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Barbara Ntombi Ngwenya

Gender, Dress and Self-Empowerment: Women and Burial Societies in Botswana

Abstract

One measure of relative poverty, humiliation and indignity among Batswana is wearing tattered clothes (makatana). Literally, a dress (seaparo) means to adorn oneself. Particular kinds of clothes have multiple meanings and authorise and legitimise participation of certain social groups in given situations in society. This paper focuses on specific ways in which women in local institutions known as burial societies (diswaeti in everyday Tswana discourse), ceremonially and ritualistically empower themselves through an event known as kapeso – to be garbed, enrobed or dressed. Empowerment embodies a sense of competence, mastery, strength, and ability to effect change. The event incorporates biblical knowledge associated with Christian religious ceremonies of dedication or devotion and Tswana funeral ritual symbols. Given the extraordinary context of the AIDS crisis in Botswana, taking up specific intervention roles of providing emergency financial relief to households in distress demands some sort of public authentication. Women in burial societies adopt a particular dress code as ritual object of social power to perform gendered social roles that closely conform to status obligations to self, family, kin, community and society. Their dress code enables them to dramatise social action (that is, the ability to understand what they do and to use that understanding as part of their performance) in ways that redefine gender relations, practices of spirituality across denominational affiliation and Tswana humanism (botho).

Introduction

In Tswana society, a dress, *seaparo* (*pl. diaparo*) has multiple social meanings. At a personal level, *seaparo* is an article of clothing, a garment,[1] and *go apara* is a verb meaning to dress up smartly or garnish oneself while *kapeso* is to be 'enrobed'. A given dress code thus either accentuates or plays down social agency[2] of individuals or groups in a given societal context. At the social level of everyday life, what individuals and groups wear has structural dimensions. The opposite of adorning oneself is to be in tatters (*makatana*), an embodiment of humiliation and indignity. Wearing worn out clothes is usually regarded as a public display of poverty due to limited access to resources and opportunities. At the cultural level, a particular kind of clothing or garment gives backing to perceived gender and status differences between women and men in society. At political and religious levels, when an individual is garbed to take up office, they are authorised to assume a new institutional role. An elaborate ceremonial event is usually organised in which the neophyte is garbed in some ritual object of social power such as a leopard skin, plumes and feathers of particular birds, custom made and colour coded robes and so on.

This paper focuses analysis on a symbolic-expressive event known as *kapeso* – to be garbed, enrobed or dressed. The ceremony is organised by women who belong to local social institutions in Botswana known as burial societies (*diswaeti* in everyday Tswana discourse). Burial societies organise and disburse emergency financial relief to members' households in distress due to the social affliction of death. The majority of members in these groups are women. They take on a particular dress code as ritual object of social power to perform gendered social roles that closely conform to status obligations to self, family, kin and community in a particular funeral context of ever increasing AIDS deaths. The concept of power applied in this paper is not in terms of agency over others but, rather, power is seen as the transforming capacity of organised social action (in this case the collective power of women in burial societies to influence the course of events in their lives). Social power in this context is understood not in terms of agency over others, but rather, as the transforming capacity of organised action. Social actors derive social power through the transformation process.

On the one hand, gendered role play in everyday life events is based on perceived differences between sexes and on the other gender relations in everyday interaction are also a primary way of signifying unequal power relationships between women and men. In any given society, social arenas and forms of ritualistic display of gendered roles and power differences between women and men are multiple. These include, but are not limited to gender hierarchies (sexism) embedded in language, cultural and religious ideologies, the media, advances in technology and skills acquisition, social institutions, sexuality and so on.

Given the extraordinary context of the AIDS crisis in Botswana, taking up specific gendered roles of providing emergency financial relief to households in distress demands some sort of public authentication. In this paper, the significance of *kapeso* in burial societies lies in ways in which women in these groups first, affirm a gendered role performance of disbursing financial relief, second, social agency and third, self-empowerment through interfacing specific forms of religious and cultural knowledge and adopting a particular dress code in carrying out their publicly stated duties outside the group. Rappaport (1985:17) suggests that personal empowerment embodies a sense of competence, mastery, strength, and ability to effect change. Self-empowerment through *kapeso* can be seen as a multifaceted process on various levels. Women redefine gendered roles and responsibilities in relation to their shifting positions and socio-cultural contexts.

For Goffman (1986) and Geertz (1973), social life is like a theatre. Social roles emerge out of specific encounters and involve situated performances. For Bourdieu (1977), social practices include the manipulation of strategic resources. What appears trivial and uninteresting is fraught with social implications. Smallness of micro practices therefore also speaks to larger processes of social transformations.

In this paper, Goffmanian and Geertzian dramaturgical approaches to cultural processes and social structure are applied to emphasise the significance of creative performances of self-empowerment and gender display of social roles by women in burial societies. Both as individuals and as a group, women are seen as dramatising social action (that is, the ability to understand what they do and to use that understanding as part of their performance) in a way that redefines gender relations, everyday discourses and practices of spirituality across denominational affiliation and Tswana humanism *(botho).*

During 1998 (January to July), I did ethnographic research on three *kapeso* events organised by women in burial societies in Gaborone, the capital city, and the villages of Ramotswa, Molepolole and Mochudi. The value of ethnographic methods (Spardely, 1980) is first, to give highly textured accounts of how things are interrelated; second, to show how culture is relevant to our understanding of the unfolding social processes in given contexts of social practice, and third, participant observation provides knowledge of the local contexts and cultural experience. The event is highly performative and dramatises multiple social issues and ideological matrices through song, prose, poetry, dance, and music. I videotaped the process to capture intricate symbolic-expressive features of the event, and these audio-visual tapes were then used for cultural analysis (Wuthnow et al. 1993).

The paper is divided into five parts. The first part gives the cultural and theoretical context of social affliction in Botswana. The second part discusses the institutional framework of burial societies in contemporary Botswana. The third part focuses on the practicalities of institutionalising the dress code in burial societies. The fourth part discusses the processes and meanings of self-empowerment through *seaparo and kapeso.* The fifth part examines the practical implication of *seaparo* on gender relations, assertion of women's social power and Tswana humanism. The paper ends with a summary and conclusion.

1. Theoretical and Cultural Contexts of Social Affliction

Death, as a biological event, in and of itself has no intrinsic value. However, the event has specific meanings when placed in a given socio-cultural, political, economic and historical context. Particularly in Botswana, death cannot be divorced from post independence economic transformations and the cultural conditions surrounding the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Briefly, between 1970 and 1990, the country experienced drastic forms of social transformation particularly through state sanctioned development programmes and the policies of five year National Development Plans. Individually and collectively the various forms of government intervention have had a phenomenal impact, materially expressed in unequal gendered access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes. In 1985, the first HIV/AIDS case was reported, and the rate of infection has been increasing at an alarming rate ever since. Particular uncertainties (of hope and despair, unity and disarray, compassion and heartlessness, caring and social neglect; risk and safety; guilt and innocence and so on) are fore-grounded by gendered meta-narratives of death that permeate everyday Tswana social life. As such, unequal access to public goods and services invariably intersects with the tenacity of AIDS-related deaths and other forms of social victimisation (murder, road accidents, suicide and so on) and suggests a perfect menu for prophets of doom and gloom. However, in everyday Tswana social life, seeing, touching, and smelling dying or dead bodies is not inevitably disastrous. Particularly since the human body, dead or alive, as a cultural symbol, is appropriated and given multiple meanings and social locations by social actors in different contexts (Csordas, 1994; Featherstone et al., 1991; Foltyn, 1996;Hallam et al.1999; Hockey, 1990; Howarth & Jupp, 1996; Martin, 1989; Searle, 1998; Prior, 1989). As Turner (1967) has pointed out, cultural symbols may have many meanings, but their meanings emerge out of the context in which they are used as well as from the aims of the users.

In contemporary Tswana society, cultural meanings define what and who has been lost. Concern is with not only the social contours of social affliction (age, gender, status, occupation and so on of the dying and the dead), but also connective tendencies among surviving people and potential use of available resources. In the context of the AIDS pandemic, the focus of individual and group emergency intervention tends to move back and forth between the region of various meta-narratives such as misfortune and opportunity, unity and disunity, compassion and heartlessness, caring and social neglect and so on. This is not surprising since in African societies, death evokes a web of cultural meanings that brings about realignment of personal, kinship and institutional relationships. A situation of contradictions thus emerges from living conditions characterised by fear and uncertainties. Conversely, the situation demands flexibility and creative imagination in order to ease the material and non-material burden of those affected by the omnipresence of death. Therefore research on societal impact and institutional responses to the AIDS pandemic has to pay attention not only to the macro-structural context of death, but also to situated micro-practices around death and disposal. Specific consideration has to be given to the significance of nuanced social dramas and gendered interactions that characterise funeral resource mobilising collaborations in rural and urban social settings. These social exchanges not only affect the redistribution of resources between social groups, but also effectively redefine individual and group obligation or commitment to family and kin welfare including gendered accountability to others in society.

Death, regardless of its causes, calls into question the most fundamental assumptions upon which social and religious life is built. Those remaining behind struggle to re-establish a sense of identity, meaning, and purpose. The omnipresence of dying and death in Botswana presents first, the danger of being overwhelmed, and, second, a particular moral problem and threat of ethical disorder or chaos that would render a given cultural order meaningless. As such, social actors in every cultural system must accept the reality of death and go on with daily life with some sense of purpose and meaning. Culture, according to Geertz (1973), may be taken as both a model *of* and a model *for* reality. As a model *of* reality, cultural patterns constitute the perceived world of human actors and define the significance of their behaviours and institutions.[3] As context, culture is part of the shared background against which, and in terms of which, social life is carried out. As models *for* reality, cultural patterns offer entry into the moral world of actors and allow an analysis of the sense of obligation people feel based on their shared experience. Morality is a component of culture. The word moral here is used to imply some kind of internalised disposition towards a shared notion of social good.[4] As a moral order, culture implies that certain relations can be counted on or even taken for granted.

In addition to the social, moral, and economic crisis, death also precipitates a religious crisis that demands specific responses reflected in intense feelings of community. Religion allows social relations to be redefined in many different ways. In the context of African societies, everything is interdependent, and in the end, everything has religious value. Conceptions of death, and its relationship to the totality of life, are not only experienced in, but also generated through, specific social institutions that enable social actors to manage death and loss (Hockey, 1990:8).

Tswana women and men respond to the pervasiveness of death in various ways. For the majority of Tswana women, the formation of local institutions in Botswana known as burial societies constitutes one way of 'bracketing out' the potential threat of existential meaninglessness and to face up to existential challenges of perpetual conditions of uncertainty. A burial society is a relatively autonomous, historically distinct, local mutual aid institution, which may be occupational or gender based, and whose goal is to provide social relief and support (material and non-material) to a member or member's family/kin experiencing conditions of distress due to death. Burial societies embody some basic features of social organisation. They are concerned with structure, organised action, unpredictable changes in sources of livelihood and conspicuous consumption in urban and rural households, uncertainties and possibilities in living conditions.

In most African societies, women and men experience and interpret death differently. In Botswana the existing literature suggests that women constitute the majority of members in burial societies (Brown 1982; Molutsi, 1995). In a random sample of registered burial societies in Gaborone and Ramotswa, Ngwenya (2000) found that, on average, women constitute 78 percent and men 22 percent of the total population of active members of burial societies. Other studies in southern Africa concur that burial societies are women-centred local institutions (Bozzoli, 1991; Leliveld 1994; Matobo, 1993).

In order to live through vulnerabilities everyday livelihood challenges (production, reproductive, religious and political responsibilities), ample literature suggests that most African women situate themselves in wide social support networks (Wipper, 1995;). Personal and community networks avail women with different resources and opportunities and engage different power structures. They are able to produce forms of reciprocity and exert social power and influence through these at household and community level. While analysis of macro changes provides a broader picture of conditions of social affliction in Botswana, a focus on micro-practices through burial societies provides insights into a rich gendered cultural history of the response of local institutions to an impending social crisis.

Furthermore, macro analysis of social change is overly biased towards economic assumptions of women's agency. Existing research on burial societies in southern Africa tends to over-emphasise their utilitarian (such as the sharing of funeral costs and labour), psychological, and therapeutic functions (emotional support for the bereaved family) to individuals and families. Without a doubt, the significance of material benefits burial societies render to individual members and members' families is unquestionable. Nonetheless, the viability of women's groups seems to depend on their ability to fuse both instrumental and expressive activities, public and domestic roles, community work, and family life, between leaders and members, and between generations and social status. As a social group, women are able to gain a foothold in, and remain accountable to, multiple spheres of social, economic, moral, religious, cultural, spiritual and ethical life.

The literature suggests that death rituals and funeral practices in Botswana, as elsewhere in Africa, impose cultural constraints on women (Bloch, 1994; Potash, 1986). During the funeral process, women and men observe specific protocols with regard to the dress code of the living and gendered roles of 'dressing' a dead body.[5] Dress brings order as a culturally defined process to the world of the living and to that of the dead. Body adornment is the basis for social action and the human body, dead or alive, is both a socio-cultural and biological entity. In fact, as Geertz (1973) has pointed out, there is no such thing as human nature that is independent of culture. Individuals become human under the guidance of historically created systems of meaning, which give form, order, and direction to social life.

Thus, cultural analysis of women's agency in burial societies pays attention to the enabling capacity of dressing up living women's bodies in order to interact with dead bodies in a way that is linked, but not limited to, their reproductive and productive gender roles. Generally, women's dress code in the context of social affliction has been analysed from a woman's social victim standpoint rather than in terms of their capability as community interlocutors and social agents who individually and collectively respond to, and learn from, a changing socio-cultural environment. Since the omnipresence of death cannot be sequestrated from public view, the focus of social participation in burial societies is to maintain social bonds in everyday interactions. By forming burial societies, it is clear that death demands massive mobilisation of resources (human and non-human) to give a dignified burial to a loved one. The scale of events in contemporary Botswana therefore has different consequences for women's participation in creating social spaces that enable them to change with a changing environment. As such, access is not just to material resources, but also to a broader cultural and social space within which women situate themselves. Research has to explore the non-material, human-centered religious and moral dimensions of institutionalised responses to social affliction by paying attention to ways in which Tswana women participate in funeral events and processes and recast gendered roles and responsibilities.

Ordinary Batswana women transform knowledge of mortality through human activity from futile to meaningful survival and resiliency. In this context, death is transformed from despair to anticipation. Women in Botswana also make use of possibilities derived from funeral events to carve out 'enabling niches' that is, organised or institutionalised support networks from which participation makes it possible for individuals *to find a place in* the community. In other words, while death and loss pose risk factors to individuals and families, conversely, protective factors also emerge that allow people to develop resiliency[6] against odds. Women in these groups become known in their communities for what they do and what they have rather than what they lack and enables members to become more adept in establishing relationships that are significant to their social identity. We therefore have to assess the extent to which local institutions such as burial societies create opportunities for women to participate meaningfully and make significant contributions that shape the course of their lives as well as the moral, religious and civic life of a community.

2. Institutional Framework of Burial Societies in Botswana

a) *Legal framework*

In order to obtain official legitimacy, burial societies, like other civic associations, have to be officially registered with the Registrar of Societies (Societies Act Cap. 18:01) with the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs in Gaborone. Ambivalence permeates the paternalistic relationship between burial societies as a community of interest and the Registrar of Societies for several reasons. Under official eyes, burial societies are classified as cultural-cum-social welfare groups. This classification qualifies them to be registered as voluntary associations. However, unlike strictly voluntary social groups, burial societies are different in that they handle and disburse an assured liquid capital at their disposal. However, the amount of money they handle is not considered large enough to qualify them for registration as co-operatives (consumer or marketing). The latter groups are regulated by the Central Bank of Botswana.

As such, within the non-governmental organisations' sector, apart from the sports and recreation and church clubs, burial societies are among the few cultural cum welfare grassroots groups (these include mutual aid associations such as *metshelo, mahodisano*, savings and loans, *stokvels*) that are required by law to be registered. Olson (1993) classifies these as 'apolitical' welfarist groups since they tend to be more inward looking and less engaged in policy issues.[7] However, Olson acknowledges, and Molutsi (1995) and Brown (1982) concur, that although women's grassroots organisations such as burial societies have been omitted from the Directory of NGOs (1995), they constitute a significant aspect of the social infrastructure that enhances Botswana's participatory democracy.

As legally registered groups, on the one hand, burial societies' legitimacy rests on legal authority. However, on the other hand, women leaders, usually determined by age and experience, commit themselves to promoting community participation through collaborative efforts by creating a space for individuals with similar concerns to mobilise, coordinate, and dispense financial relief resources around death and disposal as a cultural process. Some see the prototypical burial society as a 'family', and in so doing these women translate accepted gender roles of wives and mothers to create a new ethos of caring and compassion to help a neighbour, co-worker or relative experiencing the death of a loved one. The formative group expands when new recruits are brought in through existing personal networks. Criteria for claim eligibility and personal responsibilities to the group are spelt out to new members. As the group enlarges, individual problems are redefined as collective ones. Members engage in long debates regarding what must be considered acceptable or unacceptable funeral protocols. These agreements are formalised through the burial society's constitution (*molao motheo*), subject to approval by the Registrar of Societies and rules and procedures (*melawana*) which are context specific, subject to approval by all subscribing members. Together, *molao motheo* and *melawana* constitute a social contract (*ditumalano*). *Melawana* are formulated to allow flexibility in addressing emerging day-to-day problems (such as late-coming and absenteeism, dress code, fundraising, and financial management).

