls received sex education from their parents and/or relatives. No pre-marital sexual relations were entertained. There was strict law in form of mores and their enforcement. Sexual crimes like incest, defilement or indecent assault were very abominable. Sex education derived its primacy from the rationale of sex in family life. The traditional safeguards against improper sex were many and were part and parcel of the socialisation process and each person knew the consequences of sexual deviation. Parents never entertained lone visits by girls and showed exemplary behaviour. Young boys and girls did not freely mix with each other. Today, however, the context and rules that define social and sexual interaction have changed. With more urbanisation, formal education, migration, globalisation (in all its forms) and permissiveness, sexual regulation has become very low. Regulating institutions are weakening due to prolonged absence or separation of family members from resident authorities. There is less and declining value for virginity that used to be the cornerstone for regulation of sexuality. Most young men and women are sexually active at a very young age and outside marriage. Sexual regulation and respect is not any much better in marital relations (Atekyereza and Kirumira 2004). This becomes even more serious a problem in conditions of insecurity or lawlessness and poverty or deprivation. It is against this background that the study was conducted seeking to probe further why and how people may be forced to choose between *deaths* and not between *life* and *death*, i.e. choosing *death* (by exposure to HIV infection) in order to live.

## **Vulnerability and HIV/AIDS in Northern Uganda**

To understand vulnerability in the context of HIV and AIDS, it is important to have a clear understanding of other related concepts of susceptibility, resistance and resilience. According to Loevinsohn & Gillespie (2003) and Gillespie (2006), susceptibility refers to the chances of an individual becoming infected by HIV. It has two components, first, the chance of being exposed to the virus, which in turn relates to the risky environment and specific situations of risk that the person confronts, and the riskiness of behaviours (both of which may be related), and, second, the chance of being infected with the virus once exposed. Resistance, on the other hand, is the ability of an individual to avoid infection by HIV, either by escaping exposure or, if exposed, by escaping infection. To avoid susceptibility to HIV infection, the individual must be knowledgeable and in position to resist the risks of exposure to HIV infection. Unlike susceptibility, vulnerability refers to the likelihood of significant impacts occurring at a certain level (e.g. individual, household, community level etc). These impacts are not one-time events, they are processes, often

hidden, slow-moving, but destructive. These processes are often triggered by events, such as the sale of assets, some of which are irreversible, leaving the household, if it survives, significantly impoverished (Savage *et. al.* 2008). These impoverishments affect capacity for resilience. Resilience refers to the active responses that enable people to avoid the worst impacts of AIDS at different levels or to recover much faster to a level accepted as normal. AIDS is just one of the many disasters with which the rural people of Africa are learning to live. However, the diverse ways in which AIDS can affect rural people, societies, livelihoods and economies are not always obvious, and less so are the sources of strength that would enable people to be resilient to those impacts.

The significance of the environment in disease transmission was first highlighted by Louis Pasteur who stated *the microbe is nothing, the terrain everything* (quoted by Stillwaggon, 2002). A number of factors combine to influence behaviour and shape risky environments and situations. These include asymmetrical sexual relations, movement of people move into and out of, or between situations of risk and inequalities of several sorts which are central to the risks of exposure that people face. Asymmetrical sexual relations increase exposure to HIV infection especially where a small number of women have unprotected sex with a larger number of men, or vice versa. Epidemiological models show that such asymmetrical relationships hasten the spread of infection in a population (Garnett & Anderson 1996). The people of northern Uganda lived in internally displaced people's (IDP) camps for over 20 years due to the war between the Uganda government and the rebel soldiers led by Joseph Kony. The camp life presented a more complex nature of such asymmetrical sexual relations for different needs and purposes. The movement of people move into and out of, or between situations of risk contributes to widening the epidemic and raising infection rates in areas or among groups previously little touched by it. In the displaced people's camps in northern Uganda, movements by the displaced people, armed security forces i.e. Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF), the Police and Local Defense Units (LDUs), the rebel forces (the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)), wrong elements taking advantage of the fragile security situation as well as service providers complicate the serious nature of the sexual risk and nature of sexual networks that evolve. Different types of inequality expose people to risks (Farmer 1999). Social, economic and gender inequalities shape the sexual relationships people enter and geographic disparities affect their decisions on movement. The camp life vividly shows these inequalities particularly between service seekers and providers, displaced and security providers across age and gender.

## Northern Uganda

Traditionally, north-central Uganda was predominantly Acholi and Langi. The Pader district, in particular, is predominantly Acholi, who are a collection of small ethnic groups that came together with Luo migration in the mid nineteenth century. Their main

livelihood was traditionally based on mixed farming of cattle keeping and crop cultivation occasionally supplemented with hunting (Nzita and Mbaga, 1997). This livelihood pattern survived for a long time through the pre-colonial and post-colonial time under traditional leadership (the *Rwot*) who had spiritual, judicial, executive and legislative powers. However, in 1986 the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) took power and thereafter insecurity and civil strife raged in northern Uganda mainly between the government forces and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) of Joseph Kony. Consequently, the lives and livelihoods of many people in this part of the country started deteriorating and gradually became susceptible to all forms of socio-economic and security vulnerabilities resulting in widespread poverty. It is, for example, only northern and Eastern regions of Uganda that are highly dependent on free government health units for medicine (UBOS 2010:175) and yet these units either have very few inadequate and poorly remunerated health workers or are hit by drug stock-outs repeatedly. Table 1 shows variations in other socio-economic indicators between national averages and the region of northern Uganda.

**Table 1: Basic Indicators: Comparison of Northern Uganda the entire Country**

Socio-Economic Indicator	2005/2006		2009-2010	
	Northern Uganda	Nationwide	Northern Uganda	Nationwide
Poverty: Poor persons <sup>3</sup>	3,250,000	8,440,000	2,840,000	7,510,000
Consumption Expenditure per Household (Ugx) <sup>3</sup>	111,700	205,250	150,200	210,250
Literacy rate of persons aged 10 years and above (percent) <sup>3</sup>	59	64	64	73
Education Status of Persons aged 15+ - % <sup>3</sup>	26.7	20.1	22.8	17.3
Moderate malnutrition among children -% (MoH 2003)	25	23		
Vulnerable Children (Percent) <sup>3</sup>	80	65	43	38
Distribution of Orphans (percent) <sup>3</sup>			3.7	2.4
HIV prevalence rate - % <sup>2, 4</sup>	8.2	6.4	8.2	7.3
Population without Access to safe water -% (UNDP 2005)	29.7	37.4		
Community access to improved sources of drinking water (%) <sup>3</sup>			65.7	68.9
No Latrine/Bush (Percent) <sup>3</sup>	21.2	10.6	24.9	8.7
Telephone Service (Percent) <sup>3</sup>	12.1	48.5	19.7	70.8
Bank Branch office <sup>3</sup>	0.3	0.4	0.5	4.8
Loan Applicants by region (percent) <sup>3</sup>	4.1	10.4	15.0	17.4

**Sources:**

<sup>1</sup>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2006

<sup>2</sup>MoH and ORC Macro, 2006, Uganda HIV/AIDS Sero-Behavioural Survey 2004/05

<sup>3</sup>Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2010) Uganda National Household Survey 2009/10.

Kampala: UBOS

<sup>4</sup>Uganda Ministry of Health and ICF International 2012. 2011 Uganda AIDS Indicator Survey: Key Findings. Calverton, Maryland, USA: MOH and ICF International.

In Table 1, indicators show that in spite of the efforts by the Ugandan government and its development partners to improve the well being of Ugandans, northern Uganda has continued to be a region with high poverty incidence. As a result there are higher rates of illiteracy, malnutrition, lack of access to safe water and HIV infection. By 2006 over 1.8 million people were displaced in Acholi region and parts of Teso and Lango regions and Adjumani district (UN-OCHA 2006) and more people lived in inhumane conditions despite the increased intervention of the humanitarian community (36 Non-Governmental Organisations and United Nations agencies). The over-crowded camps were susceptible to recurrent disease outbreaks, wildfires during the dry season and human rights abuses from the LRA, the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) or Local Defence Units (LDU) including sexual and gender-based violence. The July 2005 mortality survey carried out in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts by the Ministry of Health, World Health Organisation, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and IRC estimated crude and under 5 mortality rates at 1.54/10,000 and 3.18/10,000 per day, respectively. These rates are far above the emergence threshold of 1/10,000/day and the leading causes of this mortality are malaria, diarrhoea, violence, malnutrition, HIV and AIDS and limited access to quality health services compound the problem.

Furthermore, vulnerability in northern Uganda has been compounded by cattle rustling by the Karimojong and ethnic tensions in the Karamoja region which is hampering durable return of displaced persons. Fear of the Karimojong warriors grips everybody and security escort from local militia or LDU is necessary to graze cattle or collect firewood. Furthermore, hosting of refugees coming from Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo in an area already characterised by population displacement overstretches the hosting capacity of the border areas in terms of water, sanitation, shelter and food. Ultimately, the entire population becomes vulnerable and has to make hard choices for survival. Whereas other areas in the country have received programme interventions for poverty alleviation, HIV prevention, AIDS treatment and care and support, insecurity and instability in northern has negatively affected nature of programmes and organisations that provide support. Insecurity further affects the timing and timeliness of the interventions compared to the rest of the country. In the area of poverty alleviation, for example, out of six IFAD operations completed in Uganda between 1982 and 2006, only 2 focused on northern and eastern Uganda and these projects were the Agricultural Development Project (1986-1992) and Agricultural Reconstruction programme in northern and eastern Uganda (1982-1986). This implies that IFAD's key poverty programmes stopped in 1992. In addition, out of the 4 projects on-going, northern Uganda is only included in the Rural Finance Service programme which is countrywide (IFAD 2007).

Even by 2010 with removal of IDP camps, the northern region remained vulnerable to poverty and its effects. According to the Uganda National Household Baseline Survey 2009/2010, of the population aged 15 years and above, the majority live in northern

Uganda; northern Uganda has the least working population, is the worst in terms of dwelling structures (i.e. characterised by 68.9 percent living in huts compared to 21.5 percent nationally (UBOS 2010:110)); least accessible to electricity by only 1.7 percent compared to 12.1 percent nationally; is the region with highest number of people depending on firewood for fuel by 87.6 percent compared to 73 percent nationally. Furthermore, the region has the highest levels of unemployment and is also the area where expenditure on food, beverage and tobacco increased from 52 percent in 2005/06 to 55 percent in 2009/10 and yet stagnated for health and education. It is the region with a higher proportion of poor people who escaped out of poverty (45 percent compared to 60 percent nationally) and also with highest proportion of non-poor who fell back i.e. 26 percent compared to 15 percent nationally (MFPED 2012:25) and so most people may not be out of poverty for long or sustainably. In addition, after resettlement, HIV prevalence in Northern Uganda stagnated at 8.2 percent (i.e. dropping from 7.1 percent to 6.3 percent for men and rising from 9.0 percent to 10.1 percent for women) compared to the national rate that has risen from 6.4 percent to 7.3 percent (Uganda Ministry of Health and ICF International 2012). With resettlement, more women continue to be more susceptible to HIV infection than men. It is therefore within this context that we need to understand the research findings on people's hard choices in the context of HIV and AIDS.

## Methodology

This article is based on the secondary data review and findings from an exploratory study that was conducted in the camp of internally displaced people in Paimol, Pader district. Pader is found in North Central region of Uganda. There were 31 camps in Pader District before the decongestion exercise and they became 82 camps after decongestion. Data from personal interviews was collected from a stratified random sample of 98 respondents according to Blocks in the camp. Six Focus Group discussions (FGDs) were held with married men, married, unmarried men and unmarried women, widowed men and widowed women. In order to guard the respondents against trauma, the interviews and discussions were done and guided, respectively, by a graduate student from the area of study. This promoted freer interaction and willingness to participate in the study. The primary data from personal interviews was analysed using SPSS (version 11.0) for quantitative data while qualitative data analysis of open-ended questions and data from FGDs involved the thematic and content analysis of how respondents socially constructed their perceived risk to HIV infection and ultimately responded to this risk. Qualitative data provides a deeper understanding and interpretation of the findings. Key verbatim responses have been included to provide explanatory context for the quantitative data and also provide explanation in their own right.

## Findings

In order to prevent HIV infection, seek treatment and support as well as mitigate the likely impacts of AIDS, people need to know HIV & AIDS especially in terms of its context, causes and effects. It is important to understand how the primary study findings relate to the context in Pader district (*described in the background*). Primary findings are presented in the order of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, level of awareness of HIV and AIDS, nature of sexual patterns and their rationale and implications as well as prevention efforts against HIV and mitigation against the impacts of AIDS amidst vulnerability.

## Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

It is important to understand the nature of the sample which generated the findings that are presented and discussed. Demographic characteristics have been presented according to ethnic tribe, place of birth, sex, age, marital status, type of marriage, duration of marriage education, occupation and working status.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
<b>Sex (n=98)</b>		
Male	45	45.9
Female	53	54.1
<b>Age (n=98)</b>		
17 Years and Below	3	3.1
18-20 Years	4	4.1
21-20 Years	20	20.4
31-40 Years	18	18.4
41-50 Years	18	18.4
51-60 Years	15	15.3
Over 60 Years	20	20.4
<b>Marital Status (n=98)</b>		
Never married but ever had sex	8	8.2
Currently married	57	58.2
Separated or Divorced	4	4.1
Widowed	27	27.6
Abandoned	2	2.0

<b>Duration of Marriage (n=88)</b>		
5 Years or Less	20	22.7
6-10 Years	10	11.4
11-15 Years	10	11.4
16-20 Years	12	13.6
21-25 Years	3	3.4
26-30 Years	6	6.8
Over 30 Years	27	30.7
<b>Religious Affiliation (n=95)</b>		
Catholic	57	60.0
Protestant	34	35.8
Pentecostal	4	4.2
<b>Highest level of Education (n=92)</b>		
No formal education	30	32.6
Primary incomplete	25	27.2
Completed Primary or Junior	13	14.1
Lower secondary – incomplete	6	6.5
Completed Lower secondary	7	7.6
Upper secondary – incomplete	5	5.4
Completed upper secondary	3	3.3
Tertiary institution	3	3.3
<b>Occupation (n=95)</b>		
Not able to work	4	4.2
Housewife	2	2.1
Self-employed	5	5.3
Farmer	70	73.7
Professional / Civil servants	10	10.2
Local leader / Politician	2	2.1
Other	2	2.1

The findings indicate that all the respondents, except one Karimojong, are Acholi and 88 of them were born in Pader except for the 7 who were born in the neighboring districts of Kitgum and Gulu and Kotido. Since the HIV epidemic has a gender face, there were 45 males (45.9 percent) and 53 women (54.1 percent) in the sample and a majority of these were married on in union (57 respondents) followed by those who were previously married but were now widowed (27 respondents). The other categories included 8 respondents who were never married but ever had sex, the four who were formerly married but now divorced and lastly two who were formerly married but abandoned. This pattern of marital statuses shows that most respondents come out of marital union not only due to death but also abandonment and separation which may further be linked

to the threat of HIV. Separation increases risky behaviour as one woman said *when there is a misunderstanding and man leaves his wife, then each of them is free to do what he or she want with their bodies because they are no longer together* (FGD Young women, Muttu IDP camp). Findings further show that 70.5 percent of the married were living together with their partners compared to 29.5 percent that lived separate from their partners. In addition, of respondents who were or had ever been married, 39 (48.1 percent) were in polygynous marriage and 42 (51.9 percent) in monogamous marriages and 59.1 percent of these marriages have lasted between 1 to 20 years which corresponds to time that insurgency in northern Uganda has taken. Table 2 further demonstrates that majority of the respondents are Catholics; about 80 percent are aged 30 years or less; about 74 percent either have no formal education or only went up to primary seven or junior level. This level of education further explains the occupational pattern, which shows that most respondents are engaged in farming with only a few being formally employed. However, farmer respondents were not practising farming after living in the camps for more than 20 years. In fact, the working status indicated that 76.1 percent were working while 23.9 percent were not.