In a nutshell, a social space is created where local women in urban and rural settings, both form ties with each other and develop as individuals while working collectively for the betterment of the whole community. Multiple layers of networks are thus created through burial societies, such as those of local residents with each other, and ties between local residents and leaders of the groups.

As a general rule, for some burial societies, registration with the Registrar of Societies is often viewed as a satisfactory means of acknowledging a gendered public role of providing financial relief in a funeral process. However, burial societies, especially those in the villages, endeavour to find a place in the public arena by institutionalising a particular dress code which they see as similar and different from other uniformed occupations or professions such as the police, the army, nurses, and churches.[8]

3. Institutionalising the Dress Code in Burial Societies – the Event and Processes

A group's resolution to have *seaparo* does not occur overnight. It is a lengthy process that is characterised by intense debates whose outcomes usually depend on a constellation of factors. First, the group usually toys with the idea once it deems itself relatively stable socially (in terms of subscribing members) and financially (in terms of meeting its emergency relief goals). Also, some groups assert that, if a group considers itself 'known' (in the local community generally and among its peers), then it is time to make that distinction accessible to the public, and to become common knowledge through circulation of ideas in everyday discourse, social networks, and direct encounters in funerary events (pre-burial and post burial events). *Seaparo* debates take place during monthly meetings and could last from several months to a year or even longer before final consensus is reached.

Women raise specific questions during these meetings. These centre around substantive arguments, for instance regarding the significance of the colour of cloth (red, blue, green, white, black, and so on); suitability of style of outfit, a dress or a two-piece costume, and the colour of the blouse including the length of its sleeves! If the group settles for a dress, what style would be appropriate, including the colour of the head gear (beret or head-scarf), shoulder throw (cape), and colour of shoes? Should there be men in the group, a matching suit and tie for them is discussed. It is important that they look more 'honorable' and less unkempt. In general, men in burial societies are not expected to wear a hat (akin to, for example, to when they attend a customary court (*kgotla*) meeting).

In other words, a hat is part of ordinary male dress code, and thus has not been made part of the extraordinary activities of funeral process. Colour code and style of dress thus mediate relations couched within the decorum of respectability and strict observation of funeral protocols.

Also discussed at length is the colour and design of the logo, emblem or banner the burial society must adopt if they so choose, and whether or not the society's emblem should be printed or pinned on *seaparo*. If so, exactly where? Should it be on the back of the shoulder cape or in front? And what method of display would be appropriate; should the print be circular or rectangular? The group then goes on to purchase a barrel of cloth and selects an ad hoc committee to coordinate finalisation of payment within a given time frame.[9] A seamstress is contacted. She is summoned to meet the group, take appropriate measurements, and make trial samples, after which, if they are satisfactory, she is given the permission to go ahead. If not, alterations are suggested and a deadline is set for the completion of the task.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that groups expend an enormous amount of time and pay attention to finer detail. Typically, *seaparo* consist of a skirt, a blouse, headgear, black shoes and a shoulder throw (which may or may not have the name of the burial society emblem or logo printed on the back or front). Some burial societies design their *seaparo* such that it encompasses variations to reflect the need for flexibility; for instance with regard to what would be more appropriate for funeral attendances, monthly meetings, and for other less formalised events (such as serving food or washing dishes during the funeral process). Other burial societies, for instance, have three funeral attires. The funeral attire consists of a matching grey skirt, jacket, a cloak and beret, a white blouse, and black shoes. The second combination is worn when attending monthly meetings, and is comprised of a grey skirt, beret, and a white blouse. The third set, is a grey beret and a shoulder throw of any colour worn when attending pre-funeral evening prayers or post burial ceremonials (washing of the deceased person's clothes) that take place in the bereaved household's *lolwapa*. Unlike a burial event, post burial events are more often than not relaxed small gatherings of close kin and friends.

Dramatic dress code colour is thus central to the public display of what the burial society does, with whom, and for what purpose. There are common colours that are considered appropriate. By and large, these include different shades of blue, green, purple, gold, yellow, white, black, and grey. Some colours are disqualified for one reason or another as inappropriate. Women certainly do not embrace colours that are, in their view, most likely to spark controversy. These include colours that are associated with labour unions or partisan politics.[10] Other colours, such as black, are deliberately appropriated as the dominant ritual colour imposed on women's mourning garb. Furthermore, it is women who usually dress the corpse in black and white.[11]

Historically, black is linked to missionary inspired church denominations (such as the Anglican and Catholic churches). In fact, it appears that women choose black precisely to re-assert their relative autonomy from social, cultural, and institutional constraints, whether they are associated with African independent churches and missionary-inspired denominations or gendered mourning rituals that force women to wear black. The paradox, of course, is, while black is culturally constraining for women through mourning rituals, black and white colours dominate mainstream Protestant churches. In fact, since burial societies see themselves as officially recognised groups by law, they do not envisage any contradictions in assimilating colours used by officially recognised churches. Furthermore, a corpse is usually shrouded in white in addition to other colours. The bottom line is to avoid matching black with specific colours, such as red with black, for instance, to recreate a dress code that is associated with the ruling Botswana Democratic Party.

The colours together evoke a sense of fluidity in the social process; a sense of social regeneration is animated through a flow of active qualities imparted to women's bodies and by these bodies when these colours are worn.[12] Some burial societies have come up with obligatory, but nevertheless imaginative, ways of bolstering the group's corporate identity in addition to *seaparo*. This may include using social artifacts such as carefully designed membership cards, T-shirts stamped with the group's logo or message, and the use of emblems such as buttons or pins. Emphasis is on the power of physical presence and body adornment to bolster a particular public image, respectability, social commitment and gender accountability.

Once the sewing of *seaparo* is complete or near completion, a date and venue for the event is determined. Invitations are sent, in writing, at least two to three months in advance, to other communal burial societies. It is mostly burial societies with *seaparo* already that are likely to be invited to a *kapeso* event. Also groups intending to have *seaparo* in the near future may be invited to the occasion. Additionally invited to attend *kapeso* are dignitaries, such as members of parliament, council representatives, chiefs of police, social workers, and the village chiefs[13] or their representatives. From among those invited burial societies, one group which meets specific criteria[14] is nominated to officiate *kapeso*.

As the agreed date for the event draws nearer, invited groups are informed about the venue, either through the mail or a radio announcement. Depending on the organisational and resource capacity of the hosting group, between ten to thirty groups are invited (that is, about two hundred or over a thousand people participate in the *kapeso)*. Groups come from different villages such as Molepolole, Kanye, Molapowabojang, and towns such as Lobatse, Gaborone, and Jwaneng. Each group rents a mini-bus for travel, and dresses up in their own *seaparo* to stand out as a group and yet become part of the colourful community of participants. The hosting group draws up a programme of activities and makes copies for distribution to invited participants. *Kapeso* is usually conducted in a school hall, city hall or other convenient public place.

The hosting group has a master of ceremonies (MC) and is supported by an auxiliary welcoming committee to usher in each group to the ceremonial site. The hosting group is aware that its performance will be subject to social commentary, and as such, the skill of the master of ceremonies (who could be either a woman or a man) and, the quick thinking of his/her aides remains crucial throughout the process. Again, we see that attention to detail is key, and requires a lot of thought, organising and planning skills, leadership acumen, and strategic mobilisation of resources (human and material). Every group arrival unleashes pomp and pageantry that is punctuated by ululation, song, poetry, idioms, salutation, and dance (*mmino*).

After welcoming guests, the MC introduces the goals of the event, and gives a brief history of the group, its trials, tribulations, and milestones. After taking care of general business and other affairs pertinent to the event, the empowering ceremonial process begins.

4. Self-Empowerment through Kapeso

The process of *kapeso* can be divided into two parts as follows:

a) Authenticating the symbolic-expressive message

The novices come in their ordinary, everyday clothes and bring their new *seaparo* individually in their bags. They are all asked to put their new garb in one pile on a table. A pastor may be asked to bless the new *seaparo*, but on most occasions, women do the blessings themselves. Following the blessing of the garb, then the neophytes are then instructed to change from ordinary to the blessed *seaparo* after which they return to occupy the front stage, kneel in a circle, and listen to the 'message' *(molaetsa)* delivered to them by a 'team of experts in the field' that is, three or four women selected by the officiating burial society who are deemed knowledgeable, both biblically and culturally, about funeral protocols in general, and burial societies' rules, procedures, and regulations in particular. The central role of the Bible is unify divergence (of religious voices, social background and idiosyncrasies, cultural values) and recreate a common ground for social practice (the organisation and delivery of emergency relief).

The group works as a team and may or may not supplicate the expertise of others present to affirm and conclude the ritual process. The dancing that follows takes the centre stage in a circle. The dancing and singing movements and gestures coalesce a potpourri of Tswana folk songs, chorals, funeral dirges, wedding songs, inter-denominational hymns, idioms, and poetry. The circle represents the etiology of inclusion (social and religious), solidarity of purpose, and the infusion of changing patterns of past, present and future practices and events.

The 'message' invariably includes, but is not limited to, explicating circumstances and conditions that are deemed appropriate for women to put on *seaparo* and those which do not warrant it. The novices are persuaded to comprehend *seaparo* as indicative of social responsibility and accountability (*boikarabelo*) to the group and to the public (*sechaba*). The novices are also urged to be aware that *seaparo* stands for the work of the burial society (*tiro ya swaeti*), and has to be taken off once the task it was meant for has been accomplished. The 'rookies' are also warned to take heed that *seaparo* is neither about individual aggrandisement nor for a 'fashion show' and that they should neither wear *seaparo* and go to outrageous places such as parties, bars, and nightclubs, nor become embroiled in community social scandals. Any self-indulgence that brings dishonour, betrayal or disgrace, especially to the group, and generally tarnishes the good name of the novitiating group, should not go unpunished *(kwathlao)*. Because of these stringent social protocols associated with *seaparo*, it is not surprising that some burial societies have instituted a 'police' committee to police civility and propriety.[15]

Women argue that death constitutes a respectable moment, and that it is common sense to acknowledge that certain practices during sombre events will be acceptable and appropriate, while others would be shunned as inappropriate and unbecoming. *Mapodisi* are there to police civility and to protect the burial society from falling prey to whims of individual aggrandisement.

However, substantive authority to protect and empower women to do what they set out to do is derived from the Bible. Women draw insights from Protestant eschatology that split, especially the dead body, as temporal and subject to decay, and exalt the soul as pure with the virtues of eternal life.

The next section looks at the biblically informed aspects of *kapeso* in the context of the overall religious atmosphere of the burial society community and public funeral rituals. Here I refer to it as 'civil ecumenism'.

b) 'Civil Ecumenism' and Authority from the Bible

As in any community of interest, burial societies are built around a basic shared framework of meanings, norms, values or symbols that are not arbitrarily chosen, but which arise or are born out of a particular crisis of living with the dying and the dead. Members assert that burial societies belong to all religious people, especially Christians, though not exclusively. Asked how it is that burial societies remain at ease with a medley of religious beliefs women asserted 'we are all believers and very religious and spiritual people' (Ngwenya, forthcoming).

The groups bring together women from diverse religious beliefs to work collaboratively as 'believers' for a common cause. The religious atmosphere that is produced in funeral gatherings generally, and in the burial society community in particular, does not proselytise participants. Emphasis is on integrating social, cultural, spiritual, and economic needs at community level, and on sustaining connections between people and these needs.

Overall, members of burial societies are Protestant Christians, Catholics, Spiritualists and those that subscribe to indigenous African religions. Others remain uncommitted to any particular religious affiliation, whether indigenous or Christian. These tend to participate spontaneously in religiously inspired rituals at their disposal. The response tends to be temporal and situation specific. Information from unstructured interviews suggests that it is not unusual for individuals to be subject to numerous religious influences. Sometimes varying religious practices are held simultaneously and at other times consecutively. An individual could profess Catholicism and an indigenous religion concurrently, or be a Spiritualist at one point and a traditionalist at another in their life cycle. In both scenarios, the individual may feel no contradiction in upholding a mixture of two or more religious traditions. As such, regardless of the source of overt funeral rituals, burial societies immerse their intervention in a confluence of indigenous African and Christian religious practices. Both claim a universal appeal to a higher authority in the form of God. Burial societies, therefore, promote and are at home with a medley of religious beliefs.

In burial societies some members are devotees of formal Christian religions, and demonstrate zeal and commitment that contributes to their identity and offers a sense security. Other members' appropriate religious ritual symbols 'of the moment', whatever the source of authority. The situational admixture of the committed, with varying degrees of theological depth,[16] transcends parochial religious boundaries. For lack of a better term, the writer will refer to this intersection of a medley of religious beliefs and participation in culturally defined funeral ritual across social setting as accessible and culturally embedded 'civil ecumenism' (as opposed to practices across major world religions, for example Christianity and Islam) (Ngwenya forthcoming).

Arguably, there is some affinity with the notion of ecumenical spirituality in the conservative sense. According to Wakefield (1989:125-126) ecumenical spirituality expresses the common life shared by Christians regardless of separation of their churches. It is recognition that in baptism and commitment to Christ, Christians are brought into membership of the church. Here Christian religions seem to be included while indigenous African religions are excluded. Hence the writer emphasises the complementarity of both.

The notion of 'ecumenism' is thus applied in the strict and broadest sense since it is inclusive of those devoted and committed to the theological depth of particular religions and those who hold instantaneous or consecutive religious beliefs constantly at their disposal as they move from one funeral gathering to another. This salient attribute of the burial society community cannot be ignored. In the context of this paper, the concept is used in a very wide sense, firstly, to bring together traditional religions, African independent churches, and diverse traditional Christian religions. Secondly, the concept is used in the broader context of multiple sources of distress in contemporary Tswana society. Third, as has already been alluded to, crisis in living conditions in general reflects the crisis of economic development and in particular a moral crisis of death and social deprivation (poverty, hunger, ill-health). Given the complexity of death, burial societies thus endeavour to reconstitute institutional and social relations with pastors from various churches, with individual households and community leaders, and by participating in other civic religious groups (church related welfare committees and women's church groups such as church choirs, prayer groups, mother's unions, and so on) (Ngwenya forthcoming).

What is apparent in the context of burial society 'civil ecumenism' is a sense first, of heightened awareness that the very social fibre of Tswana wellness is in a precarious state and with increasing vulnerability to gratuitous loss of human life. Second, that contrary to 'compassion fatigue' (avoidance of confrontation with reality) in which people have stopped caring for themselves and for others, burial societies have provided a common practice arena that seems to prompt an ethos of caring and more, not less, social engagement to ease the burden of loss. In this sense, human life is seen as less of a 'throwaway' and as more dignified and indispensable.

In the context of everyday/every-night experiences of multiple sources of distress (HIV/AIDS being but one among many) and religious pluralism, women in burial societies deploy and translate the 'Word' (*lefoko*) of God from the Holy Bible to make justificatory claims regarding what they do in order to empower themselves. *Seaparo* is thus seen as a constant source of courage, which enables the bearer to confront tasks and challenges without hesitation or fear of danger (Psalm 91 and 121, Hebrews 13: 5,6 and Ephesians 6: 10-18). *Seaparo* stands as a personified armour of God that empowers *(nonotsha)* and a shield *(thebe)* of protection against adversaries (Isaiah 52:1 or Isaiah 41: 10). Women see themselves as providers of necessary relief in time of affliction (ll Corinthians 12: 8-10; and Hebrew 12: 3-13), and as a source of comfort *(go gomotsa)* and compassion during times of distress and loneliness (Hebrews 13:5-6 and Isaiah 41:10). Furthermore, *seaparo* transforms the dis-empowering ugliness and hopelessness of death and beautifully bestows power and authority of deliverance and hope upon the messenger. In a nutshell, as a ritual artifact, *seaparo* not only empowers, but is also a garb that socially transforms and differentiates the mundane from the extra-ordinary, those with authority from those without, bravery from cowardice, courage from fear, strength from weakness, sheep from wolves, responsibility from callousness and so on. By the end of the *kapeso* ceremony, women have been subjected to an elaborate process of transformation from ordinary everyday women to extra-ordinary 'women of the cloth' *(basadi ba seaparo)* authorised to carry out a specific civic duty of delivering a specific public good in a given cultural context.

In general, various sources give contradictory statistical information regarding what proportion of the population adheres to different forms of religious affiliations in Botswana. Amanze (1994) suggests that only 30 percent of the population is Christian (including African Independent Churches). Some Internet sources suggest that only 15 percent of Batswana are Christian and the remaining 85 percent adhere to traditional religions, others split the population equally as 50 percent Christian and 50 percent indigenous. It is not within the scope of this paper to delve into this seeming ambivalence at a societal level, but there is an apparent overlap between Christian and indigenous African religions which has been documented in other studies. In Africa, spiritual churches combine Protestant Christian beliefs and indigenous African religious practices such as rituals of healing. The processes of blending Christian beliefs and African religions have been invariably referred to as 'enculturation' (Hillman 1993; Parratt 1991, 1995; Paris, 1993). In South Africa, Thomas's (1999, 1994) study of St. John's Apostolic Faith Mission in Cape Town, for example, suggests that members of this church incorporate rituals of healing in African religions and Protestant Christianity. The rituals of healing blend worldviews to form a cosmology that helps people live and counteract negative effects of everyday challenges of poverty, unemployment, violence, and many other social stressors in a supportive community.

However, while it may be that a significant proportion of Batswana subscribe to indigenous African religious beliefs, it is important to note that several state-sanctioned practices tend to buttress the portrayal of a view that Christianity is the 'dominant' religion in Botswana. Officially, Botswana follows a Christian calendar, the Gregorian calendar to be specific, which allows observances of Christian holidays (although there is no public holiday to commemorate indigenous religions). Also, Christian symbols are found in public places, such as the display of the cross in schools, government buildings, and graveyards. In fact, the Botswana Government invariably funds religious institutions especially in the field of health and education, and initiates legislation affecting particular religious and moral teachings (seen as rights of individuals to free assembly, worship, and expression). Official business often starts with a Christian prayer. However, officialised Christianity only partially accounts for religious plurality in Botswana and obscures, rather than clarifies, the medley of religious practices in the country.