## **Awareness of HIV and AIDS**

In Uganda, awareness of AIDS is reported to be over 99% and more than three in five Ugandans can cite two or more preventive practices (MoH and ORC Macro 2006) though comprehensive HIV & AIDS knowledge slightly lower ranging from 63 percent to 95 percent varying with gender and specific issues (Uganda Ministry of Health and ICF International 2012:4-5). The study findings also show that there is a high level of awareness of the epidemic. Of the respondents interviewed, 79.6 percent reported that they have heard about HIV/AIDS compared to the 20.4 percent who had not. However, hearing about HIV & AIDS is different from having correct information on what the two concepts mean. There are, for example, only 27.3 percent of those who have ever heard about HIV/AIDS that understand that HIV is the virus that causes AIDS and only 32.5 percent that know that AIDS refers to the sickness caused by HIV. Further analysis of FGD findings indicates that awareness among men is higher compared to women. In the FGD for unmarried women in Paimol Muttu IDP camp, a participant said, *"AIDS gets transmitted like this. When you go the bathroom and you find that the AIDS patient has just finished bathing, you can step on it"*. The findings from the FGDs show that separated and widowed women have far much less adequate information on HIV & AIDS compared to the married and singles. This may be attributed to different sources of information and stigma that might isolate the widows particularly those whose husbands are believed to have died of AIDS. Hence, though the population may generally be aware that HIV and AIDS exist, the nature of understanding may



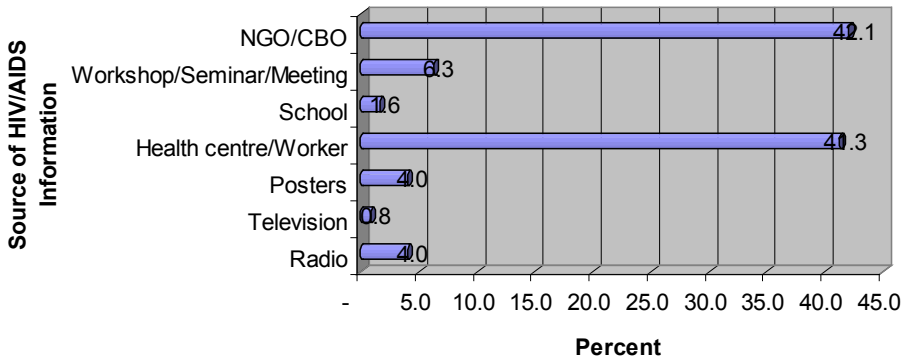
not be adequate to enable them make informed prevention decisions. In terms of the understanding of HIV, for example, 46.8 percent of the respondents said that it is a sexually transmitted virus and 23.4 percent called it just an infection while 2.6 percent did not know. The findings further showed varied but high level of knowledge of the modes of HIV infection as Table 3 shows.

**Table 3: Known Modes of HIV Infection (n=98)**

Known Modes of HIV transmission	Tally	Percent
Sexual intercourse	92	93.9
Injectables	62	63.3
Blood substances	64	65.3
Mother to child	56	57.1
Infected fluids	52	53.1
Sharing of sharp objects	12	12.2

*\*Multiple responses were possible*

The commonly known mode of HIV transmission is through sexual intercourse with an infected partner and this finding is further supported by the findings from FGDs. The variations in the awareness and understanding could be attributed to the different sources of information about HIV & AIDS and also the emphases by these sources of information. As noted earlier, the highest levels of HIV infection in developing countries including SSA and Uganda is through heterosexual sexual intercourse. However, while the rate Mother-to-child transmission of HIV was 22 percent by 2008 (UNAIDS 2008), there was low level of awareness (57 percent) on the mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Pader compared to 82.5 percent nationally (Uganda Ministry of Health and ICF International 2012:4). This has serious implications for HIV control. The findings show that though the people in Pader IDP camps received information from different sources, one source i.e. the Non-governmental Organisation (GOAL) dominated all of them (see Figure 1). According to UAC (2007), most organisations were by then concentrated in neighbouring districts of Gulu and Lira and very little attention has gone to Pader district (Savage *et. al.* 2008). It was also established in the study that the GOAL NGO also doubled as a health provider.

**Figure 1: Source of Information about HIV & AIDS**

Whereas the MoH and ORC Macro (2006:43) say that the radio was the most important source of information about HIV/AIDS, the study findings show that only 4.0 percent of the respondents had got information from this source and only one person had got the information from the Television. A majority of respondents received information from GOAL. GOAL was a Non-Governmental Organisation which provided the internally displaced persons with medical and health services. According to Fountain Publishers (2007), there were only two NGOs operating in Pader district by 2005 (i.e. African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) Uganda and World Vision Uganda). In spite of the proliferation of NGOs in Uganda, especially in response to HIV & AIDS, very few appear to be committed to operate in areas affected by insecurity like Pader. This implies that there was a very serious problem of information flow or access to information on HIV/AIDS among the IDPs which ultimately affected their sexual decisions and behaviour. Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) noted that the problem of limited or total lack of timely, correct and adequate information heightens the risk of HIV infection for all categories of people and most particularly for women, girls and boys who are deemed more prone to the risk (UAC, 2005). Young women in camps, for example, associated HIV with men who have more than one wife, are adulterous and marrying without establishing one's HIV status and that of the partner. The nature of HIV & AIDS awareness has implications on how people in the internally displaced camps constructed and responded to the perceived risks to HIV infection. Lack of or inadequate or late information about HIV and AIDS to the people living in the camps cannot help people to make informed decisions for effective HIV prevention.

## HIV & AIDS Awareness and Sexual Behaviour among IDPs in Paimol Camp

Whereas there is high level of knowledge that HIV is transmitted through sexual intercourse with an infected person, the sexual relations among the IDPs indicates that a number of people do not translate this knowledge into practice. There are a number of people who continue to have unprotected sexual intercourse with non-regular or casual partners as Table 4 demonstrates.

**Table 4: Sexual Patterns among Internally Displaced Persons in the previous 1 year.**

Sexual Patterns among IDPs Have you had:	Last 1 year		Last 6 months		Last 1 month		Last 2 weeks	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
sex with more than one partner	33.0	67.0	20.3	79.7	16.2	83.8	12.7	87.3
protected sex with a casual partner	10.5	89.5	8.8	91.2	6.3	93.7	5.3	94.7
unprotected sex with a casual partner	50.0	50.0	48.7	51.3	44.6	55.4	42.3	57.7
protected sex with a regular partner	8.9	91.1	5.4	94.6	4.2	95.8	2.9	97.1
unprotected sex with a regular partner	63.7	36.3	63.3	36.7	58.4	41.6	57.1	42.9
protected sex with a prostitute	7.9	92.1	2.8	97.2	1.5	98.5	1.5	98.5
unprotected sex with a prostitute	13.3	86.7	13.1	86.9	8.2	91.8	8.2	91.8
An sexually transmitted infections (STIs)	18.9	81.1	2.9	97.1	1.4	98.6	1.5	98.5

High levels of unprotected sex among regular (often married) partners are understandable. However, the rate of 50 percent of the respondents reporting to have had unprotected sexual intercourse with a casual partner in the previous one year had serious implications for the risk of exposure to HIV infection in the camps. The findings from FGDs show that unsafe sex is not voluntary. Most young girls and women would be raped by unmarried young men and rebels when they go to fetch water or firewood away from the camps. This has also been reported in Karamoja (Yiga 2012) and was further aggravated by alcoholism and inheritance of widows. One male FGD for the married reported, *In Acholi, flood follows the same path. How can a man whose wife has died inherit a woman whose husband has died?*

The study established a statistically significant relationship between marital statuses, whether couple are living together and religion and having unprotected sex with casual partners. These findings show that most persons who have protected sex are those in marital or conjugal relationships. Table 5 indicates the correlations with unprotected casual sex.

**Table 5: Correlations with Unprotected Casual Sex**

Respondents Characteristic	Unprotected Casual sex
Marital Status of Respondent	0.008** (n=92)
Is the couple living together	0.023* (n=83)
Religious affiliation of Respondent	0.043* (n=89)

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

The not married but had ever had sex and those who were married had a higher likelihood of engaging in unprotected sex with a casual partner compared to respondents who had lost their partners or had separated or divorced or been abandoned. Respondents reported a high level of unfaithfulness among the married mainly attributed to the influence of alcohol. It was also reported that there are women who go out with young men to look for sexual satisfaction especially if their husbands failed to meet their

conjugal and other family obligations. Furthermore, couples living together are the ones likely to unprotected sex with casual partners. This has grave implications for HIV prevention since it is not couples living apart but those living together that were not only engaged in extra-marital sex but unsafe sex. It was reported that there are women who are poor and become vulnerable to men who have some money as one FGD reported *A man can come with 10,000/= and say, Madam, I can see that you have problems. This will make me believe that this man can help me in many ways if I get his money but this also means accepting to have sex with him. As I result, I may get infected with HIV* (Young women FGD, Muttu IDP camp). The contradictory behaviour confirms sexual permissiveness that had engulfed the social ecology in and around the IDP camps. It also explains why marriage continues to become a high risk environment for HIV infection (MOH and ORC Macro, 2006; MOH and ICF International 2012). Extra-marital sexual relations are not due to normal lack of sexual partners but also other factors that affect sexual lives of the partners in marital unions. Akello, for example, reported of the Camp Commandant in Pabbo camp in Gulu district, who said *Adultery and infidelity are high. Men and women are stealing each other's wives and husbands. There is no shame and respect anymore. Grandmothers now steal young boys from their wives and hide them in their huts* (Akello 2006:52).

In terms of religion, more Catholics were likely to have unprotected casual sex compared to other religions. The findings need to be contextualised in terms of the proportion of Catholics in Pader district. According to the 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census, there are 231,450 Catholics in Pader. This is 71 percent of the total population of 326,320 (UBOS 2005). However, the findings could also be attributed to Catholic ideological teachings on HIV & AIDS which promote faithfulness for the married and abstinence of the non-married and against use of condoms as a preventive measure against both contraception and sexually transmitted infections. The implication of these findings is that Catholics in Northern Uganda may not only be highly susceptible to HIV infection but they could also be a sexual risk group that if no appropriate and effective interventions are planned during the post-camp resettlement and rehabilitation. The Catholic Church needs to identify alternative practical interventions among these people to guard them against susceptibility to HIV infection and severe AIDS impacts.

Respondents were asked whether they would have sex with a person they know to be infected with HIV in order to further explain sexual patterns. Out of the total sample, 43.3 percent said they would while 56.7 percent said that they would not. Since it

takes only one HIV+ person in a sexual network to spread the virus, this risky sexual behaviour was bound to spread HIV infection further. Table 6 show the correlations for unprotected sex with a person known to have HIV.

**Table 6: Correlations with Unprotected Sex with HIV+ Person**

Respondent's Characteristic	Unprotected sex with HIV+ person
Age of Respondent	p=0.004** (n=97)
Marital Status	p=0.023* (n=97)
Duration of marriage	p=0.002** (n=97)

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

The relationship between age and the likelihood of having sex with an infected person shows that people aged below 50 years are likely to have sex with an HIV+ person compared to those aged above 50. The social pressures and sexual networks in the IDP camp's social ecology appeared to more affect on younger people compared to the older ones. Secondly, in terms of marital status, respondents who are either separated or divorced or widowed or abandoned are more likely to agree to have sex with an HIV+ person compared to those who are single but ever had sex and the married. The most likely explanation for such behaviour could be that most of such respondents could have been widowed, separated or divorced and abandoned due to HIV and hence see no difference in protected and unprotected sex. Thirdly, it was respondents who had stayed together in marriage for twenty years or less, who were most likely to have sex with a person known to be HIV+. The twenty years correspond with the time that camps have been in northern Uganda implying that Camp life is a significant factor in shaping perceptions of HIV risks and how they respond to them.

Most respondents reported that people are likely to have sex with a person infected with HIV mainly because they were unable to physically determine which person has HIV (58.3 percent). This could be further related to the constrained flow of HIV/AIDS information. Other reasons mainly reported by women relate to their socio-economic susceptibility. The women reported that they would have sex with an infected person when they are in desperate need for financial or material assistance (16.7 percent) or to out compete rival women by getting pregnant (16.7 percent) while one woman reported that it is up to the man to decide whether to use a condom or not. It was further established that there are persons who are willing to have unprotected sex with persons believed to be HIV+. The findings indicate that of the 42 respondents who said they would have sex with an infected person, only one male said that he would use a condom. Table 10 gives the explanatory reasons for why people in the camps still continue with their risky sexual behaviour even when they know that there is no cure for AIDS.

**Table 7: Reasons for not using a Condom during sex with an HIV+ person (n=24)**

Reason Why one would not use a condom	Frequency	Percent
If it is my marriage partner	4	16.7
It is up to the man to decide	6	25.0
AIDS is not the only source death	5	20.8
I need to produce many children	2	8.3
Real men do not fear death	2	8.3
Inheritance of Widow(er)s	1	4.2
Sex with a condom is not nice	1	4.2
If I am raped or have forced sex	1	4.2
If the woman is beautiful	2	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The reasons given in Table 7 are critical. Though some of them were reported by a small number, the findings from Key informants and Focus Groups Discussions indicate that they are very grave and their consequences graver for spread of HIV. Insecurity in the IDP camps, for example, exposed many women and girls to rape. Most Focus Group Discussions reported that internally displaced persons had to be escorted by the army to go to fetch water or firewood and that most of the women and girls were defiled during that time. According to Kasasira (2007) and Karugaba (2007), girls in northern Uganda preferred to give in to sex just to get some money for survival. Both authors quote *“I prefer death by HIV/AIDS than hunger. Through sex, I can at least get 500–2000 shillings. With this, I can buy basic commodities like salt, soap, clothes and sanitary pads”* a 17 year old girl in Aleptong Camp in Lira District was reported to have said. All these findings on sexual patterns in the IDP camps could explain the persistent high HIV prevalence rates of 8.2 percent in the North central region (MoH and ORC Macro 2006, MOH and ICF International 2012). Therefore, the critical nature of the HIV pandemic needs to be seen from the perspective of people’s livelihoods and social environs and how they affect sexuality and sexual regulation or control.

## Conclusion

HIV & AIDS have debilitating effects on the health of human beings, their livelihoods and ultimately the life sustenance of infected persons and those dependent on them. These impacts are systemic in nature. Despite the breakthrough in the manufacture and distribution of Anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs), the rates of HIV infection that continue to increase. Effective prevention of HIV infection requires high level perception of risk of the modes of HIV transmission. However, the findings from Paimol camps in Pader District indicate that political strife and/or security are critical factors in the prevention efforts. Areas experiencing instability are characterised by

inhuman conditions which make people emotionally numb and strategically plan for today. Like the ActionAid study (2005) in northern Uganda found, people look at life as if it is ending today and that AIDS is something for the future hence no need to think about it. It indicates that people are already hardened and can never think of using a condom because, first of all, their supply is limited and they are too poor to afford them. Abducted girls and women are forced into sexual intercourse with rebels or soldiers over whom they have no control and whose sero-status they do not know. These women then later come back to their spouses or community after rescue or escape. The political and security situation in Northern Uganda both during camp life and after resettlement, has distorted people's normal social construction of risk to die. The perceived social risk now overrides the medical risk and as a result, people continue with risky sexual behaviour patterns in spite the levels of HIV/AIDS awareness. So this explains why people choose between types of deaths and not between life and death. It is, therefore, important to note that as the resettlement and peace building processes go on, plans should be made to recover people's prioritisation of medical risk over the social risk through psychosocial and poverty or deprivation alleviation support in order to reverse HIV prevalence in the region.

There are challenges to the early philosophy which have to be addressed in order to maintain the prevention successes and strengthen the treatment and care and support in the fight against HIV & AIDS. In particular, security and support of people's livelihoods are very important for the strategic efforts in the prevention, treatment and care and support for people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. Socio-economically secure livelihoods, for example, form the basis for food and nutrition security, decent living and life sustenance. In spite of the critical value of good nutrition in helping to reduce weight loss and wasting, delaying the progression of HIV infection into AIDS disease, improving the effectiveness of medications like Antiretroviral Treatment/Therapy (ART), enhancing the body's ability to fight opportunistic infections and improving quality of life (Gillespie & Kadiyala 2005; Avert 2005; WFP 2004a), most households in many areas of Uganda are food insecure (USAID FEWSNET-Uganda & UN World Food Programme Uganda 2005, MFPED 2012, Loevinsohn *et. al.* 2012) and the level of poverty is still high (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) & International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) 2004, UBOS 2012). This aggravates the problem of hunger and malnutrition (UDHS 2011) which further increase temptations for survival sexual behaviour that make individuals more susceptible to HIV infection. The dynamic nature of people's livelihoods immensely influences their decisions related to defining and responding to the risks to HIV infection.

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# Le coupé décalé en Côte d'Ivoire : Sens et enjeux d'un succès musical

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## Abstract

*This article is an explanatory contribution of the current success of the cut offset a new Ivorian musical genre occurred in the corridors of the Ivorian crisis. His current success is not unrelated to the phenomenon of globalization, but the factor that seems decisive is once again its specific link with the political imagination of urban youth. Of young people through this musical style expand social boundaries of power in Cote d'Ivoire. These call into crisis symbolic efficacy of political discourse by turning it as a motivating factor for repositioning on the social ladder of power*

**Keywords:** *cut offbeat young globalization imaginary social success*

## Résumé

*Le présent article est une contribution explicative du succès actuel du coupé décalé un nouveau genre musical ivoirien intervenu dans les couloirs de la crise ivoirienne. Son succès actuel n'est pas sans lien avec le phénomène de la globalisation, mais le facteur qui nous semble déterminant, c'est une nouvelle fois son lien spécifique avec l'imaginaire politique des jeunes urbains. Des jeunes qui à travers ce style musicale élargissent les frontières sociales du pouvoir en Côte d'Ivoire. Ces derniers remettent en crise l'efficacité symbolique du discours politique en le transformant comme un facteur dynamisant de repositionnement sur l'échelle sociale du pouvoir*

**Mots clés :** *coupé décalé, jeune, globalisation, imaginaire de la réussite sociale*

## Introduction

Sous la présidence de Félix Houphouët Boigny, de 1960 à 1980, le miracle ivoirien à positionné la Côte d'Ivoire comme un pays nanti et prospère dans la sous région ouest-Africaine. Le pays est alors premier producteur mondial de café cacao attirant de nombreux ressortissants ouest-africains à la recherche de l'eldorado politique (Blé, 2006). Cependant, le miracle ivoirien en dépit de son heure de gloire tourna assez rapidement au mirage occasionnant une prolifération de la misère dans l'ensemble des couches sociales ivoiriennes. Une misère qui affecta profondément le génie musical des

ivoiriens. En réponse à cette situation difficile sont nées plusieurs rythmes musicaux dont le Zouglou pour exprimer le mécontentement d'une jeunesse face à l'unanimité politique et à la multiplication des disparités sociales

Par ailleurs, vers la fin de l'année 2002 en pleine crise sociale et politique un nouveau style de musique fait son apparition dans le champ musical ivoirien : « le coupé décalé ». « Au rythme de la musique, la main droite mime le geste de couper et les jambes se lance en arrière pour décaler. Parmi les jeunes des centres urbains d'Afrique francophone et de la Côte d'Ivoire en particulier, le coupé décalé connaît un succès phénoménal, « désormais le simple fait d'esquisser ces deux gestes signifie je sors danser » (Kohlhagen, 2005 :92). Son origine est quelque peu discuté, cependant il est admis qu'il fut lancé par des discs jockeys ivoiriens de Londres et de la région parisienne, le coupé décalé célèbre un mode de vie quelque peu ostentatoire, circulant entre les grandes villes d'Afrique et d'Europe, le coupé décalé est assez exemplaire de cette dissémination de flux d'idées puisant dans divers répertoires musicaux les armes de son énonciation.

Sur le plan local son succès peut être apprécié à travers la multiplicité des sous-concepts musicaux qu'il produit : la prudencia de Don Mike le Gorou, la festibulence de Tata Kény, le décalé chinois de Douck Saga, le sentiment moko de DJ Caloudji, ou encore, le Konami de DJ Shanaka etc...., tous parus entre 2002 et 2008, et plus récemment, leKpan Kaka et le Chébébé d'Arafat DJ. Ce dernier semble s'être mué en véritable figure de prou de cette invention musicale ivoirienne en remportant deux Kora à la dernière édition de ce prix(2013) qui récompense les meilleurs artistes Africains de l'Année

Cependant, rares sont les études qui tentent de proposer un modèle explicatif de son rapide succès médiatique. C'est pour nous, encore moins le pouvoir des Disc Jockeys ou le pouvoir financier des adeptes de ce style musical qui explique son succès actuel, et non plus strictement les images qu'il véhicule à travers les clips vidéos (Kohlhagen, 2005). En effet si ce rythme musical traverse les frontières et semble être porté par un phénomène de jeune, c'est qu'il trouve à travers cette catégorie sociale, les déterminants de son succès. Notre analyse entend fournir un modèle explicatif qui s'emboîte dans le contexte culturel et politique ivoirien Le coupé décalé est pour nous porteur d'un imaginaire politique qui voit dans les logiques individuelles d'enrichissement et d'émancipation un moyen d'échapper aux conséquences sociales du déclin de l'houphouëtisme ce qui explique son relatif succès au près des jeunes urbains. Ce que nous tenterons d'exemplifier à travers les argumentations qui vont suivre

Le Coupé décalé, la sublimation de la richesse et la production sociale des nouvelles figures de la réussite sociale et individuelle

En Côte d'Ivoire et partout ailleurs, il reste entendu que le coupé décalé échafaude la culture ivoirienne et se danse avec un ensemble d'apparat vestimentaire mais de préférence en faisant voler en éclat des billets de banque. Travailler au double sens du mot semble être le principal message retenu par les jeunes urbains et les faiseurs de ce courant musical. « Dans les vidéos clips la référence à l'argent, à l'apparence et au gaspillage

abondent. Voitures et habits de luxe, chaînes et bracelets cigares et liasses de billets flambant neuf sont les principaux attributs du coupé décaleur » (Kohlhagen, 2005 :95). Par ailleurs, ce qui se joue à un niveau symbolique à travers ce rythme musical et qui explique désormais dans la longue durée le succès de ce genre musical auprès des jeunes urbains, c'est bien l'ethos de la consommation véhiculé par l'idéologie capitaliste encadré à travers cette œuvre. Car la spirale actuel du néolibéralisme pousse les individus quelque soit leur appartenance nationale à la consommation des biens marchands, c'est ainsi que les individus achètent et consomment des biens économiques pour conquérir le statut d'un sujet moderne et le sentiment d'une appartenance à une culture ultramoderne. Les jeunes ivoiriens ne sont pas en reste face à cette pression économique, en ayant fait le choix du coupé décalé ces jeunes s'identifient à la fois à cette volonté de la consommation impulsé par le capitalisme moderne mais dont ils sont privés depuis le déclin de l'houphouëtisme. Mais pour ces jeunes, la modernité se réfère aussi à une prise de conscience objective de l'espace territorial entendu comme le lieu où se déroulent des enjeux de pouvoir, le lieu ou se construit leur devenir et plus particulièrement celui de leur société et le village dans ce sens leur semble éloigné du centre de leur préoccupation.

Pour les jeunes urbains, ce qui fait le charme de la ville, c'est l'opportunité de donner libre cours à son imagination créative et d'accéder au pouvoir de la consommation des biens, de la boisson, des voitures, des médicaments ou des objets de luxe, des produits alimentaires importés et d'autres biens marchands par le mérite scolaire, mais sous le gouvernement d'un Etat non patrimonialisé. Tel était du moins le rêve caressé par de nombreux jeunes ivoiriens depuis l'instauration du multipartisme. Par ailleurs, les nouveaux maîtres politique de la Côte d'Ivoire postcolonial, emportés par la violence de l'ethos de la consommation par la quelle ils croyaient conquérir et imposé une citoyenneté que leur déniaient les anciens maîtres privatisèrent plus ou moins rapidement l'Etat ivoirien et ses biens et, ce faisant en firent l'enjeu des luttes en cours en mobilisant des ressources associées à des idéologies identitaires autochtones<sup>1</sup>. La critique de la politique du ventre ou encore la politique du grilleur des arachides qui trouvait l'un de ses fondements dans l'idéo-logique de la sorcellerie provenait en réalité d'une volonté des jeunes ivoiriens de sortir du statut négatif de dominé pour accéder au statut de sujet civilisé à travers l'accès au pouvoir de la consommation. Etre moderne et civilisé, c'est pour beaucoup de jeunes ivoiriens revendiquer son appartenance au monde urbain, avoir accès au pouvoir de la consommation.

Le coupé décalé comme répertoire idéologique subsume cette volonté du pouvoir, de l'avoir et de l'être chez les jeunes ivoiriens en claquant les billets de banque et devient par conséquent ce nouvel exutoire social qui permet aux jeunes ivoiriens de pouvoir rêver à une société idéale dont ils sont privés, par les conséquences sociales du marasme économique ivoirien. S'ils adhèrent à ce style musical c'est que ce registre musical leur

<sup>1</sup> Je fais références aux luttes fratricides qui ont émergé en Côte d'Ivoire entre les différents prétendants au fauteuil présidentiel, conflictualisant les rapports entre autochtones, allochtones et étrangers

permet de fuir les affres d'une société décadente. Le coupé décalé en ventant de nouveaux itinéraires de la réussite sociale et individuelle offrent aux jeunes urbains de nouveaux modèles d'identifications collectives à partir desquels ces jeunes s'inventent eux-mêmes leur propre modèle de réussite. A cet égard, le cas du Disc Jockey communément appelé .Arafat, en référence au célèbre leader palestinien ou encore le Yorobô (un pseudonyme de l'artiste) est assez exemplaire de ce que peut être le génie musical. Précédemment à la traine dans la mouvance du Coupé décalé, Arafat DJ adopte une nouvelle stratégie qui lui vaut son succès actuel. En effet c'est qu'ils offrent à ses différents consommateurs musicaux, le portait social d'un individu en ascension social mais contre qui, de nombreux obstacles tous ordres s'élèvent mais qui les surmonte avec brio grâce à son talent et son expérience musical. C'est ce qu'il affirme par exemple à travers l'un de ses opus musical devenu très célèbre : « Ils ont voulu me tuer mais je reste vivant. ... » .Ce Disc Jockey alimente de nombreuses controverses jusqu'au sommet de l'Etat et est ainsi arrivé à donner un nouvel élan à cet style musical depuis la disparition de son mentor Douck Saga. Arafat DJ et à travers lui un ensemble de jeunes ivoiriens perçoivent la nécessité de monter leur propres affaires pour s'en sortir dans ce difficile contexte économique et social en se muant pour certains en organisateurs de spectacle dans plusieurs dancing Bar de la capitale abidjanaise. Contrairement au milieu rural, l'espace urbain se présente comme un espace ouvert qui offre l'opportunité aux jeunes urbains de laisser libre cours à leur imagination créative, ils inventent de nouveaux emplois temporaires (vendeurs de recharges téléphoniques, le djosseur des nama, vente d'orange et de sachets d'eau, ventes de téléphone portable), exemplifiant au passage ainsi l'œuvre d'Abdou Touré. Selon l'auteur « si les petits métiers n'existaient pas, il faudrait les inventer, car les milliers de démunis qui n'auraient pas accès aux structures modernes de distribution de biens et services seraient immanquablement à l'origine d'une explosion sociale » (Touré, 1985 :19) Ans l'idéologie véhiculée par le coupé décalé encourage insidieusement ce processus d'individualisation des jeunes face à : la ville en leur offrant de nouveaux arguments pour justifier cette quête d'autonomie face au marasme économique ivoirien

L'émergence de ces nouvelles figures sociales de la réussite constitue donc un révélateur des dynamiques sociales et politiques du changement qui recompose les imaginaires du pouvoir dans la société ivoirienne. En effet, le recours à la notion d'imaginaire politique nous permet de comprendre les rapports entre les élites politiques et les citoyens, entre les dirigeants et les dirigés en analysant les courants d'innovations qui se sont déployés et qui ont touché la politique comme les autres domaines de la vie sociale. Car, l'émergence de nouvelles figures sociales en rapport avec la musique, le sport et les milieux de l'art, la débrouillardise sont en partie motivée par la crise des modèles précédents. En Côte d'Ivoire, la figure sociale du diplômé constitue dorénavant une figure sociale de la crise exemplifiée à travers le registre musical du Zouglou. A cet effet, pour beaucoup d'ivoiriens, « le capital d'espoir projeté et déposé entre les mains de l'étudiant ne confère plus à ce dernier l'influence et le pouvoir sur les siens, les amis et la société » (Mbembe,