Overall, regardless of official status of any given religion in Botswana, the cultural context in which death predominates dictates collaborative effort across religious affiliations. Implicitly or explicitly, burial societies have incorporated officially sanctioned Christian expectations in their practices without necessarily subscribing to any specific belief system. By appropriating the religious context of death in general and Protestant eschatology in particular, women empower themselves to carry what they perceive as a public service to their respective communities.

The concept of power, as already indicated in the introduction of this paper, is seen as the transforming capacity of organised social action (in this case the collective power of women in burial societies to influence the course of events in their lives) and self-empowerment as a multifaceted process on various levels. At a personal level, *seaparo* enables individual women to gain a sense of control over their lives; the process makes each person feel worthy by being able to make a difference in other peoples lives. As the writer alluded in the introduction, personal empowerment embodies a sense of competence, mastery, strength, and ability to effect change.

At the structural level, *seaparo* enables women in burial societies to have access to resources and opportunities and to expand competencies (organisational, oratory performance, leadership, networking, and referral skills). While in some contexts, *seaparo* could be perceived as a badge of oppression, under conditions of social affliction, *seaparo* marks women's advancement towards enlisting community resources and redefining gendered social responsibility, community building and participation, assertion of dignity, and resistance to dehumanising institutional power relations. Since clothes are imbued with cultural and political meanings, women's *seaparo* is not peripheral to gender struggles for recognition of a public service rendered within asymmetrical power relations.

At the level of process, the ceremonial activities that mark the event unleash a process of self-empowerment in that women build up and put into action organised responses to a particular crisis in living conditions that affects their lives. Here the process of *kapeso* gives us a perspective on social realities of living with the dead and dying every day. The process connects women in burial societies and in so doing they are able to challenge gender relations. Gendered experiences between women and men vary and both genders are aware of the changing world around them and act on the basis of this awareness.

On the one hand, burial societies see themselves as groups officially recognised by law. They are thus concerned with the normative aspects of the law that impinge upon women's creativity. *Seaparo* reconstitutes this dynamism in the sense that the process brings together multiple voices of women (and men) to a participatory social process. The diverse voices, on some issues, often collide, and on others strike a compromise. The event illustrates the subtle ways in which burial societies mark themselves as a distinct community and, conversely how the groups are being made to recreate new group identities for themselves.

From the discussion in the above section, it is clear that *kapeso* is gendered socio-cultural process that produces gendered consciousness as manifest in a choice of ritual object of power and a particular dress code for public presentation. Through the process, women in burial societies carve out an 'enabling niche' in the public arena to dispense emergency financial relief to avert the detrimental consequences of social affliction. Furthermore, the gendered construction of symbolic images through *kapeso* process expresses, reinforces or sometimes opposes divisions between women and men.

The gendered symbolic-expressive event and processes of *kapeso* enlist different sources of power (colour coded dress, bible, song, dance, gestures and so on) for women in ways that have practical implications for gender relations outside practices of a burial society. The last section looks at specific ways in which the redefines gender relations and Tswana humanism, *botho.*

5. Social Practice Implications: Redefining Gender Relations and Tswana Humanism *(botho)*

a) *Challenging the authority of pastors and redefining institutional and gender relations*

Gender is the production of gendered social structures (in this case the burial society as a social institution), interactions between women and men, between women and women, and between men and men. During these gendered encounters, women take advantage of the opportunity to organise and mobilise resources for purposes chosen by them, and to work out strategies they deem appropriate to authorise the disbursement of these resources to households in need. Conceptions of gender relations thus must explore tensions and possibilities among social and institutional relations among women, and between women and men, as necessary aspect of social practice. As Jane Flax (1990: 44) writes:

> Gender relations as an analytical category is meant to capture a complex set of social processes. Gender, both as an analytic category and as a social process, is relational. That is, gender relations are complex and unstable processes constituted by and through interrelated parts. These parts are interdependent, that is, each part can have no meaning or existence without the others.

Thus gender, as social relations, can be understood in complex ways. It refers to the content of the relationships and the manner in which they are constructed. That is, meanings of gender are maintained and challenged through social practices of social actors who engage with each other and the institutions in which they are involved. In other words, the content of gender relations is a lived experience that is arrived at through everyday life activities of authentic people working within actual historical circumstances.

During the process of *kapeso,* women find new positions (among themselves and between themselves and men), which they actively utilise and to which they give new meanings. *Kapeso*, implicitly or explicitly, poses a challenge among women on the one hand, and between women and men on the other regarding who is authorised to proclaim the Word of God, to whom, where, when, and for what purpose. Context and appropriateness of religious and cultural practices in a given social setting are thus paramount during *kapeso.* Through *seaparo,* women contest the authority of priests as sole purveyors of a moral social order. *Seaparo* gives them a moral high ground and proves women to be adept at translating and contextualising Protestant Christian and indigenous religious symbols and practices in ways that fortify a 'newly' marked sense of social identity and gendered role performance.

During *kapeso*, women juxtapose themselves as women of the garb *(bomme ba seaparo*) vis-à-vis pastors, *men of the cloth.* They contend that the role of *pastors,* as men of the cloth, is the care of the *soul of a dead body and* that of women of the garb in burial societies is to care for the 'exposed' flesh of the *dead body by 'dressing it' and protecting it from public humiliation.* In practical terms this implies providing both material and non-material support in ways that restore dignity and humanity to the deceased and their bereaved families.

Women do not conceive *seaparo* as inciting animosity among churches because, unlike churches, they say that burial societies have no bounded constituencies and territorial claims to make or protect. Emergency relief is not about religious patronage, but a service to a more open household audience that does not necessarily contest the goals of burial societies. Burial societies feed the hungry gathered at a funeral; pastors cannot feed the hungry with the 'Word' from the Bible. The *kapeso* event and processes make burial societies 'well known in the community' and acknowledged as a force to be reckoned with.

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that Judeo-Christian rituals are redeployed for elaborating new sensibilities. Pastors are forced to acknowledge and accommodate the emerging and tenuous authority women have imposed on them. Women also derive the high moral ground from the social power of sheer numbers. Pastors, they argue, are aware of the centrality of women at all levels of the funeral processes. Clearly, the concept of 'woman' defines a network of cultural and social relations and particular social positions that are relative to constantly shifting contexts (economic, cultural, and political). Through *kapeso,* women use their positions to straddle shifting contexts of living with the dying and dead and authorise new gendered social roles and identities. As such the ritual processes of *kapeso* are not merely a reproduction of existing order, but also the reinvention of religious and cultural beliefs in everyday life. What the church perceives as important for priests, the burial societies see as important for women.

b) Asserting Women's Social Power in Everyday Life

During unstructured interviews, female respondents contended that Tswana women have multiple roles to which they are accountable, and that, in any given community event, women constitute the majority (in civic organisations, as church goers, and as care-givers of the aged, children, the sick, the dying, and the dead). They further pointed out that with so many people dying, pastors are unable to cope with the demand to conduct funeral services; as such, it was not uncommon to find a funeral service run by women from burial societies. Furthermore, these women conduct sermons during pre-burial prayers, they lead sing and dramatise the art of public speaking when eulogising or preaching during the funeral vigil *(tebelelo)*. They also display acute organisational and leadership skills in mobilising and deploying resources from a range of sources, and exhibit competency in persuasion and bargaining with various institutions.

Women's confidence in explicating biblical knowledge during *kapeso* therefore cannot be divorced from the assertion of their social power in other public domains of caring labour (for example, feeding the healthy, sick and dying and cleaning dead bodies), task maintenance in religious worship and funeral resource mobilisation. Social power in this context is understood not in terms of agency over others but, rather, as the transforming capacity of organised action. In the process of transforming organised action, women empower themselves as a legitimate force to be reckoned with.

Women also see themselves as having the ability, through *seaparo*, to bring order to a chaotic situation in funerals. As one respondent in Ramotswa pointed out, the styles of dress in funerals have become 'too bizarre' since mourners come dressed in elaborate regalia like 'peacocks' on a catwalk. It is common sense, some women say, to figure out what are acceptable and unacceptable ways of dressing for social occasions. They contend that the hat a person wears says a lot about what they do and how they do it. Disagreeable colours thus offend the sombre mood of the funeral process and cause public embarrassment. Funerals, they contend, must epitomise order, discipline, sobriety, dignity, coordination, and respect. *Seaparo* serves as a corrective that differentiates the orderly conduct and dignity of a funeral from the intemperate behavior of mourners.

Other members of burial societies argue that, to be taken seriously in society as a women's movement *(mokgatlho)*, their members have to take themselves seriously. Their physical appearance in the provision of direct financial relief affirms their commitment to achieving stated goals and facilitates creation of reciprocal working relations with key institutions (such as family-kin, religion groups, and chiefs). Formation of loose alliances between burial societies and bereaved households, for instance, is demonstrated when the latter are invited by the former to participate in post-burial ceremonials such as 'unveiling' of a tombstone or 'washing clothes' of the deceased. These post-burial events are intimate moments (which are more relaxed and friendly and less conflict ridden and tense) and are not open to the public. The holistic view of cultural, moral, and spiritual dimensions of the provision of emergency relief, and the ethos of solidarity and reciprocity, become evident. This includes working with contradictions as well as concurrence to generate enabling niches.

Kapeso brings together multiple voices into a participatory social process of webs of power linked to the nation-state, the civil society and the wider world. The cooperative endeavour between these institutions presupposes gendered cues between the actors that identify the roles that they play in the funeral process. Dress and other cultural symbols may have many meanings, but meanings emerge out of the context in which they are used, and have both intended and unintended outcomes for those that are clothed for the occasion and those that are not.

At a personal level, *seaparo* confers human dignity between the individual self and the dead body. At community and institutional level, the process promotes strong community bonds and solidarity across religious denominations and traditional institutions such as chiefs and households. In this situation, all those with a stake in the process strive to achieve what is feasible and vouched for as acceptable standards of civility. It is therefore not surprising that in the villages, chiefs constantly urge villagers to join burial societies since these groups embody concrete values of compassion, primacy of human dignity, and Tswana humanism *(botho).*

c) *Practice of Tswana Humanism – 'Botho'*

For most African societies, *botho* (for Sotho-Tswana) and *ubuntu* (for Nguni speaking) peoples of southern Africa, serve as a spiritual foundation that has a unifying worldview or vision. Botswana's development principles espouse the notion of *botho* (Government of Botswana, Vision 2016), and the country's democratic principles are captured in the maxim that kgosi *ke kgosi ka batho,* 'a king is a king through people'. Both permeate social interactions in daily life in that *motho ke motho ka batho* ('a person is a person through other persons').

However, it has been pointed out that, for a Westerner, the notion that 'a person is a person through other persons' has no obvious religious connotations, but rather points to a general appeal to treat others with respect (Prinsloo, 1995, 1997). In the African context, the maxim has a deeply religious meaning and is key to understanding the Tswana sense of *spirituality* that accords basic respect, human dignity, dialogue and compassion to others. On the other hand, Western Humanism tends to underestimate or even denies the importance of religious beliefs (Ndaba; 1994, Brookryk, 1995). African humanism or *botho* implies a deep respect and regard for religious beliefs and practices (Teffo, 1994). The aphorism can be interpreted as both a factual description and a rule of conduct or social ethic. It describes a human being as 'being-with others' and prescribes what 'being-with-others' entails.

Social groups such as burial societies adopt a humanist approach to social affliction. Humanity in the African context is basically family and community, with a strong emphasis on religion and its symbolic union with the daily practical needs of people and spiritual entities in the metaphysical world (Oosthuisen, 1991). The etiology of dance circles during *kapeso,* therefore, could be seen as communicating a powerful message of togetherness and for people to pay attention to what they do, since how they do what they do could either humanise or dehumanise society.

Without a doubt, a very complex synthesis of African and Christian spirituality is apparent during *kapeso*. Burial society intervention simultaneously heals conditions of social affliction and renews mutual relationships expressed as a newness of life in Christ. The very practicality of 'civil ecumenism' shapes the role of individuals and social groups to live up to social obligation to kin and family. In practice, a humanist approach to spirituality is checked against moral obligation to kin and family rather than parochial commitment to some religious sect. Social affliction thus cultivates resiliency, that is, the capacity to survive, transform debilitating relationships, and perform some reciprocal societal functions against all odds. *Botho* translates social relations from despair and isolation to caring and solidarity in the face of adversity. As one respondent in Ramotswa succinctly pointed out, 'when women sing and dance in *seaparo*, they look nice and feel good, and that, in the shadow of death, brings life to people'.

By adopting a specific dress code as a mechanism through which to carve out a niche and sustain that advantage, women's burial societies pursue a less confrontational course of social action with moderate but achievable objectives (provision of timely financial relief to households in distress). In practice, their strategy is less likely to be considered a threat to formal institutions (especially religion and the state). The choice of balancing, on the one hand, agency and autonomy, and, on the other, social change and resiliency, is political. The approach makes it difficult for the ideological powers in these institutions to co-opt or curtail their activities.

Summary and Conclusion

Death coalesces macro and micro processes of social change and has different consequences for social participation for women and men. In Botswana, as elsewhere in Africa, funerals serve as markers of social inequalities in society, in terms of access to resources, social participation, and gendered roles. In the micro world of Goffman (1959), all roles involve situated performances. Roles emerge in the encounters, and are neither exhaustive nor necessarily the same. Social drama brings in actual processes of creating a relatively independent or emeregent cultural form, although they may describe meaning as something imposed.

Although burial societies may not have an autonomous impact on redefining gender relations, their practices can serve to legitimise, shape, redefine and reinforce prevailing understanding of these relations. Through *kapeso,* burial societies produce their own legitimising practices, and adopt a pragmatic stance of how things should be done, which symbols are invoked, in what context, and how these symbols are interpreted. The cultural analysis of organised activities of burial societies thus has to focus on transient or loose social and institutional relations. The redefinition of these relations within the framework of burial societies practices gives us insight into the modes of everyday activity that are implicated in broad patterns of gender and institutional relations.

Kapeso process embodies the pragmatism of values of civil ecumenism, compassion, and humanism *(botho)*. During the process, women create their own common understandings around death, regardless of imposed constraints in the larger political economy. Through the social process of organising emergency relief, new ideas, experiences, meanings, and situated gender roles emerge in the specific social encounters in which burial societies find themselves involved.

Notes

1. Matumo, 1997. *Setswana/English Dictionary.*
2. Meaning their capacity to do things, to influence social events, mediate social situations, and learn from specific arenas of social practice.
3. Cultural models are not necessarily in the consciousness of actors. Rather, they form a background against which actors live and act out their everyday lives.
4. Douglas (1966), following Durkheim, stresses the moral aspects of culture (as opposed to psychological functioning of individuals) especially the necessity of having predictable behaviour in order for social interaction is to be possible.
5. Dressing the dead among the Tswana also includes making the grave a domicile by providing the dead with comforts (ornaments, flowers, pots, 'shades') to ease their transition to another world. Also, it is presumed that some parts of the soul remain in the cadaver.
6. Seen here as the capacity to function and use survival skills to perform well in some contexts. This also includes the capacity to transform dysfunctional relationships or terrible experiences into something that has meaning for self and others.
7. Such classification, however, is unwarranted. Studies in women's grassroots organisations elsewhere suggest that women's welfare associations contribute differently to increasing community participation, strengthening local democracy. They promote new systems of morality, integrate and connect economic and social needs, and can also easily move from the personal to the political, or from specific practical needs to general practice goals of social justice (Ackelsberg, 1988; Gittel & Vidal, 1998; Naples, 1998; Gittel, et al, 2000).
8. Government industrial class workers have uniforms which are supplied to them by the employers, most as protective clothing. Government also issues uniforms to the police and the army. In both cases, the recipients have no voice in the selection of colour, design, and emblems that go with the uniforms. These variations have to do with hierarchy and rank in the bureaucratic structures. On the other hand, private and parastatal institutions such as Botswana Telecommunications, Debswana, Botswana Diamond Valuation, commercial banks, and so on supply

their employees with uniforms. They buy the uniforms for the workers, but management selects the design. The reasons for 'uniforming' the workers vary from security reasons (such as in the case of the diamond industry), to subtle ways of discouraging certain styles of dress (such as wearing of pants in public places) without evoking protest from women; and, for individual workers, a uniform is a way of minimising the ever-increasing expenditure on clothing.

9. The financial cost of having *seaparo* is seen as an additional cost that is not included in monthly subscriptions to the emergency relief fund.
10. They are careful not to choose colours that could be associated with any political party. For example, they avoid red and black because they are associated with the Botswana Democratic Party (the political party in power). They also avoid mixing mustard and green, which are associated with the official opposition party, the Botswana National Front, and other colours that may be associated with trade unions. Within the burial society community itself, some members are active participants in these groups and are nonetheless eager to keep partisan politics out of burial societies.
11. Mortuaries in Gaborone have also appropriated these colours. In an interview with a manager of one mortuary, for instance, I found that it was women who did the tailoring of the funeral garb, while men did the 'receiving, cleaning and storage' of the corpse.
12. Colours, blue and green in southern Africa, appear to be linked with regenerative powers; blue *(budutu)* is associated with development and maturation, and is the colour of the rain; green *(botala)* indicates points of growth, and grey is something ripened. Freshness and growth connote vegetable fecundity, and socially, the power to 'grow others' (Comaroff, 1985).
13. Although there are government appointed chiefs and *kgotla* in urban settings, burial societies hardly ever involve them in their undertakings. Chiefs from respective villages are most likely to be invited.
14. The criteria for selection include a proven track record of the group, location, familiarity with management style, respectability in the community, assessment of knowledge and competency in burial society concerns, leadership astuteness, and so on.
15. Some groups institute *mapodisi* (police) for purposes of keeping an eye the on unbecoming behaviors of members. Depending on the size of each group, about three to four members are appointed as police officers for the group. In some villages such as Molepolole, *mapodisi* have their own specially designed *seaparo* with appropriate differentiating emblems of rank and seniority. Generally, the duty of *mapodisi* is to enforce 'law and order' by monitoring appropriate behaviour for example, to ensure that the dress code is adhered to during monthly meetings, prayer meetings, funeral wakes and burials, fundraising drives. They also to impose fines on late comers, unexcused absences, keep an eye on the treasurer *(motshara madi)* and secretary *(mokwaledi)* to prevent financial mismanagement.
16. A Weberian (1963) outlook on religion suggests three levels. The theological doctrine (which provides guidance for living a moral life consistent with religious conceptualisation); the practical religion (as a product of its time – of a social

group with its own social needs, the interaction between the founding doctrine and the political, economic and socio-cultural conditions) and the practical religion of the converted (as religion spreads it interacts with the cultural life of the new community, and people transform it to meet their needs and demands as they are being influenced by contemporary social conditions). All three levels exist simultaneously and symbols that are created take their own life even if the influencing socio-economic conditions are gone. Weberian religious values are static since they are transferred in like form from one economic and political milieu to another and his approach has since been revised wherein religious values are seen as points of conversation which are debated (see Laitin, 1986).

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Learning to Live or to Leave? Education and Identity in Burkina Faso

Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to reflect upon how more or less poor people perceive different educational systems in Burkina Faso and the roles they can play in the improvement of people's basic capabilities. Inspired by the idea that poverty must be seen as 'the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of incomes' (Sen 1999:87), I seek to explore how such basic capabilities relate to education and identity. What happens with the children going to school compared to those who do not? Why do certain ethnic groups favour formal school education when others reject it? To what extent does formal school education reproduce the colonial divide between citizen and subject? How are education and identity interrelated in for example primary schooling and adult education?

While most scholars and practitioners would agree that there is a need to strengthen poor people's capabilities, less attention has been paid to the relationship between education and identity in postcolonial contexts. Sending children to school is not only a question of money and other resources but it is also a question of opting for a modern way of life, ideally as a civil servant. In other words, the school tends to be seen as preparing the children to leave the traditional way of life in favour of a life in the city. For someone who has been to school, farming is most often not a desirable activity any longer. Yet with the disengagement of the state and the lack of employment opportunities, there are simply not enough jobs to absorb the educated youth. A central question is therefore whether children 'learn to live', that is, to sustain and improve their basic capabilities; or if they *de facto* 'learn to leave', that is, to move from the rural village to town and, most often, engage in informal sector activities. The ideas that non-educated people have about formal education are crucial here, because they reveal how education and knowledge are perceived.

In this paper, I will explore the linkages between education and identity in Burkina Faso. Firstly, I will reflect upon central features shaping the ways in which knowledge and education are conceptualised in postcolonial contexts. The divide between so-called scientific knowledge and endogenous of knowledge and its impact on individual and collective identification are appraised. Secondly, I will describe how formal education is represented in daily life as an expression of modernity in Burkina Faso. Those who do the work of the white men (*tubabubaara*) are almost exclusively those with formal education. Civil servants are both seen as 'successful examples' but also as 'valuable resources' by people in their home area. Official statistics show, however, that formal education still remains an opportunity for the privileged few. Thirdly, I will discuss how adult education, in this case alphabetisation in local languages, has become an educational alternative of growing importance. It offers a means to bridge the divide between 'scientific knowledge' and 'endogenous knowledge'. But adult education is not merely a question of learning to read and write. It forms part of identification processes, here exemplified by the teaching of local history in adult education in the village of Noumoudara, as well. In the concluding discussion, I will explore the complex relationship between education and identity in Burkina with reference to both formal and non-formal education. The paper concludes by suggesting that a cultural analysis of education and identity in postcolonial contexts may help us to transcend the distinction between 'education for work' and 'education for empowerment'.

Conceptualising knowledge and education

In most postcolonial contexts, people tend to distinguish between so-called scientific knowledge and indigenous forms of knowledge. It marks off the knowledge taught in schools and universities from craftsmanship, indigenous institutions, religious wisdom and so forth that are taught outside the formal educational setting. However, the knowledge of traditional healers could neither be written off as 'non-systematic' and 'non-rational' nor could it be seen as craftsmanship. Similarly, Islamic schools in West Africa, particularly in the universities of Djenne and Timbouctou in present-day Mali, the religious *marabouts* followed by their disciples represent examples of a long tradition of higher education. Initiation into secret societies, such as the hunters' brotherhood, represents the acquisition of knowledge of practical, moral and religious character. But although people make distinctions between modern education and endogenous knowledge in everyday life, the conceptual distinction is far from clear-cut. In other words, the distinction between 'the way of the Whites' *tubabuya*) and 'the way of the Africans'(*farafinya*), constantly referred to in Burkina, is more ideologically than empirically grounded.

The distinction between scientific knowledge and endogenous forms of knowledge is central in development discourse. Mark Hobart argues for instance that western scientific knowledge has played an important part in the problem of underdevelopment. 'Not only are indigenous knowledges ignored or dismissed, but the nature of the problem of underdevelopment and its solution are defined by reference to this world-ordering knowledge' (Hobart 1993:1). The distinction between 'scientific knowledge' and endogenous forms of knowledge originates in the European Enlightenment. As opposed to superstition and ancient beliefs, scientific knowledge would illuminate people and thus promote rational progress. The very distinction between 'scientific knowledge' and 'endogenous knowledges' can thus be traced back to a specific historical process in Europe.

In postcolonial contexts education is clearly linked to a history of foreign domination.[1] Education is as much a way to state whom one is as it is to obtain knowledge and knowing. In other words, education and identity are intimately yet ambiguously linked. On the one hand, formal education represents a way to become 'modern' and thus escape 'ignorance'. Pupils are sent to school 'to know the paper'. But, on the other hand, formal education is said to 'spoil' children and thus contribute to moral decline. Old people often express their regret that 'today the world has changed'. The ambiguous conception of education goes back to the colonial school system. But while the colonial divide between citizens and subjects has been aptly analysed (Mamdani 1996), this divide is particularly striking in the context of education. Those who were educated 'became' citizens, albeit they remained of African origin; only a small minority of African individuals were 'citizens' in a legal sense.

The divide between citizens and subjects is an entry-point to education and identity, but it is worth noting that the divide is not only a legal one. Today, the divide between citizens and subjects is to a large extent expressed as the one between educated and non-educated people. In daily life people make distinctions between 'the intellectuals' or 'the instructed', on the one hand, and 'the population', 'the villagers' or 'the peasants', on the other. While the former category allows people to be approached as individuals, the latter tends to be addressed collectively, especially in development projects. In voluntary associations, this divide is often conceptualised as between 'the people who know the book' and the illiterates. In these associations such a divide is reproduced in the distinction between 'active members' and 'automatic members' (Lentz 1995). The 'active members' are the leaders and other people with modern education who are apt to define activities and channel funding. The 'automatic members' are the villagers who are to be 'developed' by providing labour.

Far from being only a question of how to earn a living, education is tightly linked to status and identity. Those with a modern education are supposed to spatially and symbolically leave the illiterates behind. If they return to farm, they would be regarded as failures. Let me just mention one example. In 1990 I was to conduct a focus group interview in a small village in western Burkina. A young man of the age of 18 years welcomed me at arrival. He presented himself as the controller of the cotton weighing and thus seasonally employed by the parastatal SOFITEX. He had been to school in Bobo-Dioulasso and was now back in the village (probably as a school dropout). At my arrival the young man imposed himself as the mediator between the villagers and myself. I felt uneasy about this intrusion, but as it was a village in which I had not been working before, I did not want to ask him to withdraw. But in the heat of a debate around a specific question, the young man said loudly to me: 'Do not consider these people, they are ignorant, illiterate, they do not understand anything, they are not intellectuals.' An old man who had understood at least the sense of the young man's statement now furiously stood up and insulted the young man. He shouted that nowadays children do not respect the elders any longer. The old man walked away in anger and, needless to say, the interview was spoiled and I ended it quickly.

The above example highlights potential tensions between those being 'instructed' and who possess 'the knowledge of the white man', at least speaking French and reading and writing rudimentarily, on the one hand, and those representing 'the knowledge of tradition', possessing ancestral knowledge and respecting moral values, on the other. Here the difference between 'scientific knowledge' and 'endogenous knowledge' has less to do with what is knowledge and not, than it has to do with status and identity. The young man behaved in an unacceptable manner, justified by his five to six years at school and his employment for the 'modern' cotton company. Thus the divide between 'scientific knowledge' and 'endogenous knowledge' is related to asymmetrical power relations. While a Mande proverb holds that 'ignorance is an illness' (*kunfinya ye bana ye*) (quoted by Ki-Zerbo 1992), ignorance is a state that people attribute to others; to label someone as 'ignorant' is a way to designate the 'Other' (Hobart 1993). This is particularly striking in postcolonial contexts where the state apparatus and formal education reproduce values of the former colonial power.

Debates over knowledge and knowing tend to be contested and contradictory. For instance, professor Joseph Ki-Zerbo who argues for 'endogenous development' is himself deeply rooted in a French scholarly tradition (Ki-Zerbo 1992). Among African scholars there is a long tradition of searching for 'authentic African knowledge'. Achille Mbembe argues that the 'modern African interrogation' of identification processes includes among other things an incantation that is based upon three tragic historical experiences: slavery, colonisation and apartheid. Today, the experience of globalisation may be added (Mbembe 2000b:17). These experiences have had serious consequences for Africans among which one notes the separation of the self, material and psychological dispossession and the loss of dignity. Current African identities are forged in the interface of cosmopolitanism and autochthonous values, because the desire for authenticity is to a large extent linked to globalisation processes (Mbembe 2000b:43).

The interface of what Mbembe calls 'cosmopolitanism' and 'autochthonous values' is clearly manifested when it comes to knowledge and education. Many children in Burkina start school without knowing any French, the language in which education is conducted. While they speak Dyula, Mooré or any other local language with their peers, in the classroom French is taught. So, before accessing the content of education, let alone cultivating a critical stance towards what is taught, children have to learn French. These pupils often experience conflicting claims between modern education and tradition, as eloquently dramatised in *Keïta: l'héritage du griot* (1994) by the Burkinabe filmmaker Dani Kouyaté. The young boy Mabo in the film is caught between the knowledge of his family origin, narrated by the griot Djeliba, and the modern school, represented by his teacher.

For the purpose of this paper I want to suggest that instead of seeking to distinguish local, endogenous or traditional knowledges from so-called Western scientific knowledge and, in consequence, remain hopelessly trapped in global-local dichotomies, we need to see how knowledge and education are produced locally, be it in the modern school, Islamic teaching, initiation or adult education. To retrace 'authentic African knowledge systems' would be to miss the point, because village schools need to be contextualised in the same manner as any ritual or 'bush school', the latter institutions having been studied for a long time by anthropologists. It is the interface of cosmopolitanism and autochthonous values that must be placed at the core of analysis.[2]

In Burkina Faso people have experienced different kinds of education, despite the fact that the most important education has been carried out according to French curricula. Kaboré *et al.* have provided a historical review of postcolonial educational experiences and current figures on how the schooling rate has developed over the years. Formal education is to a large extent mirrored in the development strategy of the moment. While educational reforms in the 1960s and 1970s aimed at attaining 'quantitative development', the substance of the curricula became increasingly addressed in the late 1970s and, in particular, with the educational reform in 1986 (Kaboré *et al.* 1999:18-19). The current Law of Education Orientation was issued in 1996. It stipulates 'no child should be excluded from the educational system before the age of 16 years, provided that the infrastructures, equipments, human resources and current rules allow it' (Law 013/96/ADP 9 May 1996, Article 2. My translation). The Law distinguishes between three types of education in the Burkinabe educational system: 'formal education', 'non-formal education' and 'informal education'. 'Formal education' refers to primary, secondary and higher education, that is, leading to university degrees and diplomas. Within formal education access to higher education is possible, provided that the pupil has his/her diploma. 'Non-formal education' refers to functional alphabetisation, *école rurale*, education in national languages and vocational training, and so on. It is organised in a non-school setting. 'Informal education' is diffuse and daily; it is often conducted within the family and the social group. 'Informal education is non-organised whereas political authorities pay particular attention to the other two' (Kaboré *et al.* 1999:14. My translation). The consequences of this typology are easily detected. Formal education, that is, an education according to a French curriculum, is given priority and non-formal educational attempts, such as functional alphabetisation and teaching in national languages, are nonetheless recognised. But other educational efforts are defined out as diffuse and non-organised. Once again the postcolonial context of knowledge production is emphasised, regardless of the many attempts undertaken to 'Africanise' or 'endogenise' the educational system (cf. Kaboré *et al.* 1999:25-30).

For the sake of clarity in this paper I take 'formal education' as a shorthand for the training that pupils receive within the formal school system, based on a French curriculum. The label does not, however, imply any normative statement of what is good education. I do not look into curriculum development and schooling conditions, but I am, instead, interested in the identity process related to formal education, because it can help us to understand the motives for parents choosing to send children to school or not. While it is reasonable to assume that children of educated people are more likely to go to school, I am focusing on how non-educated people perceive formal education. It is the very process of identification, both as the act of identifying and as the state of being identified, that interests me more than any description of a perceived innate identity of people. People have no problems with being Dagara (an ethnic group with many 'intellectuals'), initiates of religious cults and civil servants, but the question is how they identify with various forms of knowledge and education in different contexts. In the two following sections of the paper I will therefore analyse education and identity in two different contexts. Firstly, I will elaborate on how 'formal education' is perceived as a prime symbol of modernity in daily life and is contrasted with ideas about traditional way of life. Secondly, I will analyse the ways in which adult education seeks to bridge tradition and modernity and thus to reinforce a sense of collective identification.

Tradition and Modernity

Formal education in Burkina Faso is very much seen as a way to become modern. In French people refer to those educated as 'instructed'; when talking about someone people might say, 'he is not instructed' (*il n'est pas instruit*). Public schools dominate primary education. About 90 percent of all primary school children are enrolled in public schools. Laic private schools represent some 3.5 percent of all school children. Taken together Catholic and Protestant schools cover less than one percent (0.7) of the pupils, whereas Franco-Arabic schools (*medersa*) enrol as much as five percent of all children (Bayala *et al.* 1997:11; see also Kaboré *et al.* 1999:30). In 1990 the schooling rate of primary school was around 29 percent and in 1998 it was more than 40 percent.[3]

Formal education is tied to the French colonial legacy. The early Catholic missionaries invested a lot of work in ensuring that the converts and their children received a good (i.e. French) education. The Catholic involvement was strong in formal education until the 1970s when the state took over these schools. The Catholic school was often considered to be better and more disciplined than public schools. In the 1990s Catholic schools have reopened in Burkina.

Despite a rhetoric that puts emphasis on schooling, only one third of Burkinabe children are enrolled in school at the age of seven. It is particularly the poorer segments of society whose children are not attending school. A study on education and poverty indicated that while 62.7 percent of 'non-poor children' are admitted to school, only 19 percent of poor children are. The net schooling of children between the ages of seven and twelve is 35.3 percent in Burkina Faso; in the urban area 73 percent are schooled, but there are far less (28.8 percent) in the rural area (Bayala *et al.* 1997). There is also a wide difference in schooling between the country's regions. In the North the overwhelming majority (87.6 percent) of children between the ages of seven and twelve are not schooled (Bayala *et al.* 1997; see also Gérard 1998; Kaboré *et al.* 1999; Ouédraogo 1998).

Given the high percentage of non-schooling in Burkina Faso a relevant question to ask is why it is so. My fieldwork material suggests two main clusters of problem for people not sending their children to school, namely financial problems, and social and cultural issues. Financially, poor people prefer not to send children to school because it is too expensive. Although public schools are free, parents still need to buy schoolbooks, writing material, proper clothing and so on. To put a child in school involves expenses and the financial dimension of schooling is critical to most people. Parents who are relatively 'better off' try to hire private teachers to train the pupils after school hours. But many parents see the prospects for their children to 'succeed' and get a job after school as uncertain. Today, the argument goes, even university graduates have difficulties in finding work, so how can those with only primary and secondary school get a good job? Investment in education is a great cost for many parents with diminishing prospects for a payback in terms of a job with a decent income. Beyond these immediate expenses it is also a question of labour. In rural communities, children's labour is needed in production. The young boys often help in farming and livestock keeping, and the girls get involved in cooking and other domestic tasks. In the cities the girls' workload may be heavy, as they have to do much housework. Children may also be expected to conduct petty trade. Boys and girls under the age of 10 often sell items in the street or in the market place.

There is also a cultural dimension to the low level of schooling in Burkina Faso. Schooling is associated with modernity, implying that the children are to leave the rural way of life behind them. The school is seen as 'spoiling' the children. They go to school to get a job, but are unable, and often unwilling, to do farm work any longer. Schooling may then involve a double loss: a financial burden and a drain of labour. In particular, girls' schooling is problematic, because the girl is to get married elsewhere and only her in-laws will benefit from her skills and labour (Gérard 1998:198). While the fact that schooling has turned pupils away from the rural area and manual work is nothing new, structural adjustment programmes have direly reminded people that even the well-educated might have serious difficulties in getting employment.