1985 :53-53). Cette perception ne fonctionne plus en raison de l'apparition de ces nouvelles figures que constitue l'artiste musicien, le footballeur ou encore le « brouteur ». Ce dernier est en passe de devenir avec l'émergence et le développement du coupé décalé et des nouvelles technologies, un modèle d'identification des jeunes ivoiriens. En effet, l'image de réussite associée à la figure sociale du diplômé disparaît au profit de celui qui peut faire un usage criminel de la ruse et de la débrouillardise, voire l'exemplification de son talent via le sport et la musique et les nouvelles technologies. Cette métamorphose loin d'être en rupture avec les logiques politiques conventionnelles est plutôt révélatrice des pratiques de corruptions qui s'échafaudent au sommet de l'appareil de l'Etat ivoirien. A ce titre la situation ivoirienne du « brouteur » correspond sur beaucoup de points à celle du « feyman » camerounais dont la réussite repose sur l'arnaque des autres et se rapproche encore moins des descriptions faites par Jean François Harvard sur les nouvelles figures de la réussite au Sénégal via le sport et la musique. En Côte d'Ivoire, le coupé décalé contribue consciemment ou inconsciemment à légitimer ces mécanismes illicites de l'enrichissement en louant davantage les mérites de ces nouveaux adeptes du « broutage » qui sont en passe de conquérir une place de poids sur l'échelle social du pouvoir à travers les propos louangeurs des disc Jockeys ivoiriens connu sous le nom des Spots et popularisé par les Discs Jockeys ivoiriens. Comme le Feynman camerounais, le talent de ces jeunes réside dans l'arnaque consistant à faire croire à leurs victimes généralement expatriés, qu'ils sont détenteurs de titres donnant l'occasion de faire des affaires privées et parfois douteuses dont l'objectif principal reste le détournement illicite de fonds. Ainsi pour beaucoup de ces jeunes cette pratique n'est pas sans lien avec ce qu'ils nomment comme appartenant au régime de la dette coloniale, c'est-à-dire à un argumentaire consistant à se présenter comme le fruit des avatars de la décolonisation et au nouveau régime de la domination politique qu'il a consacré dans la postcolonie. Comme l'explique Rémi Bazenguissa et Jeannet Marc Gaffey (1995 : 28), « cet imaginaire implique une dimension de banditisme où tout est permis et justifié par l'idée qu'il faut se débrouiller là où on se trouve et se réfère à un mode de récupération qui implique un mode de légitimité, un devoir impératif qui engage « non seulement l'individu mais toute la communauté [...] », à rompre avec la dégradation progressive des conditions de vie dans les villes et le manque d'espoir pour une jeunesse dont les seuls horizons sont les « les bidonvilles aux alentours des villes ultramodernes »(Nzau 1984 :21). Ce qui en fait au regard du contexte ivoirien des sujets « conscients d'être les acteurs malgré tout, d'une révolution qui ne dit pas son nom »(Djungu-Simba 1996 :77)

En somme, l'usage des moyens détournés à des fins d'enrichissement personnels via le réseau internet et d'autres mécanismes à pour but le contournement du système légal national mais aussi du système international qui prive toujours une plus grande part de gens sans part et d'individus des dividendes politiques et du commerce des échanges qui se déroulent au niveau des scènes nationales. Ainsi le coupé décalé via la figure sociale



du « brouteur », du footballeur, du « benguis »<sup>2</sup> et de l'artiste offre des opportunités politiques aux jeunes de contester les conditions sociales d'acceptabilité de la violence symbolique que construisent les élites politiques ivoirienne depuis l'amorce du processus démocratique. Dans cette perspective les jeunes ivoiriens à travers cette politique de la ruse et de la débrouillardise élargissent les frontières sociales du pouvoir et du politique en promouvant de nouvelles ressources de pouvoir qui participent à la construction idéologique de la malfeasance de l'Etat postcolonial.

## Les imaginaires de la crise et le coupé décalé

Le coupé décalé est intervenu en pleine crise ivoirienne et son succès actuel est aussi alimenté par les imaginaires de la crise ivoirienne. En effet c'est que la crise intensifie les situations de rareté et de disette sociale et de ce fait participe à un ancrage de cet rythme musical dans la conscience des ivoiriens, un rythme qui recoupe dorénavant l'identité nationale ivoirienne. Le titre de l'album de Douck Sage intitulé Héros national illustre clairement de telles déclinaisons. En effet la crise ivoirienne après avoir partitionné le territoire ivoirien constituait sur beaucoup de plan une souffrance morale et physique pour beaucoup d'ivoiriens dont la condition sociale et économique se précarisait davantage, ceux ci ont donc trouvé dans ce rythme musical une ressource de survie. En effet, en Côte d'ivoire la pauvreté des jeunes constitue une préoccupation pou l'ensemble des partenaires au développement. Un tel constat est motivé par la contribution de la population jeune au renforcement de la pauvreté et du chômage. Les statistiques de l'INS montrent que la contribution des individus dont l'âge est compris entre 15-34 ans au renforcement du chômage est de 85,7% et 80,8% pour les chômeurs pauvres sont de cette tranche d'âge (Kouakou, 2009 :3)

Cet état de dégradation économique des jeunes et de leur bien être pourrait en partie expliquer pourquoi ceux-ci ont pu être vus de toutes parts dans les différentes configurations du jeu politiques ivoirien. A cet sujet, Ruth Marshall Frattani note que : « l'autre phénomène marquant du conflit ivoirien, c'est affirmation des jeunes, le 19 septembre voit l'éclosion de puissant groupes de jeunes « patriotes ». Du côté de la rébellion on constate également l'apparition de nouvelles figures politico-militaires jeunes pour la plus part » (Frattani, 2003 :7)

De plus, c'est une population essentiellement jeune et vigoureusement touchée par la crise de l'emploi et confrontée aux problèmes de l'insertion sur le marché du travail et dans la société, depuis au moins les années 1980. Ainsi, soit le jeunes, « se retrouvent soit enrôlé dans des activités subalternes et faiblement rémunératrices » (Tinel, Guichaoua, 2001 :444). Des discriminations dont le coupé décalé à participé à intensifier la logique de la rareté et le sentiment du manque en véhiculant une inversion sociale du cliché politique ivoirien en subsumant l'avoir, être et le pouvoir, le coupé décale s'est imposé

<sup>2</sup> Terme inventé par les jeunes ivoirien pour désigner celui qui part à l'aventure dans l'hexagone européen

sur beaucoup de plan comme l'antithèse de la configuration politique ivoirienne. Il devient ainsi un nouveau schème cognitif à partir duquel est évalué l'évolution politique de la société ivoirienne mais une évolution sur les conditions de vie des jeunes. Et les chansons que ce registre musical promeut sont intéressantes en tant qu'elles permettent d'expliquer clairement l'expression d'une jeunesse qui se réveille en même temps que l'ouverture démocratique en Côte d'Ivoire

A son arrivée à Abidjan, le coupé décalé s'est accompagnée de l'éclosion de tout un vocabulaire spécifique dédiée à la frime. L'un de ces termes est la « prodada ». Prétendument inventé par, Don Mike le créateur de la danse prudencia (Kohlhagen, 2005) et largement popularisé dans l'espace public ivoirien à travers la figure sociale du boucanier : celui qui peut dépenser et faire et énormément de bruit dans les boîtes de nuit et autres discothèques de la capitale Abidjanaise. C'est aussi cet imaginaire social du boucantier qui nourrit de nombreux itinéraires individuelles d'enrichissement illicites avec le phénomène du « broutage » (exemplifiant le proverbe africain qui dit le mouton broute là ou il est attaché), terme inventé par les ivoiriens pour désigner ceux qui s'adonnent à la cybercriminalité

Mais la relation réelle ou supposée entre le coupé décalé et les réseaux illicites d'enrichissement permet de replacer le concept bourdieusien de fétichisme politique au cœur même de ce dispositif musical. En effet selon Pierre Bourdieu le fétichisme politique désigne « des choses, des gens, des êtres qui semblent ne devoir qu'à eux même une existence que les agents sociaux leur ont donnée » (Bourdieu, 1987 ,187). Il ajoute l'idée que « l'idolâtrie politique réside précisément dans le fait que la valeur qui est dans le personnage, ce produit de la tête de l'homme, apparaît comme une mystérieuse propriété objective de la personne un charme, un charisme »(Bourdieu, ,1987) Ce qui permet de comprendre que dans l'action de donner auxquels se livrent les faiseurs de coupé décalé se trouve une symbolisation qui permet d'acquérir des marchandises qui sont aussi des fétiches au sens où elles peuvent servir comme l'argent à acheter des fans musicaux. Ceci montre qu'aux yeux des adeptes de ce style musical, le cadeau des « boucaniers » est une forme de reconnaissance de leur souffrance sociale par de nouveaux bienfaiteurs en cours de raréfaction sur l'échiquier politique national.

Par ailleurs, le mot politique incorporé dans le langage quotidien des ivoiriens signifie mensonge, tromperie ou encore « accepter de se faire arnaquer » ; Ainsi ceux qui font la politique sont par définition des arnaqueurs. L'imagination populaire associe explicitement la direction de l'Etat ivoirien avec le mensonge et la tromperie. Mais c'est aussi dans un contexte qui met fin au Zouglou que se déroule le succès musical du coupé décale qui à défaut de détenir une vérité certaines offre des nouvelles vérités sociales aux consommateurs de ce rythme musical. Ils leur revendent du rêve ou à défaut d'avoir convenablement pillé Houphouët ceux-ci trouvent une forme de compensation dans le travailèrent qu'effectuent ces nouvelles stars des boîtes de nuits abidjanaises

Notre idée est que le fétichisme attaché à la marchandise coupé décalé est constitutif de l'imaginaire capitaliste-néolibéral qui induit comme mutation, une consubstantialité criminelle entre le coupé décalé d'une part et le politique ivoirien. Ce qui renvoie bien entendu au fait que le coupé décalé constitue une religion de sortie de crise où les jeunes ivoiriens semblent avoir oublié leurs antagonismes et éclatent en émotion collective pour formuler le rêve d'un imaginaire national, « imaginée comme une communauté indépendamment des inégalités et de l'exploitation qui peuvent y régner, la nation est toujours construit comme une camaraderie profonde » (Anderson, 2002 : 21) . et « l'essence, d'une nation est que tous les individus qui habitent un même territoire est vécu beaucoup de chose en commun et aussi que tous est oublié bien des choses » (Renan , cité par Anderson 2002 :19)) . Et le coupé décalé est né dans un contexte de crise qu'il appelait de tous ces vœux à voir disparaître en donnant naissance à une société opulente. A défaut d'avoir un humain pour parvenir à ce but, il encourageait , les jeunes ivoiriens aussi à s'expatrier pour trouver le succès et le sentiment d'une vie réussie à travers plusieurs figures sociales que sont : le migrant, l'artiste, le footballeur, l'homme d'affaire dont la plus négative sur le plan moral est celui du brouteur qui est en passe de devenir malgré tout un nouveau modèle d'identification collective des jeunes urbains

En somme le coupé décale recoupe une séquence historique de la Côte d'ivoire et la mort de son leader Douck Saga à 34ans reste une provocation à l'imaginaire et sa relation présumée avec la famille de Félix Houphouët Boigny ont alimenté des regrets et souvenirs et transformer ses obsèques en fête nationale, décoré à titre posthume et ne sont pas sans rappeler d'autres icônes nationales : comme Kacou Sévérin ou encore Fulgence Kassi, Ernesto Djédjé qui font désormais parties de la mémoire collective des ivoiriens. Bref continuons et disons que le coupé décalé est un agent de transformation de la société ivoirienne. Selon nous, une telle transformation advient dans la question du rapport de la musique à la société. Celle –ci possède une médiativité ou capacité propre de représenter – et de placer cette représentation dans une dynamique communicationnelle qui en fait un média de déstaging de l'espace public à la construction de la communauté nationale, précisément celle de l'imaginaire de la nation en relation avec le partage des cultures. La modernité charrie aussi des idées de conflit générationnel qui peut être même une condition de construction ou de négociation de la modernité (Bahi. Ce conflit générationnel de la modernité est peut-être plus perceptible dans les rapports entre Zouglou et Coupé décalé, là où les disparités en termes d'accès aux objets préfigurant la modernité et l'existence d'un conflit idéologique. Le coupé décalé, participe à la « diffusion des idées, des représentations et des symboles relatifs à la nation à tous les niveaux de l'échelle sociale (...). De cette diffusion dépend l'émergence ou le renouveau d'un sentiment d'identité nationale » (Patez, 1998 :9)

## La globalisation, le coupé décalé et le partage de la singularité ivoirienne

Le Coupé décalé est une invention musicale ivoirienne qui prend cependant son ancrage sur plusieurs scènes et lieux internationaux, ils s'agit dans cette section de notre analyse de procéder à une évaluation sociologique des éléments culturels présentés auparavant dans son contexte d'émergence. Tout d'abord les différents types de lieux qui accueillent le développement du coupé décalé méritent une attention particulière. Pourquoi les boîtes de nuit européennes et ivoiriennes, sont ils fréquentés plus que d'autres par les faiseurs du coupé décalé ? Réciproquement, qu'est ce que le coupé décalé peut il nous apprendre sur les échanges culturels qui se produisent à partir de ces lieux ?

Disons premièrement, le coupé décalé est un sous produit de la globalisation économique et à ce titre prend son ancrage à partir de plusieurs métropoles mondiales. Le rôle de la métropole parisienne et londonienne ont été soulevé dans cette invention musicale, que ce soit à Londres, Paris ou Abidjan et Douala en passant par Ouaga, le coupé décalé échafaude une culture de la fête qui est en passe de devenir un rite d'institution qui puise son ses raisons dans le vécu culturel des faiseurs de coupé décalé. Etant donné que la plupart de ces inventeurs sont en situation d'immigration dans l'Hexagone parisien et londoniens, ils trouvent dans leur vécu culturel l'occasion de promouvoir cette culture de la fête en provenance des milieux urbains Abidjanais. Mais une culture qui n'est sans lien avec l'ambiance bruyante des métropoles européennes. D'autre part, les boîtes de nuit peuvent être considérées, d'une certaine manière, comme un lieu culturel. On sait le rôle que jouent ces espaces dans la construction de la sociabilité urbaine à un moment où le monde moderne est confronté à une crise du lien social et politique. Mais ils ont également une fonction symbolique celui de domestiquer la peur des jeunes urbains face à la ville qui est aussi présenté comme un haut lieu d'insécurité. Et la nuit à longtemps été perçue comme un temps d'inversion du rythme social et biologique ; chargée en symbolique et supports idéologiques, elle fait peur. Cependant si le coupé décalé prospère dans la nuit c'est qu'il parvient à annihiler les effets de cette peur qui se trouvait plus accentué depuis le déclenchement du conflit ivoirien

Les discothèques parisiennes et ivoiriennes ont une fonction identique dans la mondialisation du coupé décalé, lorsqu'elles mettent du coupé décalé, rappelons que leur public proviennent en grade partie des banlieues parisiennes et ivoiriennes et contribuent au formatage sur le plan esthétiques des pas de danses correspondant à cette invention musicale qui colle au projet identitaire de ces jeunes urbains plus enclin à rechercher des innovations sociales pour soutenir et légitimer leur histoire biographique

En Côte d'Ivoire, le développement de cette invention musicale doit aussi son succès au développement du phénomène des maquis qui jalonnent les rues des quartiers de la ville Abidjan. En effet la ville d'Abidjan est le fruit de l'évolution, le lieu où

la concentration humaine est importante et où les attitudes des ivoiriennes et des ivoiriens changent et se reconfigurent au contact des autres cultures urbaines, en créant la ville, les jeunes ivoiriens se recréent eux-même. En ce sens, la ville d'Abidjan peut- être considérée comme un laboratoire social, comme le lieu d'une invention musicale et c'est un fait de plus en plus certains que toutes les grandes cultures sont citadines. Et la ville d'Abidjan offre cette opportunité aux faiseurs du coupé décalé de trouver un marché local de consommateur à travers le lien social que créent les maquis Abidjanais entre les citadins. Cela est aussi le fait que le coupé décalé est porté au niveau local par de nombreuses controverses sur les détenteurs « conceptuels » de ces nouveaux rythmes urbains que sont par exemple le Kpongô d'Arafat DJ, le fatigué-fatigué de Francky Dicaprio etc

Mais puisque la ville d'Abidjan est le fruit d'une croissance plutôt que d'une création instantané il faut s'attendre à ce que ces influences culturelles participent à structurer des modes de vie et des habitudes vestimentaires. Par conséquent notre vie sociale porte plus ou moins la marque d'une société urbaine. Cette influence historique se décline dans le coupé-décalé à travers la figure sociale du maquis. Si Abidjan est « c'est la vie », comme le disent les ivoiriens, Abidjan c'est aussi une culture de la fête que le coupé décalé et les maquis permettent de promouvoir. Car les ivoiriens ont l'art de banaliser les crises et le coupé sert à cette fonction de la banalisation de la crise ivoirienne. De cette façon, les crises sont moins douloureuses, le coupé décalé en puisant dans le nouchi ivoirien les armes de sa formulation participe à décalé l'ivoirien en lui fournissant les ressources idéologiques de sa survie politique. Les banalisations politiques qui s'en suivent sont une forme indirecte de la critique sociale et politique en proposant cette singularité au monde confronté à une période de crise qu'Ulrich Beck a défini en termes d'une société du risque. Car, « [...] nous n'échangeons pas seulement des biens mais aussi des maux », et « les risques sont les passagers clandestins » de la prétendue modernité.

Si le risque semble être aussi présent dans le monde, le coupé décalé est pour les jeunes ivoiriens une façon de le dévoyé face à une crise du futur encore toujours active dans les grandes métropoles mondiale, la promotion d'une culture festive où se mêle l'humour est pour les jeunes ivoiriens une façon de banaliser les déclinaison dramatiques du politique que l'invention musicale du Zouglou plus enclin à la critique officiel ne parvient plus à atténuer les effets, le couplé décalé offre l'opportunité de « faire la fête sans se prendre la tête ». Cependant, cette jeunesse loin de jeter « l'éponge », comme un boxeur trouvera dans le coupé décalé le moyen de se distraire tout en continuant sous une forme nouvelle qui n'emprunte pas les voies précédemment tracé par le Zouglou. Ce rythme musical apparait sous la formes d'une plaisanterie chantante, (...) qui rythment les différentes langues nationales, les stéréotypes comportementaux des groupes ethniques, les problèmes de promiscuité, les difficultés de la vie des noirs Africains en France, les promesses électorales non ténues, les « ordures et la pollution » et, bien entendu, les rapports éternels entre l'amour et l'argent, ce couple récurrent dans les chansons populaires ».

## Extrait d'un morceau de Zouglou

« Ah la vie estudiantine  
 Elle est belle.  
 Mais on y rencontre beaucoup de problème  
 Lorsqu'on voit un étudiant on l'envie  
 Toujours bien sapé.  
 Joli garçon sans produit ghanéen  
 Mais en fait il faut rentrer dans son milieu  
 Pour connaître la misère et la galère d'un étudiant  
 Ah bon Dieu, qu'avons-nous fait pour subir un tel sort ?  
 Et c'est cette manière d'implorer le seigneur qui a engendré le Zouglou  
 Danse philosophique, qui permet à l'étudiant de se recueillir.  
 Et d'oublier un peu ses problèmes.  
 Dansons donc le Zouglou<sup>3</sup>

Disons ici que si le Zouglou vise les même objectifs que le Coupé décalé à savoir échapper à une situation économique et sociale devenu difficile depuis l'effondrement de l'houphouëtisme pour une jeunesse en quête de repère , c'est que les voies par lesquelles cette quête de solutions s'opèrent divergent d'avec le coupé décalé. Le Zouglou implore Dieu, l'autorité supérieure, la transcendance, tandis que le coupé décalé opère un changement paradigmatique en faisant émerger l'ethos de l'individu, qui vise un processus d'individualisation, « un processus de prise de distance, objective et subjective, de la personne vis-à-vis de ses inscriptions et déterminations sociales. Cela implique la capacité matérielle à pouvoir s'affranchir de l'appartenance communautaire, et par la suite, la capacité intellectuelle (et affective) de se mettre à distance réflexive et critique des fondations éthiques qui sous –tendent les ressorts de la solidarité » (Marie,

Par ailleurs, le coupé décalé en s'installant dans les lieux publics de la ville d'Abidjan, cherche donc à conquérir une visibilité toujours plus grande. Un tel usage de l'espace public se justifie selon deux logiques : en premier lieu une logique symbolique ; être ensemble danser là où il y a du passage afin d'être vus, côtoyer ses pairs, les défier ; en second lieu, une logique économique celle du marché : choisir des lieux attrayants pour se faire vendre auprès d'un public de jeunes. Mais le coupé décalé est également une culture d'espace public en raison des caractéristiques sociodémographiques de ceux qui fréquentent les maquis et les discothèques et autres boîtes de nuit Abidjanaises. Ces lieux particuliers ne sont pas réservés à certains groupes sociaux ; tout au contraire ce sont des lieux de circulation. Les maquis et dancings bars, ces lieux fréquentés en grand nombre par les jeunes urbains et les faiseurs de coupé décalé, sont des lieux de passages fréquentés par un grand nombre d'individus aux appartenances multiples. Dans ces lieux

3 Ces paroles sont tirées du premier Album les « parents du campus » paru en 1990

les différentes classes sociales se rencontrent des plus jeunes aux plus âgés. En somme ces lieux précédemment cités ont une fonction de désenclavement et d'accessibilité au plus grand nombre, ce qui justifie qu'ils deviennent des lieux à soi qui participent à la popularisation du coupé comme la nouvelle invention musicale de cette nouvelle décennie. C'est ainsi que cette musique devient si populaire au point de transcender les frontières en faisant des faiseurs de coupé décalé de Paris à Abidjan en passant par Londres ou Bruxelles pour devenir des stars mondiales. Les airs du coupé décalé se déclinent par exemple comme suit :

African connection: Ami Oh!  
 Hey ami oh, ah  
 Viens couper décaler  
 Les gens ils sont entrain de couper,  
 Décaler la -bas  
 Oh la prudencia  
 Ca aussi ca inquiète les gens la bas  
 Couper, couper  
 Ils sont en train de gâter le coin la bas  
 Danse, dans le tempo danse (Couper, décaler)  
 Danse, dans le tempo danse (il faut travailler  
 Danse, dans le tempo danse (Couper décaler  
 Danse, dans le tempo danse (il faut, il faut, il faut travailler)  
 Ami oh le monde est ma maison  
 Et le ciel est mon toi  
 Vien avec moi  
 Ami oh, l'amour est ma maison  
 Eh le bonheur ma loi  
 Viens avec moi  
 Ami oh, l'amour est ma maison  
 Et le bonheur ma loi  
 Viens avec moi<sup>4</sup>

En somme, disons que ces différents airs et rythmes du coupé décalé s'emboîtent dans les logiques de la globalisation et son message principal se retrouve dans une posture festive où elle offre l'occasion à ses différents adeptes de se divertir malgré la présence de la crise qu'elle soit mondiale ou nationale. Aussi la vie moderne dans les grandes métropoles est largement rythmée par un ensemble d'institutions dont l'école, l'église, les associations culturelles, les partis politiques si bien que le temps des loisirs est utilisé pour se soustraire des obligations institutionnelles devenues assez contraignantes

<sup>4</sup> Ces paroles de la chanson *Ami oh !* sont extraites de l'album du groupe *Africain connexion* paru en 2004

pour les individus et les communautés. Dans cette posture le coupé décale que ce soit à Paris ou Abidjan fait partie de ces espaces sociabilités entre la famille et les milieux institutionnels avec leur logiques bureaucratiques, le coupé décale invite à être loufoques dans un espace temps déterminé pour oublier le stress qui peut découler de l'intensité des activités professionnelles.

Le succès actuel de ce rythme musical est aussi motivé par cette fonction thérapeutique qu'il joue auprès d'un large public de jeune en quête d'un projet identitaire. On voit dans ces conditions comment il conditionne les trajectoires sociales des individus en même temps qu'il offre à la fois un espace d'apprentissage pour les groupes de pairs et un espace de représentation au sens goffmanien du terme et qui participe à structurer des scènes de reconnaissance et une dynamique représentationnelle de l'altérité sociale auprès des jeunes urbains

Disons aussi que ce style musical renforce une culture de la mobilité. En effet les jeunes Africains sont motivés par le projet migratoire européen du fait de la faiblesse institutionnelle de l'Etat en Afrique redoublé par les multiplicités des crises qui rythment le quotidien de ces jeunes. Et le coupé décalé en renforçant une culture de la mobilité participe à structurer et à faire circuler ce flot d'images en provenance des clips vidéo et des médias que montent ces faiseurs de coupé décalé et vantent auprès de ce public jeunes le caractère luxueux des métropoles européennes. En effet Jean Jaques Kouamé, un autre membre de la Jet sept parisienne, (Jet 7) à travers son dernier clip intitulé le pas du brave arbore des vêtements particuliers au coté d'un jet privé et esquisse des pas de danse d'une facilité déconcertante auprès d'un public féminin. Ce qui montre à la fois que le coupé décalé mobilise un langage de la réussite sociale qui s'encastre dans une culture de la mobilité et un échange de valeurs entre le local et le global et fait miroiter à la jeunesse Africaines le rêve de l'eldorado européen. Cette tactique musicale est motivée par le désir d'une plus grande visibilité de ces stars faiseurs du coupé décalé. Mais de manière générale la culture du coupé décalé recherche la notoriété mais une notoriété qui transcende les frontières et qui implique de multiplier les clips vidéos, les contacts et d'être présent dans un maximum de lieux. Les danseurs de ce mouvement participe aussi à des battles à l'occasion des concerts que se livrent ces stars du coupé décale à l'image d'Arabat DJ dont la notoriété traverse aujourd'hui les frontières du continents. Ils imitent les stars américaines en popularisant la notion de clachs musicaux

Ainsi le coupé décalé contribue pour les jeunes ivoiriens à structurer une dynamique représentationnelle de la ville d'Abidjan qui en dépit de la crise ivoirienne demeure un pôle de médiation culturelle à travers aussi des blogs comme : Abidjan Show.com, Ivoirmixdj.com. Mais il convient cependant de replacer le rythme coupé décalé que mènent les jeunes urbains ivoiriens consciemment ou inconsciemment dans une politique culturelle visant à redorer le blason de la capitale ivoirienne terni dans leur imaginaire par les dix dernières années du conflit ivoirien, car la culture joue un rôle important dans leur imaginaire et dans la construction des images de la ville ; elle



est en quelques sorte une vitrine de ce qu'une ville peut offrir à ces habitants et à ses visiteurs en termes de loisirs et de manifestations artistiques, et en même temps elle symbolise l'identité nationale, à la fois sa capacité à agir sur les grandes orientations politiques de l'Etat et participe à indiquer la pluralités des mondes sociaux et que l'universel n'est que le partage des singularités et ce rythmé musical participe à exemplifier le phénomène de la mondialisation comme l'entrée symbolique du monde dans l'intimité sociale et culturelle de chaque société, avec les effets que cette proximité relationnelle, souhaitée réelle ou fantasmée peut produire sur notre manière de voir , d'entendre et d'éprouver les sensations, une évidence que le coupé décalé participe à intensifier à travers une « culture matérielle du succès » . Par cette expression, nous désignons une matérialisation de la réussite via une mise en intrigue de la vie sociale que proposent ces adeptes de ce style musical par le biais des vêtements qu'ils arborent et des clips vidéo qu'ils produisent. Cette visibilité leur donne du pouvoir et participe à exemplifier l'échec de la société politique. En se concentrant sur les lieux où les faiseurs de coupé décalé se produisent, nous pouvons émettre l'hypothèse que nous détectons des lieux de médiation qui constituent des lieux de partage d'une singularité par lesquels les messages suivent des trajectoires complexes. Et parviennent par conséquent à s'implanter durablement dans la conscience des jeunes ivoiriens qui pensent dorénavant à la libre expression d'eux-mêmes

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# An Investigation into Factors Impacting on Exports from South Africa to the Southern African development Community (SADC)

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## Abstract

*Manufacturers face vigorous competition in local and export markets and need to have a genuine competitive advantage in order to grow. The South African government has recognised the importance of developing national manufacturing capacity as a means of increasing employment and reducing poverty. To this end, the government provides substantial support to both the manufacturing and exporting sectors. The government also negotiated the Southern African Development Community (SADC) agreement which leverages competitive advantages for South African manufacturers exporting into the region. However, since the ratification of the SADC agreement in 2008, there has been no perceptible increase in export activity to the region when compared to other markets. This research study was conducted to determine why this is the case and what factors are influencing the process. A structured literature review was undertaken to encapsulate export barriers, the role of the South African government in the export process, and the SADC agreement. The findings of the reviewed literature form the basis of the survey that led to the compilation of the research primary data. The results indicate that export barriers do not pose a major obstacle to trade into the SADC region. The role that the South African government holds was less conclusive with some successes noted, but on the whole the impact is not meaningfully positive. The SADC agreement and the dynamics prevailing in the free trade area do have a positive impact on exports to the region. The level of awareness with regard to the government support initiatives appears to be low.*

## Résumé

*Les fabricants font face à une vive concurrence sur les marchés locaux et d'exportation et ont besoin d'avoir un véritable avantage concurrentiel pour se développer. Le gouvernement sud-africain a reconnu l'importance de renforcer les capacités nationales de production comme un moyen d'accroître l'emploi et réduire la pauvreté. À cette fin, le gouvernement apporte un soutien important à la fois la fabrication et secteurs exportateurs. Le gouvernement a également négocié l'accord Southern African Development Community (SADC), qui s'appuie sur des avantages concurrentiels pour les fabricants sud-africains exportateurs dans la région. Cependant, depuis la ratification de l'accord de la SADC en 2008, il a eu aucune augmentation*

*perceptible de l'activité d'exportation de la région par rapport à d'autres marchés . Cette étude a été menée afin de déterminer pourquoi c'est le cas et quels sont les facteurs qui influencent le processus . Une revue de la littérature structurée a été entreprise pour encapsuler les obstacles à l'exportation , le rôle du gouvernement sud-africain dans le processus d'exportation , et l'accord de la SADC . Les résultats de la littérature examinée forment la base de l'enquête qui a conduit à la compilation des données primaires de la recherche . Les résultats indiquent que les barrières à l'exportation ne constituent pas un obstacle majeur au commerce dans la région de la SADC . Le rôle que le gouvernement sud-africain détient était moins concluante avec quelques réussites constatées, mais dans l'ensemble l'impact n'est pas significative positive. L'accord de la SADC et la dynamique qui prévaut dans la zone de libre-échange ont un impact positif sur les exportations de la région . Le niveau de sensibilisation à l'égard des initiatives de soutien du gouvernement semble être faible .*

## **Introduction**

Globalisation has enabled businesses to increase revenues by selling to larger markets internationally, thereby allowing businesses to take advantage of cheaper factors of production by manufacturing in optimal location economies (McLeay, 2010). Foreign competitors are now entering industries in developing nations that were closely protected in the past and this has resulted in increased competition, which ultimately benefits consumers through lower prices (Hill, 2011). In a small open economy such as that of South Africa, it is becoming increasingly important for manufacturing enterprises to compete in international markets to benefit from economies of scale and develop a sustainable competitive advantage (Williams, 2010). The global recession since 2008 has impacted on the traditional South African export markets, particularly in Europe and North America. The world is looking to Africa for growth opportunities and South Africa has the advantage of being a gateway into sub-Saharan Africa (DTI, 2010).