There are remarkable differences between different ethnic and religious groups with respect to schooling in Burkina Faso. I will take two examples: Fulbe non-schooling, and Dagara schooling. Fulbe pastoralists are often reluctant to let their children go to school. Many Fulbe informants in the Banfora region stated at several occasions that 'the Fulbe do not go to school'. Instead, when the white colonialists wanted children for schools, the Fulbe sent their 'slaves'; that is, their former captives the Rimaibe to school. But the Fulbe children stayed outside modern education. Today, however, the Fulbe see that 'their slaves' have become government officials and that Fulbe interests are not defended. One Fulbe man said to me, 'the government is Haabe [that is, for non-Fulbe Black Africans] and only God supports the Fulbe'.

Koranic schools represent another form of schooling in line with local Muslim moral and educational values. In particular, the Franco-Arabic schools (or *medersas*) seek to integrate Muslim teaching with knowledge of French and other subject matters. These schools are managed by Muslim brotherhoods in urban centres and have classes from primary education to high-school degree. The high-school degree gives access to universities in Arabic countries, such as Egypt, Yemen and Saudi-Arabia (Kaboré *et al.* 1999:30). The Franco-Arabic school provides an interesting compromise between modern education and Islamic teaching, in particular for many Fulbe. For instance, the only two Fulbe who speak rudimentary French in the village of Djalakoro, in which I have worked for a long time, have both attended the Franco-Arabic school. The Franco-Arabic school is a relatively recent urban phenomenon, but the Koranic schools tend to remain in rural areas (Kaboré *et al.* 1999:30).

However, the Fulbe represent one extreme of non-schooling and the Dagara, an ethnic group of southwestern Burkina and northwestern-Ghana, represent another. The Dagara have many 'intellectuals', occupying important posts in state administration. The single most important factor explaining this is the presence of the Catholic mission. The conversion experience among the Dagara has been analysed elsewhere (e.g. Poda 1997; Tengan 2000) and also in relation to political leadership (Lentz 1998). But to my knowledge less attention has been paid to the impact on schooling and the many Dagara intellectuals in at least the Burkinabe state administration.

The examples of Fulbe and Dagara show the different roles played by religion. Christianity in the Dagara case has been instrumental in bringing these Dagara children to school. But Islam seems to have contributed to preventing the Fulbe children from going to school. The politically significant aspects of knowledge production can scarcely be more evident. Koranic schools are defined as religious and traditional, but Catholic schools are intimately linked with modernity and progress. Although laic public schools dominate in Burkina, the impact of Koranic and Catholic schools needs to be taken into account. Gender differences are strong in religious schools. Boys rather than girls are those who dominate in Koranic schools and thus those who will inherit the cultural capital of Islam (Gérard 1998:205).

There is an ongoing debate over primary education and its role in development, because 'education' has become a panacea for overcoming almost any obstacle to development. State agents and other development practitioners often argue that 'we need to work for a change of mentalities', which in fact implies that those without education are 'ignorant'. Schooling of girls is especially considered to be critical for development to take place. Marie-France Lange highlights how the discourse on girls' schooling is based on utility. Policies that are conceived to favour schooling of girls and training of women are enclosed in a utilitarian discourse, which imposes upon girls a schooling under conditions and upon women a utilitarian training (Lange 1998:9).

Education is seen as a prime factor in becoming 'modern' and 'developed' and thus escaping 'ignorance'. But the educated may also lose power and influence in local settings as illustrated by the following example. A man I know well since many years back (let us call him Bwa) is acting as the Master of the Earth or Earth Priest (*dugukolotigi* in Dyula or *chef de terre* in Burkinabe French). The Master of the Earth institution is common in rural societies on the West African Savanna. The Master of the Earth is the eldest living agnatic descendant of the first settler of a site and is in charge of the community's relations with the Earth. He is the one in charge of conducting sacrifices to the spirits of the earth and the ancestors so as to ensure fertility. He distributes land and gives land to strangers who want to settle there. The idea of being first is ingrained in this vision of the world: first, the Master of the Earth is the descendant of the first settler; and second, he is the eldest living man in the lineage of the first settler.

Bwa who is in his 50s is acting as the Master of the Earth of the locality. He is thus an important person in the local setting. He has never been to school. Once Bwa told me that his maternal uncle did not allow him to 'make the bench' (*faire le banc*), a fact that he deeply regrets: 'I could have been someone, you know'. However, Bwa is a descendant of the first settler of the site, but he is not the oldest living descendant. His elder brother (let us call him Moussa) resides in the same locality and is the one who should normally occupy the position of Master of the Earth. This extraordinary situation seems to be due to two factors. Firstly, sacrifices to the Earth are seen to 'spoil the prayers', that is, this kind of sacrificing is *against* Islam. Moussa prays five times a day and avoids alcoholic beverages. Although Moussa should conduct sacrifices to the spirits of the Earth he explained to me that this is not compatible with Islam. Secondly, Moussa has been working as a medical officer and been employed by the state. He retired relatively recently and returned to his home locality. Thus Moussa has been to school and received an education, but this also made him less apt to occupy the position of Master of the Earth. But Bwa 'stayed with his uncles' since he was a boy and thus learned a lot about rituals of the Earth. He acquired the knowledge of how to act in agrarian rites and how to make 'reparations' (purifying rituals) in case of bloodshed (cf. Hagberg 1998; Hagberg 2001a). Bwa is the bearer of crucial local knowledge, but he has not 'made the bench'.

This example illustrates that 'formal education' does not necessarily make a person knowledgeable. Bwa possesses knowledge that is critical for the well-being of the community. This knowledge, however, is located outside the frame of both formal and non-formal education; it is instead what the law refers to as 'informal education', being 'diffuse' and 'non-organised' (Law 013/96/ADP 9 May 1996). But the case of Bwa and Moussa shows how education not only relates to knowledge but also to identity. While Bwa identifies himself as Master of the Earth and guardian of tradition, his brother Moussa is locally defined as 'intellectual' and Muslim.

A Quest for Identity

The preceding discussion on how education relates to discourses on tradition and modernity leads on to the question of individual and collective identification. People with formal education are simultaneously identifying with a certain way of life and are identified by others as being 'intellectuals'. The divide between so-called scientific knowledge and endogenous knowledge is reinforced in this process. Yet most children in Burkina Faso still do not go to school. One study indicates that the schooling rate is slightly more than 40 percent (Kaboré *et al.* 1999:45) while another estimates net schooling of children between the ages of seven and twelve is 35.3 percent in Burkina Faso (Bayala *et al.* 1997:18). Only 19 percent of 'poor children' are in primary school. Thus schooling does not reach the majority of children in Burkina Faso. It is for this reason that informal education must be assessed as a means by which the divide between formal education and non-formal education may be bridged.

The Franco-Arabic schools are interesting in the context of collective identification. These schools aim to ensure an education that applies to non-Islamic educational systems and that simultaneously emphasises Koranic teaching. While the traditional Koranic schools remain in rural areas, the Franco-Arabic schools are urban-based. The emergence of Franco-Arabic schools is an expression of the close linkage between education and identity. Parents want to ensure that their children receive a good education, but they should remain within the moral values of Islam. In other words, the requirements of formal education are respected, but Koranic teaching is thought to strengthen the morality of the pupils.

Adult education has become increasingly important in many African countries. Today, most French-speaking African countries have inscribed the use of national languages within their educational programmes (Alidou-Ngame 2000). In Burkina Faso, emphasis has been placed on 'functional alphabetisation' to eradicate illiteracy and to increase people's productive capacities. In other words, such alphabetisation campaigns should support a rural youth capable of modernising agriculture and animal husbandry (Kaboré *et al.* 1999:25-28). In the 1960s and 1970s attempts to combat illiteracy by means of 'functional alphabetisation' seem to have had a relatively limited impact. But since the 1980s – in particular the Alphabetisation Policy in 1984 – there has been a growth of adult education in Burkina. During the school year 1990/1991 there were 2,356 alphabetisation centres with about 70,000 pupils; six years later (the school year 1996-1997) there were 4,669 centres with more than 130,000 pupils (Kaboré *et al.* 1999:55). There has been a steady growth in female participation: from 39.8 percent in 1990-1991 to 50.6 percent in 1996-1997.

State agents and developers often promote 'functional alphabetisation' with the argument that it responds to illiterate people's needs. By learning book keeping and the ability to read and write instructions, the argument goes, these people will get the knowledge they need to be 'developed'. Efficiency is seen as the rationale for alphabetisation as it will improve their basic capabilities (cf. Sen 1999). But in practice alphabetisation is not merely functional and there are good reasons to take a close look at the content of the educational material. I will therefore show how history is narrated in adult educational material in the village of Noumoudara.

Houmoudara is located some 25 km south-west of Bobo-Dioulasso and is the 'captial' of the 'Tiefo country'. The ethnic group Tiefo belongs to the Mande family and they are firstcomers to the area, or better, they are those who are locally considered to be firstcomers and therefore occupy the position of Master of the Earth (*dugukolotigi*). The Tiefo have a reputation as warriors in the region and they refer to their legendary leader Tiefo Amoro, who was renowned, and feared, at the end of the 19th century as a great warrior. Tiefo Amoro refused to compromise. But in 1897 the Dyula Emperor Samori Toure took Noumoudara under siege. After a one-week-siege during which Samori lost many people Noumoudara was defeated. According to the Tiefo, Tiefo Amoro was betrayed by the actions of their neighbours the Bobo and the Dyula in general and a Tiefo woman called Filamuso Mori Dawo in particular. She spoiled the gun-powder of the Tiefo and put *fonio* (a local cereal) there instead. This betrayal was what defeated Noumoudara. Many people were killed. Some testimonies estimate up to 2,000 deaths (cf. Hébert 1958). Tiefo Amoro who had promised never to become a slave of Samori and surrender alive, killed himself when he realised that he would be defeated.

These events that occurred a few years before the territory became under French command shape the ways in which the Tiefo look upon themselves and how they perceive other peoples. These events also influence how others see the Tiefo.[4] The Tiefo refer to their legendary warrior leader and glorify their past. A Tiefo intellectual once declared: 'I am proud to know that my ancestor did not surrender, but that he kept his word not to be taken by Samori. He was defeated, but he did not surrender'.

The Tiefo are often described as 'a disappearing people' in Burkina Faso. Firstly, the historical memory is scant. Except for the story of Samori's destruction of Noumoudara, most Tiefo have obscure notions about history. Many admit not really knowing from where they originate, a fact that was stressed in one of the few studies on the Tiefo (Hébert 1958). But most Tiefo seem to share the interpretations of some critical events that occurred in the 1890s, notably the battle of Bama and the destruction of the Tiefo 'capital' Noumoudara. These 'Tiefo interpretations' contrast with other interpretations defended by members of neighbouring peoples, notably the Bobo and the Dyula. Secondly, the Tiefo language is indeed 'disappearing'. With the notable exception of two villages the Tiefo language is not spoken any longer. All Tiefo speak Dyula, the lingua franca of the region, albeit with a Tiefo accent. Most other ethnic groups of the region – for example the Gouin, the Karaboro, the Sambla and the Bobo – speak their own language besides the Dyula. But the Tiefo do not. The Tiefo have difficulties in finding their place in present-day Burkina Faso, and some say that they have 'become' Dyula!

It is in this context that adult education in Noumoudara can be understood. People obtain access to reading and writing, but they also learn about local history. The centre for adult education in Noumoudara has two classes with parallel alphabetisation sessions. The two class-room buildings are built in concrete. While the village groups provided manual labour, a development project furnished building material and skilled labour. The teachers are paid by the project, but the villagers have to provide them with food. In Noumoudara, alphabetisation in Dyula takes place in the dry season when there is less farm work. The first school year comprises 50 days, and the second school year 30 days. Fifty women have been 'alphabetised' thanks to the school.

This 'functional alphabetisation' has stimulated other interests besides reading and writing skills. There are books in the school and a monthly journal *Hakilifalen* ('Change of ideas') is produced in Bobo-Dioulasso to support adult education in the entire region. One woman stated: 'We cannot write letters to our friends and therefore all people have to be alphabetised'. Local history is predominant in many books. There is one book *Horonyakelew* ('The noble wars, the wars of freedom') that narrates the historical events in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. In the preface it is said, 'these are the speeches [*kumaw*, cf. French *paroles*] of the old people'. The book narrates the revolt of the Sambla in 1916, the Noumoudara massacre in 1897, the wars in Péni in 1892 and in Bama in 1893. Another book treats the revolt in Bona, *Bonakaw ka muruti*; here again the contributions of several old men are acknowledged in the preface. A third book concerns Dyula proverbs, *Julakan taleenw*. There are also two volumes of tales, *Tariku ni Maana*.[5]

It is striking how tradition is represented in these books. Although a more in-depth analysis of these books remains to be done, three remarks can be made. Firstly, in these books history is first and foremost narrated by 'big old people' (*mogokorobaw*) or 'big old men' (*cekorobaw*). The speeches of old people are treated as pure and the writers of the books, curiously anonymous, define themselves as 'translators'. Thus these are the 'true' and 'authentic' speeches that have first been collected and then written down!

Secondly, ethnic identities are treated as unproblematic categories in the books. The Sambla, the Tiefo, the Bobo and the Dyula are referred to as representing homogeneous identities. In this sense, the books reproduce ethnic stereotypes that are used daily in Burkina Faso. They locate different groups of people within local history. The books thereby provide a means by which collective identification is strengthened.

Thirdly, the defeat of Tiefo Amoro is described in heroic terms in *Horonyakelew*. While the Bobo, the Dyula and Filamuso Mori Dawo are portrayed as traitors, Tiefo Amoro who refused to become a slave and chose to commit suicide, is portrayed as a hero. He took off his warrior clothes (which would otherwise have protected him) and let his albino servant kill him. The corpse was buried in his courtyard (*Horonyakelew* N.d.:20). The ideal of Tiefo Amoro as one who did not surrender is reproduced in the books. It gives the Tiefo a place in the history of the region.

Narratives of the past are critical to the ways in which identities are forged. Adult education in Noumoudara is not only 'functional' in the sense that it supports people's basic capabilities to improve their living conditions, but it is also central to collective identification as 'Tiefo people'. It urges adult people to be stimulated by reading, because through the books they may listen to 'the speeches of old people' who have already passed away.

Discussion

So far this paper has sought to reflect upon how education is perceived by more or less poor people in Burkina Faso. I have particularly tried to show the extent to which education is associated with discourses on tradition and modernity and how different kinds of education relate to individual and collective identification. Children going to school obtain access to something different than those who do not. Yet many parents in Burkina choose not to send their children to school. The financial costs linked to formal education are definitely critical. The need for children's labour, especially in rural areas, is another factor. The distance between home and school is also important. Not all Burkinabe villages have a school. But education is also associated with identity. A son going to school may later be unwilling to take up farm work, because he has become intellectual. Girls' schooling is often not seen as useful by uneducated parents. She will marry elsewhere and only her in-laws will benefit from her skills. A Dyula marabout stated:

> If a girl will study, she will have open eyes, she will become independent, she will not feel shame any longer and she will get a hard head [she will not be submissive]. Thus, she will refuse the choice [of husband] of the parents. (Quoted by Gérard 1998:198. My translation.)

The growth of Franco-Arabic schools is an interesting example of bridging between tradition and modernity. The moral values of Islam are maintained together with teaching in French, Maths, History and so on. Adult education is another bridge. It provides adult persons with an opportunity to read and write in a local language. But as I have shown adult education may also give them the opportunity to identify with the past. In this concluding discussion I will move a step further and 'on the basis of people's perceptions' reflect upon the roles that different educational systems can play in the improvement of people's basic capabilities (cf. Sen 1999; see also Hagberg 2001b).

Ideally, education should of course support people's capabilities to get a job, and simultaneously empower individuals to improve their own living conditions and those of the society as a whole. However, the expression widely used in Burkina is that people with education are 'instructed', putting emphasis on the transfer of knowledge from the illuminated teacher, backed-up by the formal educational system, to the pupils who are supposed to receive this instruction. In reality, formal education is not a one-way process, but would be more appropriately described as encounters (of people, epistemologies and institutions) in specific settings (classroom and schoolyard) with the explicit purpose of learning. The contexts in which formal education actually takes place is an interesting topic to be studied. That is why I have tried to explore linkages between education and identity. In the interface of cosmopolitanism and autochthonous values in African contexts (cf. Mbembe 2000b), education is very much part of individual and collective identification.

Much has been said and written about education in Burkina Faso, but at least in public debates one gets the impression that the interrelatedness of education and identity is left aside. In July 2001 the majority political party CDP organised a conference on education. It was established that the Burkinabe educational system has many weaknesses:of educational supply, regional and sexual disparities, the insufficiency of personnel, insufficient infrastructures, the inappropriateness of training for employment, the weak involvement of partners [i.e. donors], and lack of funding.[6] In Article 2 of the Law on Education Orientation (Law 013/96/ADP 9th May 1996), this lack of basic infrastructure is apparent: no child under the age of 16 should be excluded from the educational system, provided that infrastructures, equipment, human resources and school rules allow it. In other words, if there is a school with a teacher no child could be prevented from going to school!

It could be argued that a country like Burkina Faso should first seek to solve the material and human problems of providing an adequate schooling. The issue of non-schooling would then find its solution, because the supply of education would improve in quantity and quality. Although I strongly sympathise with the idea that major investments need to be made in the educational sector, it worries me that the role of education in people's individual and collective identification is addressed so rarely. What happens, for instance, with people who have been to school and who are not able to sustain themselves? And what are the potentials of alternative forms of education?

Dropouts from school and unemployed people with university diplomas form part of a steadily growing urban youth. Many of them sustain themselves by subsistence activities in the so-called informal sector; and some even get into 'illicit activities'. While high school and university students are a political force that has played and continues to play an important role in the country's postcolonial history (Hagberg 2002 in press), these youths experience serious difficulties in finding ordinary jobs. Many of these youths seem to be what Ferguson (1999) has called 'disconnected'. When Copperbelt mineworkers in Zambia expressed a sense of abjection of an imagined modern world 'out there', they were not simply lamenting a lack of connection. Instead, they articulated a specific experience of disconnection. Ferguson reminds us that disconnection, like connection, implies a relation and not the absence of a relation.

> Disconnection, like abjection, implies an active relation, and the state of having been disconnected requires to be understood as the product of specific *structures and processes of disconnection*. What the Zambian case shows about globalization is just how important disconnection is to a 'new world order' that insistently presents itself as a phenomenon of pure connection. (Ferguson 1999:238)

In line with Ferguson I find that the educated but unemployed youths in Burkina feel disconnected from an imagined world 'out there'. They have acquired the skills to take cognisance of global flows of information, but they have difficulties in finding a place in Burkinabe society. Dropouts from school and less successful youths face a double loss: they experience disconnection from the modern world and they fail to fulfil social obligations (supporting parents, getting married etc.). But the picture is nonetheless more complicated that that. Burkinabe society also displays many positive examples of people finding jobs in the state administration, for projects or for NGOs. The ingenious *bricolage* that people do to sustain or to make a living (*se débrouiller* in French, *ka bamba* in Dyula) creates new dynamics. While Ferguson focuses on 'structures and processes of disconnection', I find it necessary to pay specific attention to individual agency. The reason is that individual experiences of connectedness have an impact on Burkinabe society as a whole. They are successful examples of being 'connected' and thus 'developed', and as such they express that, realistically or not, 'connection' to an imagined world 'out there' is within the limits of the possible.

Alternative forms of education shed new light on the linkages between education and identity. Children in Franco-Arabic schools remain within 'traditional spheres' of life. They aquire reading and writing skills, but they are less exposed to ideas of connectedness. The Fulbe who have gone to these schools are often using their skills in business, e.g. cattle trading or shop keeping. But many also tend to lose their skills when they go back to the village.

Adult education carves out a new space of literacy in that people read and write in a local language. But these skills are not merely 'functional' for development activities and associational life. They also contribute to strengthen and ingrain individual and collective identification by means of local history. This is an interesting interface of cosmopolitanism and autochthonous values. Mbembe and others have reminded us that the desire for authenticity is to a large extent linked to globalisation. Adults who are trained in the village of Noumoudara do not aspire to become connected to the new world order in the same way as the dropouts from school do. But they do aspire to become connected to outside organisations, such as development projects and state services, to improve the living conditions of the family and the community. Investments in housing (iron roof, building in concrete), technology (plough, draught animals) and other activities (petty trade, social obligations) may well be facilitated by the skills they have acquired in school. These adult pupils are stably settled in villages and the impact of education on village life is easier to assess.

In this paper I have explored the linkages between education and identity. I have demonstrated the extent to which education forms part of discourses on tradition and modernity and argued for the importance of going beyond positivistic knowledge conceptions to understanding the processes of identification involved. The analysis of the socio-cultural dimensions of education seems to be urgently needed in postcolonial contexts where the state apparatus and formal education reproduce the legacy of colonialism. While formal education faces many problems in present-day Burkina Faso, Franco-Arabic schools and adult education are no panacea either. Instead, I would like to argue for the necessity to carefully investigate the socio-cultural contexts in which different educational systems are implemented.

Notes

1. In anthropology the process of knowledge production is increasingly under scrutiny, taking a critical look at the role of the anthropological fieldworker, and the power relations of knowledge production (Fardon 1985, 1995; Gupta & Ferguson 1999; Moore 1996; Strathern 1995).
2. There is a wealth of recent writings on African postcolonial identities (e.g. Mbembe 2000a; Werbner 1998; Werbner & Ranger 1996).
3. The exact figures presented are 28.86 percent schooling in 1990: 35,02 percent for boys and 22.43 percent for girls. In 1998 the figures are 40.87 percent: 48.00 for boys and 33.40 percent for girls (Kaboré *et al.* 1999:45).

4. The fieldwork in the 'Tiefo country' forms part of an ongoing research that aims to elicit the ways in which 'Tiefo-ness' is expressed today. Particular attention is paid to the role of history and religion in the construction of Tiefo identity.
5. The books used for the analysis are the following: 1) *Horonyakelew*. N.d. Bobo-Dioulasso: Ministère de l'Agriculture et des Ressources Animales & Coopération Française; 2) *Bonakaw ka muruti*. N.d. Bobo-Dioulasso: Ministère de l'Agriculture et des Ressources Animales & Coopération Française; 3) *Julakan taleenw*. N.d. Bobo-Dioulasso: Ministère de l'Agriculture et des Ressources Animales & Coopération Française; 4) *Tariku ni Maana: Burkina Faso ni Jamanawerew ka Tariku*. 1997. Tome 1. Bobo-Dioulasso: Elisabeth Mariam Millogo Traoré with support by Coopération Suisse au Développement; 5) *Tariku ni Maana: Burkina Faso ni Jamanawerew ka Tariku*. 1997. Tome 2. Bobo-Dioulasso: Elisabeth Mariam Millogo Traoré with support by Coopération Suisse au Développement.
6. The conference was commented on in the Burkinabe newspaper *L'Observateur paalga*. http://www.lobservateur.bf/quotidien/select.asp?Numero=894).

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Non-State Justice in the Post Apartheid South Africa – A Scan of Khayelitsha

Introduction

The transition from apartheid to democracy necessitated an overhaul of both the state and civil society. As the net of citizenship drew wider a paradigm shift was needed in governance. While this was true for practically all spheres, it was all the more acute with regard to social ordering, especially the provision of safety and security as well as dispute resolution. The immediate targets of transformation in this sphere were the state police and the judiciary. Both were subjected to far-reaching changes. While all these changes were occurring, the provision of safety and security for the townships, which has always been predominantly non-state, continued to exist and evolve. But just as the state ordering, it has developed dimensions that make it different from its pre-1994 form and *modus operandi.*

The structures of ordering that exist today are in many respects, and substantially, different from the ones that existed before 1994 and so is the state justice machinery that co-exists with them. There are a variety of organisations that provide safety, security and dispute resolution in the townships. These range from the well-known street committees mainly affiliated to the South African National Civic Organisations (SANCO) to private security structures as well as structures that straddle state and non-state ordering. There has been a concerted effort on the part of the post-1994 government to combine state and non-state ordering resources and structures of which community police forums, as will be discussed later, are the most visible. These structures which straddle the state and the non-state divide co-exist with many other structures in the community. The ideological basis as well as the concomitant rhetoric of these different structures range, on the one hand, from traditional African dispute resolution mechanisms spiced with an urban flavour, to the popular justice mode, typical of townships and often tainted by sporadic acts of violence. On the other hand, one also sees the Western notion of community policing, private justice, private security and dispute resolution.

One of the townships where this variety in social ordering manifests itself is Khayelitsha, which forms the focus of this discussion.[1] Khayelitsha is a black residential area ('township') on the outskirts of Cape Town, about 20km from the city. The literal translation of the name is 'new home'. This township was formed in the early 1980s in line with a government decision to try and bring the mushrooming shanty settlements under control. It is therefore one of the youngest, but also one of the biggest, townships in South Africa. It is a home to over

half a million people, the majority of whom are unemployed. The unemployment rate was estimated at 80% in 1990.
(http://library.thinkquest.org/28028/History.html.)

The structures discussed here, as they operate in Khayelitsha, are Khayelitsha Community Police Forum (KCPF), traditional leaders under the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa), street committees under SANCO, and the Peninsula Anti-crime Agency (Peaca). While these structures in no way represent the total number of structures that perform non-state ordering in Khayelitsha,[2] let alone in the whole country, they serve as a window through which we can peep and catch a glimpse of the variety, diversity and plurality of ordering that characterise South Africa today. Moreover, the experiences of Khayelitsha are not atypical of those of other South African townships, at least as far as plurality and diversity in ordering are concerned.

The Khayelitsha Community Police Forum (KCPF)

The relationship between the South African Police (SAP) and the country's citizens was one of the key issues that demanded urgent attention, right at the dawning of the post-apartheid form of governance. Before 1994, the relationship between the police force and South African citizens, especially blacks, was an unhealthy one to say the least. This was occasioned by a variety of factors primarily related to the apartheid policing policy. Among others, the police force at the time had been trained and equipped in ways that would be inconsistent with the new order that required equal treatment of all citizens. For instance, as Brogden & Shearing (1993:178) remind us, the police officers then were trained with the aim of protecting white South Africans and controlling their black counterparts. These authors labelled the SAP a 'competent oppressor but not a competent protector of black communities' (ibid.). To that end the negotiating team, which was charged with negotiations that led to the dismantling of apartheid and the introduction of the current form of governance, developed a road map for the new form of policing that would resonate with the constitutional ethos of the country. One priority was to create structures through which the police and the civil society would be able to interact. This approach was anchored in the concept of community policing which served as the ideological basis on which police reform was undertaken.[3] It was in line with this thinking that community police forums (CPFs) were introduced. Their introduction was enabled by the provisions of section 221 of the Interim Constitution Act 200 of 1993 and subsequently entrenched by chapter 7 of the South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act"). These forums have turned out to be so important that they have even been described as '... the most visible, if not the only, expression of South Africa's community policing policy' (Pelser 1999:10).

The overall aim of community police forums, in short, is to improve the relationship and interaction between the South African Police Services (so named after 1994) and the public. Among other things, the SAPS would be made accountable to the community. The forums are civilian in constitution with the provision that the station commissioner and any number of members designated by him/her, as determined by the CPF, be members (section 20(3) and section 23(1)(b) of the Act).

Designed at that particular time of South African political history, CPFs have been given a mandate as stipulated in section 18, read with section 22, of the Act. A glance at these provisions, as in the list below, reveals that the lawmakers were keen on fostering a close relationship between the SAPS and the public. However, a caveat is in order. These functions as stipulated by the Act do not necessarily reflect what CPFs do in practice, as Pelser (1999) has shown, and this study of such a forum in Khayelitsha will further demonstrate. This incongruency between the statutory functions of CPFs and their practice should, principally, be attributed to lack of clarity on the scope, jurisdiction and modus operandi of CPFs.

Statutory functions of CPFs:

- to establish and maintain a partnership between the community and the SAPS;
- to promote communication between the SAPS and the community;
- to promote co-operation between the SAPS and the community;
- to improve the rendering of services to the community at local level;
- to improve transparency in the SAPS and accountability of the SAPS to the community;
- to promote joint problem identification and problem-solving by the SAPS and the community.

Such a forum was formed in Khayelitsha in 1995. This forum has 13 subforums throughout the township, with an executive committee of 12 members elected at a general meeting. All its members serve on a voluntary basis as required by section 23(2) of the Act. Community structures (e.g. SANCO) and the SAPS are represented on the KCPF. Over and above the prescribed responsibilities of CPFs as outlined in the Act, KCPF also acts as a dispute resolution structure and in that capacity deals with disputes among individuals – an attribute that earned it a space in this article. Not only has it put itself forward as a dispute resolution structure, it also claims legitimacy over all other community structures as far as representating the township is concerned. This claim to legitimacy is based on two attributes. Firstly, KCPF is a structure initiated and supported by the government. Secondly, its members have been elected democratically by members of the community of Khayelitsha. Based on that legitimacy it is seen by some of its members as superior to all other structures. Some of its members even see it, in the words of an executive committee member of KCPF, as 'the only legitimate structure and everything and every project in the community ought to be done through this structure'.[4]

KCPF serves as 'a one stop forum' where all problems are attended to and all issues affecting the community are addressed. Some of the cases that KCPF deals with are brought directly by individuals while others are referred to it by other structures such as street committees.

A typical day at the offices of KCPF takes the form of an executive committee member, the secretary most of the time, opening the office at about 10:00 am. There are normally people queuing to report their problems. Amidst the ordinary members of the community, one also finds members of the KCPF subforums who come to report their problems and experiences as well as seek guidance from the 'head-office'.[5] Virtually any sort of problem may be brought to this office. At one time advice is given to one enquirer, at another someone receives counselling and in yet another an executive committee member serves as a mediator or an arbitrator or even a judge over a dispute.

KCPF makes some distinction between criminal and civil cases in its dispute resolution or problem solving practice. This distinction is very important as it determines how the dispute gets handled. Criminal cases are cases where a crime has been committed. The definition of crime, however, is not strictly the common law definition thereof. In practice the label 'criminal' is attached to cases that are seen, at the discretion of the particular member(s) of KCPF involved, to warrant police investigation, in which case KCPF helps the complainant report it to the SAPS. The rest are considered civil matters and KCPF attends to them. In respect of the latter the respondent (i.e. the person against whom the complainant has been lodged) will be asked to come to the KCPF office where the problem would be attended to. The procedure followed in the settling of disputes differs from case to case and tends to depend on the particular member of KCPF attending to the problem. The procedure is discretionary and at times instead of calling the respondent to the KCPF office a member concerned might accompany the complainant to the respondent's place to discuss the problem. Generally the handling of a dispute takes the form of KCPF member(s) bringing the disputants together, listening to both (or all involved) and pronouncing a solution. The following extract from my interview with the deputy secretary of KCPF sheds some light on the procedure followed:

> Question: ' ..... how do you go about this problem solving?'
> Answer: 'Say may be a daughter and mother have a dispute, the daughter is normally the one who would approach the CPF. Then we ask the mother to come forward and then involve other relatives in the process. They then come to an understanding. Or it could be a widow whose in-laws have a conflict with her regarding death benefits. We then tell the widow that she has a right to all the benefits, as it is her husband who died and they all understand'.

> Question: 'I want you to take me through the procedure that you follow as the CPF. Let me put it this way: I have a problem and I walk into your office to report it, what happens next?'
> Answer: 'We first listen to your problem in the absence of the other party. We interview you. If it needs referral to the courts, we do so. If it needs us to consult your family we do. That means we do conflict resolution. Otherwise we give you a letter to be delivered to the respondent. That is if you are not afraid to take it. If you are afraid we devise other means to deliver it. The letter calls upon the respondent to come to CPF'.
>
> Question: 'When we both come to your office on the basis of your letter (i.e. as complainant and respondent), what happens?'
> Answer: 'We let them explain their stories – both in the presence of each other and the CPF member'.

A number of KCPF attributes are clear from the above interview extract. Firstly, the KCPF settles disputes among individual community members, while this is clearly not within their functions in terms of the Act. Secondly, KCPF members exercise wide discretionary powers in the handling of such disputes. This refers to, among others, the decision whether to attend to the dispute or refer it to other structures. Thirdly, members of KCPF adjudicate over legal disputes. They pronounce on the legal rights and obligations of individuals as in the example the interviewee gives about a widow and her in-laws. Further in this interview, it appeared that KCPF attends to all cases. In other words, a person would never be turned away from KCPF on the basis that a dispute falls outside its scope and powers. As this particular respondent told me: 'There has not yet been a case we could not resolve ….'

An explanation is in order here. This does not mean that the KCPF deals with all the cases itself. It refers criminal cases to the SAPS and some cases are also referred to street committees. To an enquiry as to what cases the KCPF does refer to street committees, the interviewee responded as follows: 'Problems between neighbours. For example one neighbour throwing a bucket of dirty water into the other's yard. Such a problem is solved by street committees. If we refer a person to a street committee we tell the complainant to come back to us with a feedback'.

Whether a case is referred to other structures or not, however, the KCPF still regards that case as its own. In respect of criminal cases, the complainant is helped to open a docket with the SAPS. The KCPF also keeps a record of that case and monitors progress. As is clear from the interviewee's words, if such a case has been referred to street committees, KCPF still expects feedback on the outcome of that case. Moreover, according to the secretary of KCPF, there are instances when she went to street committees to sort problems out. This, she says, was occasioned by one of the parties to a dispute having come to voice dissatisfaction in the street committee's handling of a problem. It is therefore safe to say that KCPF handles all sorts of cases, albeit through referral to or partnership with other structures. It may be said that that fact does not make KCPF any different from other structures as they all would refer elsewhere if they do not handle a particular problem. I argue that what makes KCPF different is that it refers and then monitors progress. At times it gets involved in helping the structure the problem has been referred to solve the problem and, importantly, feedback as to the outcome is required by the KCPF.

As could be expected in a sphere characterised by such plurality, a blurring of functions occasionally occurs. This happens, for instance, in areas where one finds both street committees and subforums of the KCPF operating, as there is no clear demarcation of jurisdiction. They both attend to cases affecting the family and to minor neighbourhood disputes. Both refer serious cases to either the police or the KCPF head-office. There are no directives concerning to whom referrals are to be made. It seems that to a considerable extent, referrals are left to the leader's discretion. What appears to be a new trend is that referral of some cases by street committees does not go to higher structures within SANCO hierarchy, but to KCPF. In the past referrals from SANCO area branch would go to SANCO local. Some, as it will be shown later, see the KCPF as having now assumed this role.