The terms of the SADC agreement therefore create a favourable environment for South African manufacturers competing in this region, although it appears that manufacturers have yet to leverage these benefits to their full potential.

This leads to the need for research to enable the effective internationalisation of South African manufacturers through export, to achieve the dynamic gains required to compete successfully in the new economic paradigm.

## **Problem statement and objectives**

In the context of an increasingly competitive economic environment, the importance of exporting has been widely recognised (DTI, 2011). To satisfy the growth imperative large companies have to turn to export when local markets are saturated (Adendorff, 2010; UN, 2012). Besides the traditional argument on the benefit of economies of

scale, exporting also gives companies valuable insights into customers and competitors attributes that enhance overall competitiveness (Van Eldik and Viviers, 2005). Small to medium sized manufacturing enterprises (SMME's) that export are therefore usually more sustainable and have a greater likelihood of business survival and expansion (Trung, 2008). According to Brouthers, Nakos, Hadjimarcou and Brouthers (2009), the higher the ratio of exports, the greater the competitive advantage that is developed through the transfer of knowledge gained in international markets.

However, South Africa is still largely a resource based exporter with a relatively poor record when it comes to manufactured exports. While the ratio of manufactured exports to total merchandise exports increased from 43.2% in 1994 to 63.7% in 2006, it still lags noticeably behind the world average of 74.8% (UN, 2012). Recent data reveals that the ratio of manufactured exports to total merchandise exports decreasing from 68% in 2008 to 59% in 2011 (DTI, 2011).

It is in the best interests of the South African economy to stimulate the growth of manufacturing and it is advantageous to stimulate the export growth. Taking this one logical step forward dictates that it is in the best interests of a modern economy to stimulate the exports of manufactured goods (UN, 2012). Unfortunately South Africa lags behind international trends in this category (Van der Walt, 2007) and failure to address this problem may lead to a systematic decline in the competitive position of South African manufacturers.

Against this background, the primary objective of this study is to identify the trade barrier factors that impact on successful SADC exports. The potential influences will also be investigated in terms of why exports to the SADC region have not improved and to determine further factors influencing this process?

## **Factors impacting on exports**

In developing nations, an outward orientation promotes the adoption of best business practices, new product development and improved competitiveness (UN, 2012). The economic argument is that all countries enjoy the benefits of comparative advantage while emerging economies reap the additional benefits associated with an external orientation (Palley, 2011; UN, 2012). The success of the Asian countries that adopted an outward orientated approach also provides a strong case for exporting as a medium to achieve economic growth (Hye and Siddiqui, 2011).

Export trade theory has attracted a great deal of research into its shortcomings and limitations, particularly with regard to the assumptions based on perfectly competitive markets (Mbatha and Charalambides, 2008).

While questioning the economic fundamentals underlying export theory is important. Palley (2011) argues that some of the proponents of economic openness and trade

are the large multinationals that benefited from what is now known as globalisation. Large multinationals found allies in the IMF and World Bank who provided financial assistance to developing countries conditional on the acceptance of open economic policy. Palley (2011) contends that this paradigm fosters a “race to the bottom” that is characterised by a poor regulation of environmental and working conditions in order to attract investment. Palley (2011) cites the Robinson (1947) critique that infers that some developing countries rob employment from other countries by following an export-led growth policy. This critique also suggests that developing countries on the other hand exports may ultimately end up in congested markets. Rangasamy (2009) however cautions that there is a risk that South Africa may end up being vulnerable to external slumps by cultivating a strong dependence on exports. The South African government has therefore recognised this hazard and targets “balanced growth” as part of the AsgiSA initiative.

## **Export barriers**

Exports barriers refer to restrictions that constrain a firm from trading in foreign markets. Arteaga-Ortiz and Fernández-Ortiz (2010) performed an analysis of the literature and categorised the barriers according to four core factors: knowledge barriers; resources barriers, procedure barriers and exogenous barriers. For the purpose of this study, a selection of internal and external barriers has been reviewed.

According to Köksal and Kettane (2011), external barriers arise from market structures and the government policies in the home and foreign countries. These include factors such as fierce competition and cut-throat pricing in foreign markets. Alternatively difficulties may also relate to perceptions about the country of origin. A significant barrier to exporting is the regulatory environment, which can be split into economic, social and administrative regulations. Economic regulations involve interference in the market that may affect pricing or competition and social regulations are instituted to protect safety, health and the environment. Administrative regulations consist of the documentation and administration procedures that need to be performed to comply with government requirements (Koch and Peet, 2007). Political instability also poses a serious threat via the risk of property being confiscated, operations being terminated or payments being frozen (Leonidou, 2004).

Research by Mpinganjira (2011) points to the following as the most common internal export barriers: shortage of personnel skilled in exports; lack of knowledge on export opportunities; lack of production capacity; shortage of finance, and product quality issues. Perhaps more significantly, Mpinganjira (2011) found that firms in different industries viewed the relative importance of barriers very differently. According to Van Eldik and Viviers (2005) some of the reasons firms are restricted from exporting are

related to insufficiencies in financial, operational and managerial capabilities. Many South African companies are not price competitive and lack an export culture (DTI, 2011). In terms of product certification, Koch and Peet (2007) point out that while many South African firms already conform to international requirements, some exporters have great difficulty in obtaining the correct information to allow them to comply. Companies that were interested in exporting but not yet exporting, cited a lack of information on export opportunities and an inability to compete on price as the two most prevalent barriers to entry (Adendorff, 2010). Mpinganjira (2011) also highlights management perceptions and the effect of negative experiences in the past as important barriers to export.

As with tariff barriers Leonidou (2004) again ranks non-tariff barriers as only having a moderate impact on export performance. However, Daya, Ranoto and Letsoalo (2006) argue that non-tariff barriers are of major importance with regard to the African continent. Obstacles like customs procedures and payment mechanisms affect the price of goods sold and hence competitiveness. The absence of predictability and transparency within customs offices in Africa is also an important impediment to trade. A World Bank (2009) report on logistics performance highlights the “thickness” of Africa’s borders. The “thicker” the border the greater the restrictions placed on trade, travel and the mobility of the factors of production (UN, 2012). Examining this in more detail reveals that African countries trail other regions when it comes to customs procedures, infrastructure, logistics capabilities and time efficiencies. This is backed up by the Doing Business report (The World Bank, 2012), which reflects that the number of days to import or export goods in sub-Saharan Africa are 38 and 32 days respectively and this is three times longer than the OECD countries. A similar pattern emerges when it comes to the costs of moving containers across borders, where it is more than double the cost in SSA compared to the OECD and East Asian countries. Finally, it is pertinent to review some of the most detrimental barriers that remain in Africa and consider their consequences and the costs they incur (The World Bank, 2012). Low quality transport and logistics networks, delays caused by inefficient customs procedures and a lack of competition amongst logistics providers leads to increased trading costs (UN, 2012). A major retailer in South Africa maintain that for each day lost due to border delays the cost incurred is US\$500 per truck. The fiscal borders between the countries of Southern Africa are therefore inefficient and overly complicated.

Another important issue uncovered by The World Bank (2012) report is that preferential trade is limited by obstructive rules of origin. The labour intensive industries of the SADC region often require capital intensive inputs that are not competitive locally. The cost of complying with the rules associated with certificates of origin offsets the benefit gained from a trade preference and acts as a disincentive to trade. The administrative costs can be almost half of the benefit enjoyed as experienced by the same retailer, who lay out US\$5.8 million per year to recover SADC duties of US\$13.56

million. In contrast, another major South African retailer does not bother with ever claiming preferential SADC duties as it considers the reward not worth the investment (The World Bank, 2012). Both Nsingo and Steyn (2007) and Reddy (2011) have also cited technical regulations as a trade barrier, and Southern African countries are guilty of being overly zealous in this department.

## **Government support**

Several studies (UN, 2012; Flatters, 2002; Economic Commission for Africa, 2011; Gorlach, 2011; Gwartney, Lawson and Hall, 2011; Reddy, 2011) recognise the importance of government's role with regard to the macroeconomic environment. In this context, the state enables trade through the provision of a stable exchange rate and macroeconomic policies, the financial regulatory environment, education, enforcing the rule of law, telecommunications and the many other factors conducive to creating a climate favourable for trade, investment and employment (UN, 2012, Adendorff, 2010). Creating strong institutions, bringing in foreign resources and improving productivity are all important elements of the process. The issue of productivity is particularly important as it is the differential in productivity between countries that is the main reason for different income levels, rather than capital accumulation (Economic Commission for Africa, 2011). Hallaert, Cavazos and Kang (2011) support the importance of labour productivity as a factor to increase trade and economic growth. Their research indicates that an increase in labour productivity of 10 % improves the ratio of exports to GDP by 3% and increases the economic growth rate by 0.65%. This highlights the need to have government policies that are complimentary to each other; thus making labour productivity a strategic objective that should be supported by appropriate education and training programmes (UN, 2012).

According to the Economic Commission for Africa (2011), another area where government has an important role to function is with regard to economic diversification. The lack of structural transformation and limited diversification inhibits the ability of African economies to reach and sustain high growth rates and to benefit from the concomitant social development. This is evident in the high African growth rates achieved over the past decade, which have counter-intuitively been accompanied by increased unemployment and poverty (UNDP, 2012). The recent global economic crisis has also demonstrated the need for economic transformation, for economies to be diversified to be able to create wealth, reduce poverty and provide good quality employment. The importance of economic diversification is supported by Karungu and Khamfula (2004) who contend the developing economies are too reliant on the exports of primary products. This places such economies at risk in terms of unpredictable exchange rates. An even greater risk may be volatile international commodity prices



that are beyond national control and can have a serious impact on export performance. Economic diversification can therefore mitigate the effects of these risks, which may stabilise and expand trade in recessionary times (UN, 2012; World Bank, 2010).

Research by Skae and Barclay (2007) also found that developing countries should have export growth in excess of 5% per annum to have a meaningful impact on poverty reduction. It was argued that this will not happen autonomously; hence countries need a national strategy to facilitate the growth of exports. It would be unfair to suggest that the South African government does not play a significant role, whether it is with regard to export promotion, trade facilitation or in the macroeconomic arena. Through AsgiSA (Government Communication and Information Services, 2006) the government identified constraints restricting economic growth, as well as a set of strategic interventions designed to overcome these restraints. A component of this package includes macroeconomic challenges such as reducing exchange rate overvaluation and volatility. Jordaan and Kanda (2011) cite the argument that since the 1990s the South African government has implemented reforms that have transformed a highly protected economy into one that is now open. The contention is that industries that are now externally orientated are growing at a faster rate than other industries.

## **Methodology**

In quantitative research, data is collected by means of a survey for statistical analysis purposes with the intent to generalise the results to a population (Yin, 2004). Surveys may be descriptive in nature and aimed at gaining insights into phenomena at a certain point in time; whereas analytical surveys, are conducted to ascertain if a relationship exists between variables (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The descriptive element covers the level of awareness of the manufacturing community with regard to the role of the government and that of the SADC agreement and the analytical component examines the impact of the variables on exports to the SADC region.

## **The Sample and Data Collection**

The population for this study was manufacturing enterprises within the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The unit of analysis was the export managers or middle to senior level marketing managers within these businesses. The sample frame contained manufacturers that currently export to the SADC region and/or, currently export but not to the SADC region. Due to time and cost constraints, convenience sampling was used for this study. Subjective sampling is based on methods such as judgment and convenience sampling (Evans, 2010). With this in mind, the measuring instrument was sent to the Eastern Cape Exporters Club, the Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber, Tradepoint Nelson

Mandela Bay and the Eastern Cape Development Corporation for distribution to their members. The measuring instrument was sent as an attachment in Microsoft Word format, to be completed and returned either via email or fax. The questionnaire was also offered as an online survey where the anonymity and ease of submission appeared to facilitate a better return rate. Through this process, 80 manufacturers were approached and this yielded 55 responses. However, 52 were deemed suitable for analysis after visual examination of the completed questionnaires. This translates into response rate of 69%. All of the items on the questionnaire were based on a 5 point Likert scale.

## **Data Analysis Procedure**

The results were initially arranged in a suitable format using Microsoft Excel 2010 and subsequently analysed using Statistica 10.0. The objective was to determine if any relationships exist between the variables. When the objective is to measure relationships between one or more independent variables and a dependent variable, Evans (2010) proposed that regression analysis is a suitable tool for this type of analysis. A thorough, descriptive statistical analysis, which entails means, was also undertaken by the researchers using Microsoft Excel 2010.

## **Reliability and Validity Of The Instrument**

Reliability and validity are important concepts in research and impact on the probability that researchers will be able to obtain meaningful results from the data. In terms of the data collected for this study, the Cronbach alpha test was performed for each of the variables to determine the internal consistency. With acceptable reliability being associated with a result of 0.70, it can be seen in Table .1 that all four variables exceed this benchmark.

**Table 1: Cronbach test for internal consistency**

Average inter-item correlation: 0.56		
	Item-Total	Alpha if
	Correlation	deleted
EXB1	0.42	0.92
EXB2	0.74	0.90
EXB3	0.80	0.90
EXB4	0.78	0.90
EXB5	0.68	0.91
EXB6	0.71	0.91
EXB7	0.68	0.91
EXB8	0.82	0.90
EXB9	0.69	0.91
Cronbach alpha: 0.91		

Average inter-item correlation: 0.39		
	Item-Total	Alpha if
	Correlation	deleted
INB1	0.48	0.79
INB2	0.60	0.76
INB3	0.40	0.80
INB4	0.51	0.78
INB5	0.64	0.75
INB6	0.64	0.76
INB7	0.52	0.78
Cronbach alpha: 0.80		

Average inter-item correlation: 0.55		
	Item-Total	Alpha if
	Correlation	deleted
ROG1	0.69	0.88
ROG2	0.66	0.88
ROG3	0.67	0.88
ROG4	0.70	0.88
ROG5	0.84	0.86
ROG6	0.76	0.87
ROG7	0.43	0.90
ROG8	0.73	0.88
Cronbach alpha: 0.89		

Average inter-item correlation: 0.41		
	Item-Total	Alpha if
	Correlation	deleted
SAD1	0.57	0.75
SAD2	0.71	0.72
SAD3	0.53	0.76
SAD4	0.54	0.76
SAD5	0.53	0.77
SAD6	0.47	0.79
Cronbach alpha: 0.79		

## Results

The questionnaire encompassed the export barriers, with the first nine questions relating to external barriers and the next seven to internal barriers. A summary of the responses is listed in Table 2 including each question's mean and standard deviation.