My interviews with members of the KCPF and SAPS reflect that the KCPF invariably refers criminal cases to the police and thereafter monitors progress of the resultant investigation. They also handle cases involving 'imigalelo'[6] and family members. Sometimes family matters are referred back to street committees. Even here discretion plays a very important role. For example, when a young lady who had run away from home approached the KCPF, as she was afraid her father would punish her for having run away from home to a boyfriend, the secretary of KCPF took her home. I accompanied them to the house, where the secretary successfully pleaded with the father not to give her a hiding. When the secretary herself was robbed of her belongings, she took it upon herself to mobilise other people and looked around for the culprits until they found two of them in the possession of some of the stolen property. When these suspects were granted bail she took it upon herself again, with the assistance of the KCPF chairman, to confront both the police and the senior prosecutor. The result was that the investigating officer was changed and a warrant of arrest was issued for the suspects to be rearrested. Throughout she kept the investigating officer under tremendous pressure to ensure arrest.

A slightly different approach, however, appeared a few days later while I was interviewing another member of KCPF in their office and generally observing how she dealt with the cases/complaints reported. A man walked in and reported that he had a quarrel with his girlfriend and needed help to solve the problem as she was threatening to harm and destroy his property. The KCPF member listened to him and then told him to report the case to his street committee and if that did not help, he was to obtain an interdict against her. I later discussed this particular dispute, and how it was handled, with the secretary of KCPF. She was not present when the complaint was lodged. She thought an appropriate thing would have been for her to approach the girlfriend and convince her not to carry her threats out, failing which she would help the complainant obtain an interdict immediately.

Further to the discretion allowed, therefore, the character of the particular KCPF member seems to be very significant. It would appear that the ability of the secretary to confront respondents, SANCO street committees and the police accounts for the perceived success and efficiency of the secretary as a person, not so much the institution itself. A less confrontational/courageous person may find it difficult to perform the task.

It being clear that discretion of individual members is that decisive, the question becomes: how informed and guided is that discretion? As I will argue in my concluding reflections, and not restricting my critique to KCPF, this seems to leave justice too much to chance.

While KCPF undertakes community dispute resolution, this is not a tendency of other community police forums in the Province. This is what makes KCPF unique, if only in comparison with its counterparts researched in Western Cape townships. In nearby Gugulethu, just as one example, the community police forum restricts itself to being a liaison between the SAPS and the community. They have neighbourhood watches that fall directly under the Gugulethu Community Policing Forum (GCPF). GCPF does not involve itself in settlement or resolution of disputes among community members at all. This is a role left completely to SANCO street committees. According to the current secretary of the GCPF, if a person comes to report a dispute to GCPF, they refer him/her to his/her street committee immediately. The same procedure applies in other Cape Town areas such as Nyanga and Mfuleni. It therefore appears that KCPF is more of an exception in its role as a dispute resolution structure.

The KCPF also runs neighbourhood watches as a crime prevention strategy. They have a good working relationship with the SAPS (Khayelitsha).[7] The only organisation, to my knowledge, that openly disputes the legitimacy and efficiency of the KCPF is Peaca. They charge that 'the community police forum just occupies offices at the police station and receives money while they do nothing for the community'. (Co-ordinator of Peaca).

Street Committees

Street committees form a significant part of township society.These forms of civic organisation started in the late 1970s in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg townships. They then spread throughout the country and served as forums that dealt with township problems such as housing, electricity, water and other related services. The term 'street committee' has at least two meanings. The one refers to any group of people, normally staying in the vicinity of one another. The other refers to structures – as I use it here – that are part of a broader civic movement that arose first in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg townships. An example of the former is the one described by Burman and

Schärf (1990:706) whose origin is not very clear.[8] An example of the latter, as described by Lanegran (1996:117), started in the late 1970s and then formed part of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983 when it was founded. These are the ones that were used as a terrain for resistance against the state ordering in the 1980s. As Seekings noted, the UDF invested a lot of '... effort and resources into building organisation and co-ordination in the civic sector' (Seekings 2000:278). There can be no doubt that the civics took a political stance against the apartheid government. Classifying the civics as operating under the auspices of the UDF, however, in no way suggests that the relationship they had with the UDF was a smooth one as there were people within these civics who wished to operate independently (Ibid.:279). During this time the civics were used to articulate alternative ordering mechanisms. This manifested itself in their handling of cases, both civil and criminal. Many of these civics became part of SANCO when it was founded in September 1992.

While there are many other civic formations that may use the name 'street committee', I will limit my discussion to SANCO street committees here. Firstly, because they are the dominant street committees in Khayelitsha and, secondly, because they are the ones that play a significant – at times paradoxical – role in the ordering of this particular township. For instance, all structures of non-state ordering discussed here have a relationship with SANCO street committees and, at the same time, each one of them is entangled in some turf battle with them. This is not surprising. While SANCO as an umbrella body succeeded in affording the various civics a national identity, it never really fully organised them under its leadership. Or as Seekings (1996:148) puts it: 'First SANCO's standing as representing the "community" was newly questioned. In many of the larger towns SANCO did not even unite all ANC-aligned civics, let alone non-ANC groups ... SANCO had no rivals at the national level, but at the local level it was often just one civic grouping among several'. After the formation of SANCO in 1992 many civic organisations joined it, but others remained outside its fold. Many others were further estranged when SANCO put its weight behind the ANC during elections.

These particular street committees referred to here exist as structures at '...the lowest level of the civic organisation' (Mangokwana 2001:156, footnote 30). They are part of a four-tiered structure. A number of street committees (about 4-6) come together and form a SANCO branch. Above branch-level are 'local' structures (embracing the whole township), 'regional' (provincial) and finally the national body itself. The committees restrict their jurisdiction to 'bread and butter issues' which involve disputes among neighbours and family. What remains unclear is the procedure that they follow, despite probing in my interviews. What could be detected was that to many people procedure seemed insignificant, that the leaders use discretion as to procedure, the resolution of a dispute depends on the willingness of the disputant, not only to attend, but also to accept the outcome, and that there are no clear channels to be followed in the event of non-resolution of a dispute. This feature also characterises all other community justice structures that have been researched. Further there seemed to be a clear understanding that criminal matters are a terrain of the SAPS and CPFs. The obvious novelty is that they have, at least at policy level,[9] relinquished criminal matters to the state. This is clearly attributable to the transfer of political power and the approach of the present government, which is accepted, at least by SANCO, as legitimate augmented by its (the present government's) willingness to cooperate with the community. The main manifestation of this cooperation appears to be the CPFs. There is an impressive cooperation between SANCO, and its street committees and the SAPS, as all interviewees indicated it. The secretary of KCPF put it as follows: 'You see SANCO has *a very strong relationship with the CPF and the police* and SANCO is a non-political organisation which represents the community and it is part of the CPF' (Italics added for my emphasis).

Street committees, in Khayelitsha, seem to be becoming more passive with the passage of time as far as dispute resolution is concerned. This is evident, for example, in many organisations assuming the role of non-state dispute resolution with the encouragement of (or tolerance by) SANCO. A pertinent example here is the recent introduction of the CPP's 'Peace Committees'[10] in Khayelitsha which have been welcomed by these street committees. SANCO seems to accept, albeit implicitly, its inability to handle cases, at least in Khayelitsha where some members of SANCO refer cases to Peaca, others to KCPF, as well as to the newly established Peace Committees. The Khayelitsha set-up appears to be more of an exception than the general trend of CPFs, even in the Western Cape townships.[11] What is clear, however, among all street committees is that the working relationship with the SAPS and other government structures has minimised the scale of operation of the street committees and the latter confine themselves to being first aid structures with very limited jurisdiction.

What remains puzzling is SANCO's focus on civil cases, while they have in the main relinquished their 'jurisdiction' (for want of a better word) over criminal cases. It is clear that SANCO street committees set themselves to solve civil cases and deal with disputes among individual members of the community. Is it perhaps because SANCO is unwilling to relinquish that part of their responsibility? It is plausible to think that SANCO would be willing to relinquish power to deal with civil cases just as they did with criminal cases. The willingness of SANCO to relinquish power in dispute resolution has been demonstrated in at least two instances in the Western Cape. Firstly, and again using an experience from another township, when the now defunct Community Court of Gugulethu was established, SANCO passed its responsibility of handling cases to the new structure. It was only when the community court stopped functioning that SANCO street committees resumed dispute resolution again. It is evident that SANCO recognised the Community Court and was part of the structure as well as the consultation process that led to its establishment. In that regard the Community Court had the same role, more or less, that is held by the CPFs in it being a community structure that involved the people and was accountable to them while at the same time cooperating with the state. What could have made the cooperation between the street committees and the Community Court easy to forge is the fact that, as Wilfried Schärf[12] argues, almost all members of the Community Court were members of SANCO street committees or other functionaries. His observation lines up with my interviews and observations.

The second occasion took place in Khayelitsha when the Peace Committees were established in 2000. Here SANCO gave them the go-ahead to deal with cases among the people, thereby assuming the role that had been played by the SANCO street committees up to that stage. A SANCO member had the following to say in rebuking the Peace Committee members for holding a gathering on the day on which the death of Chris Hani, the assassinated leader of the South African Communist Party, was commemorated: '... we allowed you to operate here but you are now getting out of control by holding mini-rallies while we are commemorating the death of comrade Chris Hani'.

This fact is further evident in that members of street committees cooperate with the Peace Committees such as in attending the Peace Committee gatherings and participating in their dispute resolution processes.[13] What one sees is that SANCO performs dispute resolution out of necessity. Were there accessible structures that handle cases among the township dwellers, SANCO would not engage in this service. Were it the aim of SANCO to engage in dispute resolution, I submit, they would not easily let go of that responsibility as they seem ready to do as shown in the above examples.

Chiefs and Headmen

The chiefs and headmen referred to here are members of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa). While it cannot be said that all chiefs and headmen in the Western Cape belong to Contralesa, it can be said that chiefs and headmen with membership of this organisation are the ones that are presently muscling their way into the dispute resolution politics of the urban townships of this province. Before looking into the position of these chiefs and headmen in the ordering structures, I will shortly deal with the nature and political context of Contralesa.

Contralesa was formed in September 1987 by a group of chiefs who held progressive views. One of the founders of Contralesa was one Klaas Mahlangu of Kwandebele[14] who had gone to Johannesburg as a result of his expulsion from that homeland's Legislative Assembly for opposing the proposed 'independence' of the homeland. He collaborated with the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO). The African National

Congress (ANC), then banned and operating from exile, supported this organisation (Van Kessel & Oomen 1999:162).

The context of the formation of Contralesa (e.g. its allies) indicates that right from the beginning it positioned itself against the apartheid system and aligned itself with the liberation movement. It is, therefore, not surprising that Contralesa entered into an alliance with the ANC in the past and it is of the opinion that it played a critical role in the ANC's election victory. They say the only provinces not won by the ANC in the 1994 elections are the ones in which Contralesa is not active, namely the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.[15]

This organisation played a significant role in the politics of South Africa. It participated in the negotiations that led to the new order and the country's constitution as adopted in 1996. Recently Contralesa and the government have been at loggerheads around the functioning and powers of traditional leaders within the new democratic framework. That dispute is not resolved yet.

By the very nature of its main constituency, namely traditional leaders, Contralesa is an organisation that is at home in the rural areas where chiefs and headmen still lead their tribes and clans. By the nature of urban townships, it would be difficult to have chiefs reigning there. One of the reasons is obviously that members of different ethnic groups share residential areas. It would then be difficult to identify a chief to rule over a particular residential area. It can also be said that the socio-economic conditions of the urban areas are not conducive for structures of chieftainship. Even the dispute between the government and traditional leaders is in the main a rural matter. This point was further illustrated in that only provinces that took over former 'homelands' were to establish Houses of Traditional Leaders in the new democratic dispensation. Homelands were run through participation of, or accurately the use of, traditional leaders who acted as an extension of this system. The Western Cape, Northern Cape and Gauteng were excluded as they do not fall under that category.

Contralesa has, however, started establishing itself in the urban areas, including the Western Cape where it has branches in Strand, Khayelitsha, Langa, Crossroads, Nyanga (KTC), Gugulethu and Phillipi. They aim to afford Africans a home from home, which means they wish to implement rural ordering mechanisms in the urban areas. Their membership fee is R10.00 per year and anyone over 18 years may join the organisation. They find urban ordering structures alienating for Africans with a rural background. As the provincial chairman of Contralesa put it: 'the urban structures such as SANCO are too urban for the people'. The first branch of Contralesa in the Western Cape was formed in 1996. According to this interviewee they have, however, been trying to give the chiefs a voice in the Western Cape from as early as the 1960s and 1970s, and when youth structures started abusing power in the mid 1980s (e.g. necklacing of people), it became clear that the chiefs were the only solution. But the chiefs and headmen could not unite and act, as the political conditions were not favourable. On the one hand the government controlled chiefs and headmen and would only use them for their own ends. On the other hand the popular structures such as the ANC, ANCYL, PAC, etc. saw them as anti-democratic and a hindrance to liberation. Moreover they are constantly at loggerheads with civic organisations. The struggle between Contralesa and civic organisations is a national problem but its intensity is manifest in the Eastern Cape. It has to be remembered that the majority of the township residents of the Western Cape come from, and many still have residences in, the Eastern Cape. The interaction (or tug-of-war) in the Eastern Cape is therefore bound to affect the relationship between civic structures and Contralesa in the Western Cape, for better or for worse.

The relative calmness of the situation in the Western Cape as of now is mainly because the power in ordering within the townships is in the hands of civic organisations, government created structures and political parties and Contralesa is concentrated mainly in the informal settlements. The concentration of Contralesa in the informal settlements is understandable for three main reasons. Firstly the leaders of Contralesa, at least in Khayelitsha, are former shacklords or informal settlement leaders. Their traditional power base was therefore in these areas. Secondly, informal settlements are the less stable of the townships in that people there do not have established civic organisation so entrenched as to command authority. Thirdly, it is in the informal settlements where the majority of people with rural roots and new comers to the urban areas are found. These are people who grew up in the rural areas and came to the Western Cape recently. Finding the structures of ordering in the urban areas unfamiliar to them, they are likely to find the rhetoric of Contralesa leaders appealing.

One of the aims of Contralesa is to maintain order in the community. That is done, firstly, through patrolling at night and catching offenders and then punishing them. Secondly, by attending to problems between individuals. This, according to the interviewee, was done at Crossroads, another township in the Western Cape, where crime subsided dramatically when headmen, of whom he was one of the leaders, organised street patrols at night and dealt with 'skollies'[16]. One of the regulations imposed by the headmen was that people had to be indoors after 9:00pm and anyone found outside that time of the night had to have a good reason, such as coming from work. The patrollers were known as *'witdoeke'*. The reason why they do not deal with crime at present, he said, is because they are afraid of the 'skollies' who now have lots of guns while the patrollers do not. Moreover, they are not recognised by many of the urban residents and structures and in order to succeed Contralesa would first have to organise the chiefs, headmen and other residents to support their efforts to curb crime.

The interviewee explained the organisation's *modus operandi* in settling disputes among the people as based on negotiation. The procedure followed is that once a complainant reports a dispute a messenger is sent to the house of the person against whom the complaint has been laid requesting the person to come to the chief or headman's house on a particular day on which the complainant would also be present. Both parties then describe their version of the dispute after which the chief or headman will rule on the matter. An example the interviewee gave is that of a young man who after impregnating a girl refuses to pay 'lobolo'[17] or damages. The first inquiry would be whether or not he is the one responsible for the pregnancy. If that is determined the chief or headman will order him to pay. In a case where the young man concerned denies paternity, a blood test is ordered and its outcome settles the matter. The result being that either 'lobolo' or damages must be paid by him. Should the young man remain uncooperative, his parents are held responsible and have a duty to make him pay, failing which further steps are to follow. Asked what such a further step would be, he said that would be to take the case to the formal courts. Greenwell (2001:41), however, notes that this leader and 'his headmen' had been running a 'Kangaroo Court' at his (the leader's) home and that people were even imprisoned there until fines were paid. This casts some doubt on the benevolence of this leader and Contralesa and further clouds the issue with more uncertainty. What seems clear however is that control over land, which has been the main concern and source of income for many of the executive committee members of Contralesa, remains their area of focus. 'Administration of justice' also remains their area of interest. This is hardly surprising as these two sources of power are necessary for each other's sustenance. If a leader controls land s/he will decide who and on what conditions a person can settle in that particular area as well as who to expel and why. For this reason, control over land and 'administration of justice' prove to be useful allies.

Contralesa, however, experiences problems with other community structures such as SANCO who have objected to the existence of Contralesa in the townships of the Western Cape because according to SANCO, the chairman of Contralesa said, 'there is no place for chiefs in the townships'. According to the secretary of SANCO local in Khayelitsha, however, SANCO has not objected to the formation and functioning of Contralesa. She said although SANCO never discussed and made an official decision on the matter, the interaction between the two structures 'will have to be carefully discussed as their approaches to issues may differ. For example the status of women and youth within traditional meetings'. Traditional structures such as Contralesa, she said, 'sometimes treat women and youths as less important and see them as not able to make a meaningful contribution during discussions'.

Contralesa aims to engage the government in the creation of jobs for the people as well as building of necessary facilities such as schools and clinics. In the words of the chairman of Contralesa, those are the things they 'will demand and fight for'. To that end they would like to have new residential areas built to alleviate the accommodation crisis as there is a lot of unused land and it does not make sense why people should live on top of each other in the present townships. Such places would then be under the authority of chiefs and headmen who would run them exactly as they do in the rural areas, including in settling disputes.