**Table 2: Responses to export barriers**

<b>Section 3: Barriers to exports</b>										
<b>To what extent does each of the barriers to exports indicated below make it difficult for your company to initiate or expand its export activity into the SADC region?</b>		<b>Code</b>	<b>Valid n</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>x-bar</b>	<b>StdDev</b>
Q3-1	A shortage of foreign exchange	EXB1	48	4%	4%	15%	25%	52%	4.2	1.10
Q3-2	Documentation and red tape required for the export operation	EXB2	48	8%	15%	27%	25%	25%	3.4	1.25
Q3-3	Political instability	EXB3	48	4%	15%	29%	23%	29%	3.6	1.18
Q3-4	Corruption	EXB4	46	15%	15%	20%	24%	26%	3.3	1.41
Q3-5	Import duties	EXB5	49	4%	12%	27%	27%	31%	3.7	1.16
Q3-6	Risk of exchange rate volatility	EXB6	49	4%	10%	31%	29%	27%	3.6	1.11
Q3-7	Transport costs and shipping arrangements	EXB7	48	6%	33%	33%	13%	15%	3.0	1.15
Q3-8	High financial cost of the methods of payment	EXB8	46	7%	15%	26%	24%	28%	3.5	1.24
Q3-9	Mandatory pre-shipment inspections	EXB9	47	0%	17%	26%	23%	34%	3.7	1.11
Q3-10	Lack of personnel skilled in exports	INB1	48	4%	19%	15%	21%	42%	3.8	1.29
Q3-11	Lack of knowledge of potential export markets	INB2	48	10%	21%	19%	21%	29%	3.4	1.38
Q3-12	Insufficient production capacity in your firm	INB3	48	2%	6%	10%	19%	63%	4.3	1.04
Q3-13	Lack of finance to fund export operations	INB4	48	2%	4%	13%	21%	60%	4.3	1.00
Q3-14	Lack of information on opportunities for your products abroad	INB5	48	6%	23%	25%	21%	25%	3.4	1.26
Q3-15	Difficulty in complying with product certification	INB6	48	2%	2%	13%	27%	56%	4.3	0.93
Q3-16	Lack of management time	INB7	48	2%	8%	13%	29%	48%	4.1	1.06

Source: Author's own construction from survey data

The first perception measured was in relation to the influence of a lack of foreign exchange on exports to the SADC region. The data reveals that 77% of the respondents indicated that this factor is not a significant constraint, with only 8% indicating that it is a hindrance. This is a factor that has historically been a problem in the SADC region so the positive response is encouraging. With a mean score (MS) of 4.2, this is clearly not a barrier that is significantly restricting exports to the SADC region.

Only 23% of respondents indicated that documentation requirements are a hindrance, while half of the sample indicated that that this factor is not a material obstruction to SADC exports. It is worth noting the feedback from the "Category 7" SADC exporters – respondents who have more than 60% of their export turnover going to the SADC region. This group had an MS of 2.6, indicating that they felt the negative impact of this factor more than the other respondents. Previous research by Van der Walt (2007) found that the primary facilitating factor requested by exporters from government was the simplification of paperwork. The data depicted appears to indicate that this element is not a major impediment to initiating exports but there is still a need to streamline these processes. The data demonstrates a similar configuration for political stability with more than half of the respondents indicating that this factor poses no major export barrier.

The influence of corruption also had half the respondents indicating that this factor does not significantly hinder exports to the SADC region. But this must be moderated with the 30% of respondents, who have suggested that corruption is a noteworthy hindrance. As one of the corner stones of the SADC agreement is the reduction of import duties within the region, it was expected that this factor would not prove to be a substantial barrier to export within the region. This is borne out by 58% of the respondents. Perhaps more significant is the fact that only 16% of respondents ranked this as an influential barrier. It might be argued that if the SADC agreement was completely effective in reducing the impact of import duties then the ratio of 16% would be even lower. It should, however, be borne in mind that import duties have not been eradicated entirely by the SADC agreement. Where import duties are still applicable, it is usually to protect an indigenous manufacturer, hence the tariff rate may be sizeable

The perception of exchange rate volatility reveals a similar pattern to that of import duties, with 56% not being harshly affected and only 14% ranking this factor negatively. This may imply that the government is succeeding with its AsgiSA objective of reducing exchange rate overvaluation and volatility. The World Bank (2012) consistently highlights the challenges associated with moving goods within Africa and the results imply that their observations and concerns are accurate. With only 28% indicating that transport is not a major hindrance, countered by a category high of 39% saying it has a negative influence on exports, it appears that this is indeed the most significant external export barrier in the SADC region. The mean score of 3.0 is also the lowest in the category of external barriers supporting the perception that this is the leading external

barrier. The "Category 7" SADC exporters (those with more than 60% of their export turnover going to the SADC region) affirm this position with a mean of 2.4. The results on payment costs again support the notion of an export barrier in decline with just over half the respondents not perceiving a significant negative impact. This is possibly the result of an improved banking infrastructure within the region, making payment mechanisms quicker, easier and cheaper to process. It may also be argued that political and exchange rate stability has a positive impact on this factor. The final external barrier that was reviewed was that of mandatory pre-shipment inspections, with an MS of 3.7 and 57% of respondents perceiving this factor as a low hindrance, this is another export barrier that does not appear to have any significant negative impact on exports to the SADC region. An interesting phenomenon is that this is the only external or internal barrier that had no respondents indicating 1 (hinders enormously) on the scale.

The MS of 3.6 supports the perception that external export barriers do not present a significant hindrance to SADC exports. A noteworthy incidence within this data set is reflected with the average score for each category of employee level. The smallest companies with a mean score of 3.8 perceived external barriers as a lower hindrance than respondents with more than 500 employees. This might appear counterintuitive, but could be a manifestation of Trung's (2008) claim that smaller firms are more flexible and adaptable than larger firms.

The first measurement of internal factors analysed the human resource aspect of exports. The data reveals that, although 23% of respondents designated this factor as a hindrance, 63% did not, suggesting that the Eastern Cape has a reasonable supply of export personnel. The MIDP scheme played an important role in generating remarkable increases of exports in the automotive industry. The next factor evaluated was the knowledge of potential export markets and a mean score of 3.4 with a standard deviation of 1.38 infers that there is no clear trend in this element. While half the respondents may not perceive this factor to be a serious obstacle, 31% do find it to be a noteworthy barrier.

The data displayed, complemented by a mean score of 4.3, indicates that production capacity does not appear to be hindering exports to the SADC region. This is perhaps not surprising given the fact that the world is in the midst of a recession that is leading to reduced production levels across most industries. The risk inherent in this scenario is that manufacturers may engage in exports to dispose of this excess capacity, but withdraw from the export market when the local market stabilises. Foreign customers negatively affected by this type of behaviour are seldom recovered once lost, so it may be a prudent long-term strategy to practise export customer loyalty in both good and bad times. Although the feedback on production capacity was not an unexpected revelation, it is conceivably surprising that the data on finance reveals similar characteristics as it reflects that 81% of respondents do not regard a lack of finance as a major barrier.

Another interesting characteristic lists the mean score per employee level. Where it might be expected that small companies would feel the greatest negative impact

with regard to a lack of finance the mean of 4.5 indicates strongly that the opposite holds true. This is relevant because many of the resources allocated by government to the business sector are focused on providing finance. Viewing the observations below it may be tempting to suggest that the South African government could move some resources from funding to skills training, for example. Alternatively the findings might simply be confirmation that the government funding programmes are in fact successfully achieving their objectives.

When scrutinising the data covering the lack of information on opportunities abroad, it is interesting to note a parallel with the data. These elements both form part of the knowledge barriers referred to by Arteaga-Ortiz and Fernández-Ortiz (2010) and have the joint lowest mean score of 3.4 in this category.

Another link between these two knowledge barriers is found when analysing the data relative to the number of employees in the organisation. Once again both elements have the same mean score (3.1) for businesses with 50 or less employees. It was noted that one of the non-tariff barriers that has gained favour to offset declining import duties was that of product certification. It is reassuring to that this factor appears to have little negative influence on exports to SADC. Both the 83% who indicated a minimal negative impact and the 4% who indicated that this factor is an obstruction are the most positive results for either external or internal export barriers. This may be because many South African manufacturers are already familiar with the stringent requirements of first world markets such as Europe or the United States of America. It may also imply that our SADC partners are not using product certification in a discriminatory fashion.

The final element assessed as part of the internal export barriers examined the influence of a lack of management time. This is another internal barrier where a majority (77%) of respondents indicated that this factor was not a significant negative influence. This may be another factor that is linked to the worldwide recession, in a similar manner as proposed with regard to production capacity. The reduced operating levels associated with the recession may have freed up management time that can be allocated to exports and other endeavours. The means for all the internal export barriers paints an even more favourable picture than the external barriers. The data indicate that 69% of the respondents do not perceive a significant negative impact and only 10% feel that internal barriers do pose a material hindrance.

Question Q3-17 was open-ended questions allowing respondents to add a barrier that was not listed and question Q3-18 gave them an opportunity to indicate the impact of their barrier. Nine respondents added their own barriers with only one new barrier occurring two or more times. Three respondents highlighted the fact that there are no vehicle original equipment manufacturers (OEM) in the SADC region. As would be expected these three respondents are in the automotive industry and it is most likely that they are automotive component manufacturers who produce products that do not have a large aftermarket requirement.

## **The Role of Government**

Calculating a mean of means across all eight elements results in an average of 40 % of the responses being “Yes”. Looking at this another way, 50% more of the respondents said “No” rather than “Yes”. However, it is necessary to introduce some balance to the results.

The two initiatives with the lowest positive response rates are Tradepoint Nelson Mandela Bay (AROG6) and the Nelson Mandela Municipality Trade and Investment Promotion Unit (AROG8). But it should be noted that both initiatives are relative newcomers. In contrast, the first three factors (AROG1, AROG2, and AROG3) have been in existence for more than two decades each, hence it would not be unreasonable to expect that these would have an even greater level of visibility.

A summary of the responses on impact is listed in Table 3, including each question's mean and standard deviation. When analysing the descriptive statistics relating to the government initiatives, a great deal of symmetry was found in the data. Instead of belabouring the point by deliberating charts for each element it is more effective and instructive to consider the mean scores for all eight questions together. The data excludes the neutral answers allocated to the respondents who answered “No” to the questions on awareness.



**Table 3: Responses to the role of the Government**

Section 4: The role of government		Code	Valid n	SD	D	N	A	SA	x-bar	StdDev
Q4-2	The Export Marketing and Investment Assistance (EMIA) scheme has a positive impact on your ability to export to the SADC region.	ROG1	50	8%	4%	80%	4%	4%	2.9	0.75
Q4-4	The diplomatic missions of the South African government have a positive impact on your ability to export to the SADC region.	ROG2	50	10%	6%	80%	4%	0%	2.8	0.68
Q4-6	The Export Promotion Directorate of the Department of Trade and Industry has a positive impact on your ability to export to the SADC region.	ROG3	49	10%	10%	73%	4%	2%	2.8	0.77
Q4-8	Trade and Investment South Africa (TISA) has a positive impact on your ability to export to the SADC region.	ROG4	49	4%	6%	90%	0%	0%	2.9	0.46
Q4-10	The Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) Export Promotion Unit has a positive impact on your ability to export to the SADC region.	ROG5	50	8%	6%	80%	4%	2%	2.9	0.70
Q4-12	The Tradepoint Nelson Mandela Bay has a positive impact on your ability to export to the SADC region.	ROG6	48	8%	4%	79%	6%	2%	2.9	0.72
Q4-14	The Eastern Cape Exporters Club has a positive impact on your ability to export to the SADC region.	ROG7	47	6%	6%	81%	4%	2%	2.9	0.67
Q4-16	The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Trade and Investment Promotion unit has a positive impact on your ability to export to the SADC region.	ROG8	50	4%	4%	88%	2%	2%	2.9	0.55

Source: Author's own construction from survey data

Nonetheless, more than half of the responses given were neutral and only 14% indicated any degree of positive impact. In the context of this data set, a fairly significant 34% of responses inferred that the initiatives listed did not have a positive impact on exports to the SADC region. This is reinforced by a means score of 2.7. It was noted that on average only 40% of the respondents indicated that they are aware of the government initiatives listed.

## The SADC Agreement

While it is encouraging that 82% of respondents have at least an awareness of the agreement, this is mitigated by the fact that only 35% have at least worked within SADC. When compared to the data which depicts the role of government, there is an almost completely asymmetrical contrast, with a mean of means for all the dynamics indicating 62% responding “Yes” and 38% “No”. However, it remains to be seen if this improved level of awareness translates into a positive overall dynamic.

**Table 4: Responses to the SADC agreements**

Section 6: The impact of SADC		Code	Valid n	SD	D	N	A	SA	x-bar	Std Dev
Q6-2	The preferential duties have a positive impact on your ability to compete in the SADC region.	SAD1	50	0%	4%	54%	26%	16%	3.5	0.81
Q6-4	Having fewer multinational competitors within your industry in the SADC markets has a positive impact on your ability to compete in the SADC region.	SAD2	49	2%	4%	61%	31%	2%	3.3	0.67
Q6-6	The lack of indigenous competition within your industry has a positive impact on your ability to compete in the SADC region.	SAD3	49	2%	4%	59%	31%	4%	3.3	0.71
Q6-8	The high level of SADC economic growth has a positive impact on your ability to initiate and grow exports into the region.	SAD4	49	0%	4%	61%	31%	4%	3.3	0.63
Q6-10	The Rules of Origin requirements do not hinder your ability to export into the SADC region.	SAD5	49	0%	0%	67%	27%	6%	3.4	0.61
Q6-12	The close proximity has a positive impact on your ability to export into the SADC region.	SAD6	49	6%	14%	41%	35%	4%	3.2	0.94

Source: Author's own construction from survey data

While the data above includes all the responses, the data depicted exclude the neutral answers allocated to the respondents who answered “No” to the questions on awareness. The first question measured the impact of the preferential duties and as reflected 62% of respondents indicated that this factor had a positive impact on their ability to compete in the SADC region. Another good indication of the degree of impact is the fact that 24% indicated that they strongly agree, which is the highest score on this scale for any of

the elements in this section. The next two questions reported on the impact of reduced multinational and indigenous competition in the SADC market. These two factors delivered very similar results. In both cases more than half of the respondents felt that these factors had a positive impact on their competitive position.

The data reveals that the good economic growth in the SADC region also has a positive impact on exports in the region. With 68% agreeing and only 8% disagreeing, this is a strong indication of the potential that lies within the region. A factor that the literature revealed as a possible impediment to export within the SADC region was the requirements with regard to the rules of origin. This is not supported by the data, which indicate that 55% perceive that the requirements are not a hindrance. It is fairly remarkable that no respondent indicated that the rules were any form of hindrance. This may be evidence that the South African Revenue Service (who manage the certification process through Customs and Excise) is performing effectively with regard to the administration of this process.

To measure the impact of the close geographical proximity of South Africa to other markets in the SADC region, this response scored the highest level of awareness at 73%. This is supported by the fact that 53% of the respondents indicated that this dynamic has a positive impact on their ability to export to the SADC region. One possible explanation is that the vast improvements in transport and communication technologies have reduced the effect of distance to market. When searching for other significant associations within the data the positive effect of the SADC agreement was also revealed when considering the results. When analysing data in conjunction with knowledge of the SADC agreement, the respondents who indicated that they are simply aware of the SADC agreement, achieved an overall MS of 3.2. The respondents that answered and have at least worked with the SADC agreement returned an MS of 3.7. Hence, the conditions of awareness and knowledge emerge once again as relevant factors.

## **Managerial implications and concluding remarks**

The results revealed that the most significant external barrier inhibiting exports to the SADC region is that of transport costs and shipping arrangements. This affirms the exposition, which identifies transport as an important barrier to overcome throughout Africa. Another barrier that displayed a crucial negative propensity relative to the other external factors is that of the documentation and red tape associated with the export operation. There is also an overlap between some aspects of the shipping arrangements raised and the documentation and red tape being corroborated by consistency in the findings. The significance of these two barriers needs to be moderated and viewed in the context of the results for the other external barriers.

The issues of political instability and corruption might receive a great deal of coverage in the popular media, but the research findings do not support a negative inference with regard to these barriers. While this may be contrary to popular media, it is the result of a reawakening in Africa that has been recognised by Parker (2009), amongst others.

When evaluating the internal export barriers, the two factors that share the lowest mean score are both classified as “knowledge” barriers. These are the lack of knowledge of potential export markets and the lack of information on opportunities abroad. As mentioned earlier, a great deal of government support is focused on providing financial backing to industry and this result may either be interpreted as implying that government resources are focused in the wrong area or alternatively that the financing programmes are working successfully.

The research of Herrington, Kew and Kew (2009) and Finscope (2010) forewarned of the low levels of awareness in the small business sector with regard to government support programmes. This is supported in this study. While the awareness level is consistently low amongst small businesses, this does not imply that the level for larger businesses is acceptable. The quality of government support measures is immaterial if the intended recipients are unaware of their existence.

There are some meaningful and generous government support measures that have been operational for many years but still do not enjoy high levels of exposure.

A good example of this is the EMIA scheme which provides direct financial assistance for various export marketing operations. This scheme is promoted by the Department of Trade and Industry, the Eastern Cape Development Corporation, Tradepoint Nelson Mandela Bay and the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality amongst others, and yet only records a 42%. As noted earlier some of the programmes are promoted by many different organisations yet remain largely unknown. With all the promotional efforts already taking place, it would be unfair to charge the government with the lone responsibility for improving this state of affairs.

When all the results are considered, the conclusion must be that the government support programmes are not having a positive impact on exports to the SADC region from the perspective of the study respondents.

The SADC agreement and the SADC acronym itself enjoy a fair amount of exposure in the media; hence it may not be unexpected that the gross level of awareness exceeds that of the government initiatives. Also, based on the literature review it should not be unexpected that the dynamics in question have a positive impact on exports to the region. Performing the analysis of awareness based on employee level reveals that the smallest companies once again have the lowest level of awareness. What is more encouraging is that the larger employers, and particularly those with more than 500 employees, display a far higher level of awareness. When analysing the influence of SADC, the impact of the preferential duties achieved the highest overall ranking as well as the highest number of responses that “strongly agree”. In practice, it is not unusual

for manufactured products to attract duties of 25% or higher in many African markets. The SADC agreement makes provision for most of these products to be zero rated or have reduced import duties when emanating from South Africa. This translates into an unambiguous competitive advantage over manufacturers outside of the SADC region. The respondents who indicated “strongly agree” are most likely manufacturers that are already benefiting from this significant competitive advantage.

It is also unlikely that a duty imbalance of this magnitude will apply indefinitely and it is advisable that South African manufacturers take a long term view of the region. Efforts should be made to advocate the primary objectives of SADC by creating development partnerships within the region designed to benefit all member states. Simply taking advantage of the favourable duties without any noticeable benefit to the importing country will surely lead to repercussions.

On to the competitive environment, both the lack of multinational competitors and indigenous competition were revealed to be enabling factors in exporting to SADC. Many multinational companies have previously ignored the African continent for political and economic reasons. This is changing as the continent is receiving increased attention both due to the depressed international markets as well as the good African growth rates. Outside of SACU and Mauritius, the other SADC members generally have limited manufacturing capabilities, resulting in the muted impact of indigenous competition. This is perhaps the area where South African manufacturers need to consider partnerships with SADC counterparts to genuinely leverage the benefits of regional integration. While having an absolute advantage within the region is appealing, it is worth recalling that a fundamental tenet of comparative advantage is bilateral trade.

The focus on the high levels of economic growth indicates that it is clear that this has a positive impact on exports to the region. It is the fact that almost half of the respondents are not aware of what is happening in nearby states that is disconcerting. Even for companies who do not currently have suitable products for African markets, it should still be good business practice to have an awareness of markets showing good growth, particularly this close to home.

As noted repeatedly there are many support programmes that already exist, but they are often administered by different departments. It is suggested that as many of these programmes as possible are consolidated under one body. This would increase the body of knowledge under one umbrella and make it easier for manufacturers to access support. It is necessary to establish an export culture within the manufacturing sector. With all the resources dedicated to providing support, it is recommended that that an initial focus is placed on educating manufacturers on the explicit as well as the latent benefits of exporting. The next suggestion is for government to create specific support structures for African exports in general, and SADC exports in particular. The SADC agreement provides a genuine competitive advantage and should be backed by support mechanisms that leverage the benefits for South African manufacturers. At a regional

level, it is recommended that the government actively promotes access to the South African market for other SADC member states. This can encourage the establishment of manufacturing value chains within the region. It may also appease any calls for economic retaliation that arise as a result of trade diversion in favour of South Africa. The final recommendation stems from the finding that a lack of finance is not revealed as an export barrier.

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## Book Review/Critique de livre

# Agony In Nation-State Building/ Agonie dans construction de la nation

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*A Review of*

*Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960*

*Frederick Cooper,*

*Princeton, 493pp, 2014, ISBN 978-0-691-16131-0*

“Can we devise the means to reconcile aspiration to equality and democracy with the diversity of humanity?”, asks Frederick Cooper at the end of this impressive 493-page narrative of debates on citizenship, empire, sovereignty and nationality, all critical determining issues of a defining historical epoch, and which, can be neatly summed up as attempts at nation-state building, in the dying days of empire and colony in French Africa. Every now and then [in time], we are presented with possibilities to confront the thorny issues [of the time]; how we utilize such possibilities, is, in a way, a factor of many variables. Whether or not the outcome is a logical extension of the choice made or unintended consequence of such a choice (with its own logic), is judged by history. And in this book are the essentials of this reasoning. The question posed by Frederick Cooper is one that philosophers would relish; so also political scientists and indeed social theorists. It fits excellently into a discourse, mostly at an abstract level, beloved by these scholars. While, of course the question came at the end of the narrative, I would love to second guess Cooper that if it has been the question around which the book revolved, it would have been engaged by him in a similar manner that led to the question being begged; that is, not at the abstract level. And here, for me, lies the strength of this worthy piece. One is tempted to ask whether it is Cooper’s craft as a political/labour historian or Cooper, the Africanist scholar with sensitivity to the sensibilities of the context of the political actors in his study that made him go the route of narrative in explicating such abstract notions as citizenship, nationality, empire, state and sovereignty or is it both?

We get a hint of the answer to this question in the very first paragraph of the Preface with a statement that reads like a disclaimer, in a way:

“This is a book about politics, in two senses. First, it is about politics as the art of individuals and organizations getting people to do things they did not think they wanted to do, about how the entry of different people into political debate changed the frameworks in which politics took place. .... It is a book about citizenship, nation, empire, state, and sovereignty, but it is not about political theory in a formal sense. It is about how these concepts were deployed- and queried and transformed – in the course of political action”.

Surely as a book on the listed concepts, a reader will be forgiven for expecting definitions, if not at the outset, then, somewhere in the body of the text, given that this is the standard in most of such books; but explicating these concepts in the course of engaging or telling the story of the debates about them by some political actors, in a particular epoch in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, renders to the reader the difficulties of pinning the concepts down, generally, and, in particular contexts. Just as much; Cooper rightly notes the salience of what people “actually said, wrote, and did, not the supposedly immanent logics of preidentified types of political regimes”. This, in relation to the familiar concepts “the colonial” or “the post colonial”, the latter, pretty much in circulation again since the past ten years or more.

The standard narrative of the demise of empires constructed in the mid to late nineteenth century and the emergence of nation states from them in the period starting a decade after the Second World War to a decade and a few years in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century is one of nationalists up in arms against apologists and defenders of empire, subsequently resulting in sovereign nation states in which subjects became citizens. It is generally a narrative of a goal achieved: nationalists set themselves the goal of a fully independent nation state with equal rights to all who belong in it as citizens. This would hardly be said to be far from the truth: yet, it is a fact that, in many cases, the post-colonial set up was scarcely the goal intended by some of these nationalists; we notice this in a number of countries, in particular, French West Africa. Frederick Cooper draws us to this point, taking us back to the debates of the period before political independence in French Africa, which in a very significant way, injects an informed understanding into the rather simplistic discussion of the recent events in two French-speaking West African countries - Côte d’Ivoire (the Gbagbo-Ouattara standoff) and Mali (the waving of the flags to welcome Francois Hollande as hero following the French troops’ campaign to protect 6000 French citizens from the heavily armed and heavily mobile Malian insurgents reaching the city of Mopti and later Bamako, the capital).

The immediate post-Second World War period revealed, among many other things, what I would call ‘internal wound’. In France, this ‘wound’ in form of the defeat of France by Nazi Germany, was so deep that ‘amputation’ was inevitable: colonies had to go. But the psychological process of amputation is never short of anxiety. What will become of French West Africa when it goes? Cooper tells us that leading African activists “began to insist that territories should become internally self-governing, but still belong to a larger more inclusive unit that would remain French. Empire would become federation or confederation and the once-dominated colonies – Senegal, Dahomey, Niger – would become equal partners with European France”. “Give and take”, Cooper calls it but more having one’s cake and eating it. This applies to the European French and the French West African leaders, for they both wanted a “route out of empire”, a new political form “that would preserve some kind of assemblage while giving a degree of autonomy to the former colonial territories.” Well, didn’t the British have their commonwealth? Though, different; but similar, in spirit, in some ways. What we have with the French is breathtaking ingenuity: being French, but with a difference – *French with an African accent*, and indeed, *French with a very European accent*, so to say. Very clear in this regard was the two sides’ notion of federalism: So, how did they proceed?

As might be expected from the self-appointed beholders of ‘civilization’, the French elite, it was an idea that was never well received. But was there any choice, especially at that material time in history? Probably not. Cooper helps us out here: “The citizenship that French West Africans were claiming in the postwar years was not that of a nation-state, but an imperial citizenship – in a composite political entity, built by conquest, governed in a way that had subordinated and degenerated its subjects but which was, activists asserted, to be transferred into a structure that would ensure the rights and cultural integrity of all citizens. Such a conception both assumed the history of colonization and transcended it.” In as much as both sides wanted to have their cake and eat it, they expressed ‘fear’: the French fear their civilization being set at a par to the African civilization, whereas, the Africans fear a loss of security. The dynamic process by which African leaders inserted themselves, successfully by 1946, into the debate “over the place of empire in the new Republic and used that place to insist on a new vision of citizenship” is the story Cooper provides in Chapter one. In this chapter, the reader is led gently into Cooper’s powerful evocative story of the African political elite of that period.

The enabling factor of the “insertion” was the Second World War, the aftermath of which was uncertainty. France has to be ‘re-born’ following its spectacular capitulation to Nazi Germany and subsequent liberation by the Allied forces, including, however much it is less sung, French West Africans. Cooper reminds us that throughout the Third Republic 1871-1940, prior to the epoch of his focus, the republican principles espoused since the Revolution by France was violated in the colonies – citizenship was denied in the colony to those colonized. Should one be surprised that citizenship was not extended to the colonized? We would, perhaps, not be forgiven if we did; for,

it is not in the make-up of domination to have the dominated be extended same and equal rights by the dominating group. Hardly are the dominated considered favorably in the scheme of things. "Governing different people differently was what imperial system did", logically extending "us and them" as in many other things. The civilizing mission of empire building and colonial rule however much it was about imposition of values, beliefs and norms and practices of the imperial and colonizing power, rights, itself, a key value, remained an essential (enjoyed in the metropolis), that was not to be 'imposed' and extended to the colonized. Colonial officers and settlers were so wedded to this that they resisted concerns of some well-meaning legislators about its denial to the people of the colony. Cooper writes: "The Popular Front also considered applying to French West Africa some of the social legislation including the forty-hour week and the expansion of trade union rights – it had been implemented in the metropole but local officials and business interests pushed back, insisting that Africans were too backward to benefit from such provisions. Even limited initiatives disappeared along with the Popular Front in 1938."

Be that as it may, what shaped the debate were events in two of the colonies – Indochina and Algeria - Cooper tells us. These events made "some to conclude that French control had to become rigorous and others to emphasize the need to make overseas subjects feel included in an imperial community. Sub-Saharan French Africa, where conflict seemed muted, offered an opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of imperial inclusion. In the early postwar years, however, most members of the government wanted to approach the restricting of empire in a comprehensive way, as a re-configuring of all its parts." But, it seems, of greater importance, was the debate in what appeared to be a consensus to keep the empire in whatever form. P.O. Lapie's vision of the post1945 Empire seemed to set the tone and was to be so in almost two decades. This vision was simply turning the empire into a federation. Cooper quotes from Lapie who argued that it was imperative that "France brings the colonies into a French federal system, following in this respect the international movement toward federation that is particularly well illustrated by the British Empire, Soviet Russia, and, in one form or another, by North America and China." Cooper notes that this federal idea sprang from a notion of empire as something more complex than a dichotomy of metropole and colonies to have more "initiative" and "autonomy" while Paris would still exercise a measure of "control". Lapie might have had this reconfigured idea of French empire into a federal system with France in control, but this never meant extending to the people in the colonies what obtained in the metropole because as Cooper, quoting him, points out to the reader, "it is appropriate to have natives evolve in the mindset of their own institutions by choosing and developing those which over many years will lead native societies little by little to a status in which they are capable of understanding what we consider wisdom, because we practice it".

One thing for sure, this book is an archeology of lived experience of a people as they attempted to shape their lives and as others attempted to shape them.

But what do we gain at the end of the excavation? In my view, it would hardly be wrong to suggest that Cooper's narrative of the complexity of the debate by these political elites – European French and French West Africans, if we are allowed this category – is among many other things, an *anatomy* of citizenship, empire, nation-state, sovereignty that renders these concepts as hardly fixed; we end up with a knowledge of history and circumstance as significant, very much so, in making sense of concepts. If this point was to be pushed to its logical conclusion, it would amount to saying that these concepts are *relative*. A contentious point? Perhaps; but it is a point we make informed by the book. The French political elite (De Gaulle) championed federalism, which was similarly argued for by the French West African politicians. We see in their understanding of federalism, a concept relative to the period. We see also nation-states as 'provinces' of empire and empire as a complex polity, less hierarchical, more integrative. The idea of concepts as hardly fixed might probably not have a wide appeal but it would seem to imply a lesser propensity to impose values held by one group of people over others and perhaps, contribute to pushing us to "devise the means to reconcile aspirations to equality and *democracy* (italics mine) with the diversity of humanity".