Contralesa' s establishment in the urban areas of the Western Cape has to be seen against the backdrop of the openness of, or contest in, the field of non-state ordering in this province. It obviously derives relevance from the fact that chieftainship plays a very important role in the lives of many of township dwellers. Though there are no structures for chieftainship in the townships, many individuals have very strong rural roots. Having grown up in the rural areas and still having dual residences, many township dwellers still hold that the indigenous African dispute resolution mechanisms, epitomised by the institution of chieftainship, are the answer to the rampant social problems in the black community. The logic is that in the rural areas crime is low and social problems are not as bad as in the urban townships and that is due to the existence of chieftainship in the former and absence of them in the latter. There is obviously a considerable measure of oversimplification in this approach as social problems develop and flourish independent of chieftainship. This rhetoric appeals to many and may prove to be a strong recruiting tool for Contralesa even though the nature of ordering in urban areas differs significantly from that in rural areas.

The plurality of ordering in the townships is boosted by a lack of certainty. In the rural areas it is commonly accepted that chieftainship is an institution for dispute resolution and a person would have little other alternative but to make use of it, whether s/he personally likes it or not – it is sort of a fact of life[18]. Should a person undermine such an institution, many in the community would regard them as a deviant. But in the townships there is freedom as to what structure to approach without fear (at least as it would be in the rural areas) of being seen as different from others. People can go to Peaca or to SANCO street committees or even the formal courts – whatever structure the particular individual deems capable of serving his/her interests in a given time and dispute. This free market of ordering structures is both a boon and a doom for Contralesa – the former in that they can freely recruit followers and the latter in that they cannot exercise control to the extent of their rural counterparts.

Structures such as Contralesa seem to be a manifestation of nostalgia on the part of the township dwellers. Looking at the things that Contralesa aims to do, one notices that they are the very functions performed by chiefs and headmen through, inter alia, structures such as *makgotla* in the rural areas.[19] It is therefore not surprising that other community structures, such as SANCO, object to their existence. To such bodies, chieftainship, *per se,* implies the superiority of the institution and, contrary to the present day democratic practices, is based on inheritance of positions. That clashes with the democratic principles espoused by many of the urban community structures. It must be said, however, that Contralesa seems ready to adapt to the order of the day. For instance, youth and women may hold leadership positions. This adaptation of Contralesa seems to be a prudent and necessary step because, as Mangokwana (2001) sees it, it was the absence of women and youth in *makgotla* that impacted negatively on their efficiency. But the extent of that adaptation remains unclear. It would appear that individuals of royal descent feel left out in that they are not recognised for who they are and therefore fight for a place of their own. This should be seen within the broader picture of South African politics where traditional leaders are fighting for recognition by the national government.

One look at the objectives of Contralesa such as development of the community and dispute resolution reveals that they are the same as those structures which organisations such as SANCO busy themselves with. It is therefore a matter of 'who' does it as opposed to 'what' is done. This point struck me afresh when I interviewed a Contralesa leader who has a long history of personal power. What is the justification for forming a new structure instead of joining the existent ones such as SANCO, seeing that their concern and aims are the same, such as development of the community and service delivery? This is not to insinuate that structures such as SANCO ought to have the monopoly of ordering, but that it is difficult to justify Contralesa's radical stance to the extent of coming up with new residential areas subject to a different ordering style and governance altogether.

Some have argued that Contralesa is being used by individuals so as to achieve personal benefits (e.g. Maloka 1995:41). Having looked at Contralesa's formation and its leadership in the Western Cape, it becomes difficult to disagree. The current chairman of Contralesa has been involved in power struggles in the informal settlements of Crossroads. He has a history of moving from one organisation to the next. He was part of the apartheid administrative machinery as a leader of Crossroads. He ran a personal mini-army called 'the Big Eight' which enforced his wishes with brutality. He joined the ANC in 1990, even becoming its branch chairman, but still continued to act in cahoots with the apartheid security police. He also had a relationship with taxi organisations that are accused of committing serious atrocities in the early 1990s. In 1998, he joined the Federal Alliance. The calibre of the Western Cape leadership of Contralesa is summarised by Chiara Carter of the *Mail & Guardian* as follows:

> Conrad Sandile, a well-known if enigmatic figure in Western Cape land and housing, who was investigated by the Goldstone Commission and now heads development and housing for Contralesa in the Western Cape; Jeffrey Nongwe, Contralesa's deputy chair, a Crossroads leader who is no stranger to changing political allegiances, having previously moved from the ANC to the Pan Africanist Congress, flirted with the UDM and all the while maintained his power base in the informal settlement of the Crossroads area; Western Cape Contralesa chair Jerrey Tutu, a squatter leader from Khayelitsha who at one stage was linked to Prince Gcobinga. Gcobinga served a prison sentence in connection with an attempted coup in the Transkei and was recently named by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a military intelligence agent (Carter 1998).

The Peninsula Anti-Crime Agency (Peaca)

Peaca was formed in 1998 by ex-members (soldiers) of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA)[20], Self-Defence Units (SDU's) and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Their offices are two shipping containers situated at Site C taxi rank in Khayelitsha. Peaca boasts a membership of 1500 throughout the Peninsula. Though Peaca members say that this organisation operates throughout the Peninsula, all interviewees from other related organisations – UMAC, CPFs of Mfuleni, Gugulethu and Nyanga as well as SANCO – bear no knowledge of their activities outside Khayelitsha. The members of Peaca are appointed to office by the founders[21] of this organisation. Among the most important positions in the executive committee of Peaca are Commander, Co-ordinator, Director and Deputy Director.

According to the office bearers interviewed,[22] this organisation was formed in response to the high rate of crime and the criminal justice system's inability to deal with crime. Though their initial focus was on criminal cases, they now handle all cases brought to them. The Co-ordinator of Peaca, asked as to what cases they deal with, put it as follows:

> Armed robbery, murder, car theft. But petty cases are supposed to be handled by SANCO and its street committees, but street committees fail. The people come to us and say 'sisi/buti'[23] those people failed, so we handle those cases as well.

This feature of Peaca (their handling of criminal cases) distinguishes them from other community structures, which restrict themselves to non-criminal cases, thereby leaving criminal cases to the (state) criminal justice system. Peaca further distinguishes itself from other community structures in that they charge disputants for services rendered. There are two methods in which money is collected. The Co-ordinator put it as follows:

> The complainant pays R70.00 for transport and we go and fetch the respondent. The respondent then has to pay the money back to the complainant because we wrote a letter and s/he did not come to us... There are these structures called 'imigalelo'. If Peaca is to collect R200.00 from a respondent, we collect R220.00. R20.00 goes to Peaca and R200.00 to the complainant. That is how we buy food and we pay for our phone. But if there is no case we have no money.

Like many community structures, to my knowledge only the Peace Committees being an exception, the members of Peaca are vested with significant discretion regarding the procedures to be followed in handling of cases. The extent of discretion is demonstrated in the words of the Co-ordinator of Peaca, who said:

> When a person comes to report a case to us we take a statement and then write a letter to the respondent calling him/her to our office. When the respondent arrives we listen to both the complainant and the respondent. Because of my intelligence, acquired in military training, I can tell who is telling the truth and who is lying. Then I make a decision

> concerning who is wrong and who is right. If a case is not very serious we do not go to the police station, we take chances. Before we go to the police, we try our best *to force the person to admit guilt*. We do not refer cases to other structures. (Italics added)

Peaca appears to be the most radical and controversial structure in Khayelitsha by far. For instance; KCPF (through its Chairman, Secretary and Deputy Secretary) regards Peaca as a vigilante group run by criminals with no mandate from the community of Khayelitsha and it should be closed down. The South African Police Services members interviewed hold different views about Peaca. One Inspector dismissed Peaca as using unconstitutional means to handle suspected criminals while a Senior Sperintendent at the same office saw Peaca as useful, though having reservations about their *modus operandi*.

The chairman of KCPF had this to say about Peaca: 'These people are trained as soldiers. They are very active people who have been active all their lives. They now find themselves in a situation of unemployment, so they create activities to keep themselves busy. Unfortunately the high rate of crime makes it possible for them to engage in such activities. Being trained soldiers who are unable to render their services within the country's military structures, they try to create a platform for themselves so that they can get some recognition and make a living as well. Everyone needs an income to survive'.

Peaca has been accused by many of using force in dealing with suspected criminals and its members contradict one another in responding to these allegations. The Co-ordinator of Peaca admitted use of force in handling of suspects. Another interviewee at the Peaca office admitted intimidation as the means they use to get people to tell them the truth. He denied ever assaulting anyone, as they never reach that stage. In one of the offices there are pictures on the wall which show people lying down. He says they show people these pictures and tell them that that is how they would be tied up and shocked with electricity. He says that they show them the electric plug and tell them that it controls a machine in the adjacent room, which will be used to shock them. The Human Rights Committee recorded a well-known incident in Khayelitsha where a police officer was kidnapped by Peaca (2001:25). An interviewee at KCPF informed me that the family of the kidnapped police officer had to pay R150 per day so that the police officer could be fed. He spent the whole weekend at the Peaca container. He was accused of having stolen a motor vehicle, which later was proved to be his own.

Despite my nine visits to Peaca offices, I have not been able to find a case in progress at all and there is no register of cases to be handled. The explanation initially given to me was that the weekend was their busy time. My visits there, even on weekends, failed to find any case in progress. My last visit was on Saturday, 14 April 2001, banking on an assurance from a Peaca member that that day was bound to be very busy. All I found on that day were only two people in the office who are members of Peaca and no cases were expected. It is really difficult to tell if Peaca handles cases the way they say they do, but the account of the lady who was handled by Peaca as a respondent gives a hint: it appears that in many instances Peaca members go to look for the respondent/suspect immediately after a report has been made which does not necessarily have to be at the office, and when the respondent/suspect has been found summary trial takes place on the spot. I am more inclined to agree with her assertion. This, I think, would explain why (as an example) the Co-ordinator of Peaca was not aware of a well-publicised case in which Peaca had recovered about R40 000 for members of an '*umgalelo*'. He probably did not know about it because it was handled by some members outside the offices and there are no records. This case had been publicised in the township newspaper with credit given to Peaca but when I interviewed him he bore no knowledge of it. Only after I had shown him the paper, which he read with visible interest, did he say: 'I just did not want to brag'.

Peaca has been trying hard to boost its image by attempting to forge a working relationship with many other institutions and organisations. Among others they tried to join the KCPF, they approached Dr. Omar, the former Minister of Justice, for a letter of recommendation to form a private security company; they approached the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) and are now negotiating with CPP. These attributes of Peaca taken collectively, especially their expressed wish to register as a security company and their charging of fees for services rendered, surely qualify them as a version of private security for the poor. What is disturbing, however, is their apparent lack of accountability even to one another, let alone to the community and the state.

Concluding reflections

From the foregoing discussion of non-state ordering structures, a number of issues present themselves as having the potential to undermine the current democratic governance of the country. It strikes one as disturbing that the democratic structures and channels of security, safety, justice and dispute resolution continue to be exclusive of the majority of the population. Indeed, this constitutional right and duty of the township resident and the state, respectively, is often a matter of chance. The availability of many dispute resolution structures, each with own form of justice, begets uncertainty and unpredictability, at least. At worst it results in arbitrary, and at times dangerous, administration of justice. In a situation where anyone can form a structure of dispute resolution subject to no regulation (be it by the state or any other body), this is hardly surprising.

Each of the above structures, except KCPF, has been initiated outside the state. They can be seen from that angle as judicial surrogates. KCPF also falls under this category to the extent that it sees itself as and performs dispute resolution among individual community members. All these structures, therefore, operate because the state fails. This is not to imply that were the state not failing, these structures would not exist. On the contrary, experiences from both the developed and developing countries show that non-state forms of justice coexist with state justice world-wide.[24] What is different appears to be the *modus operandi* of the particular forms of non-state ordering that operate in the different countries.

This short description of the state of ordering in just one township shows, on the one hand, the conspicuous absence, or at least, insufficient presence of the state in ordering mechanisms within the townships. On the other it shows that the sphere of ordering has become both a competitive terrain and increasingly uncertain. It is further evident that all the above structures started operating, or operating in their current form, after 1994. Ironically this is the time when the state justice system was opened up and was supposed to cater for all South Africans. This post-1994 proliferation of non-state ordering structures puts in question the nature of democracy in this country and the extent to which it is inclusive. The non-state ordering structures can no longer be accounted for on the basis of the illegitimacy of the state system as it was during the apartheid era. This is a government that has been put into office by the majority of citizens of the country.

What is obvious, and common cause among many involved in this sphere, is that some form of state regulation is necessary. The nature and extent of such regulation, however, remains a moot point. Unfortunately the residents of Khayelitsha, as those of many other townships, have to make do with the forms of justice discussed here. My contention is that enough is not being done to improve the situation. The present government, I think, takes advantage of the weak civil society in the townships as well as the majority's loyalty to and gratitude for the non-racial governance. Moreover, the township residents are not informed and demanding as customers of state services such as policing. Shearing put his finger on this point when he noted that '... if the market mentality is to be empowering to blacks some way must be found to create them as powerful customers who can use the market to reshape the inequalities that will continue to pervade South Africa after it becomes a democracy' (1994:8). Put crudely, South Africa has bought into what Shearing (ibid.) calls 'the market mentality', but the township residents are not equipped to be demanding customers. For that reason the South African government can afford to ignore their plight, as they are doing now, with impunity. It is only if seen in this light that it is somehow possible to understand how South Africa can afford to live with the form of ordering that I have outlined above. The net effect is that the poor have to find ways of providing for their safety, security and justice needs over and above the daily battles for sheer survival in a society with such levels of social injustices as South Africa.

All the structures I described above are some forms of justice designed solely for the poor. This does not bode well for the future of this country. I submit that what we need in South Africa is not a form of justice aimed solely at the poor's needs, though it should certainly cater therefor, whether initiated by the state, non-government organisations or township residents themselves. Nor do we need to live with the *status quo* as described in this article. What is needed is an opening up of the state justice system to accommodate all South Africans both in terms of substantive and procedural law. It is after all their right - and the state's duty. Sadly all the forms of non-state ordering discussed here are aimed at the poor black township residents. And they all appear to be some form of second class justice. If so then the township resident is a second class citizen in South Africa, at least as far as justice is concerned. And what does that say for the country's democracy?

Notes

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1. This discussion is based on an exploratory study of non-state justice structures that was conducted in a select number of black urban residential areas, commonly known as townships, in the Western Cape Province between March 2000 and June 2001. Financial assistance for this research was provided by the National Research Foundation (NRF). For the purposes of that study ordinary citizens, members of the judiciary, members of community policing forums, members of SANCO, members of Peaca, members of U Managing Conflict (UMAC), members of the Quaker Peace Centre, project coordinator of CPP, members of Peace Committees, an inspector of the South African Police Service (SAPS), a senior superintendent of the SAPS and the provincial chairman of Contralesa were interviewed. The research was guided by a number of themes, namely: to examine the functioning of a select number of non-state forms of ordering; their relationship with state organs; their relationship with one another; the participants' vision regarding these structures as well as their role in social ordering at large. While that study dealt with a number of townships in the Western Cape Province, the discussion here only focuses on one township, viz. Khayelitsha. The research adopted a qualitative approach and focused semi-structured and open-ended interviews were used. Given the ambitious nature of this research, as seen in the themes, the total number of interviews can in no way be representative of the whole field nor of the views of all involved in or affected by non-state ordering. This research, even with the restricted sample, serves as a mapping and exploratory exercise. Data was gathered through tape-recording, hand-written notes and observation of proceedings of the different structures as discussed herein. The data allows for a scan of some of the important ordering structures that exist in Khayelitsha today and their pertinent attributes.
2. There are other structures that perform non-state ordering in Khayelitsha. Conspicuously absent from this discussion are the Peace Committees. These structures

may be of critical importance as they stand to influence the course on non-state justice in South Africa. I have dealt with these structures elsewhere (Tshehla 2001:41-47) and Declan Roche (2002) deals with them in detail.

3. See Van der Spuy (1995) for reflections on the concept of community policing and how it was introduced in South Africa.
4. Interview with the secretary, Ms Nomahlobi Dlula, on 30 November 2000.
5. This is a name the Human Rights Commission (2001) gave this office.
6. This refers to a saving scheme in terms of which a group of people save money together to be distributed at the end of a specified time period (normally during the festive season).
7. This is based on my interviews with SAPS and KCPF members as well as my observations on my research visits to Site B and Harare Police Stations in Khayelitsha.
8. 'Our interviewees reported different sources for the street committees, not all of them incompatible, that probably reflect different histories of Cape Town's African townships and their populations. First, street committees were said to have arisen spontaneously from a need to have a leader and rules to control the officials it created. A second explanation was that they were modelled on the courts of rural village communities. A third was that street committees originated from burial societies which gradually began to undertake more community duties. Probably compatible with the last explanation was a claim which initially appeared to be contradictory: that street committees developed from the political vigilance committees, which sprang up in the first townships in the early twentieth century.' (Burman & Schärf 1990:706).
9. This is not to suggest that SANCO easily released handling of criminal cases – the process has been problematic and gradual with some SANCO branches still holding on to dealing with criminal cases. Some parts of Khayelitsha show evidence of this 'hold' even in 2000. But in general SANCO accepts that criminal cases are for the SAPS and the CPFs. I think the release of criminal cases to the SAPS is owing to the introduction of the CPFs, in the main. The CPFs provide a vehicle through which SANCO could monitor the police and their activities thereby providing a space for SANCO to still have some control over the handling of criminal cases. There was a way in which the police could be held accountable and SANCO was part of the structure holding that mandate, to wit: the CPFs. The CPFs were therefore a bridge between the community structures, such as SANCO, and the state. I think that the fact that there is no structure equivalent to the CPFs in respect of civil cases, further contributes to street committees' hold onto civil cases.
10. These structures and their modus operandi in Khayelitsha are discussed elsewhere (Tshehla 2001). For a more general discussion of Peace Committees see Roche (2002).
11. This was brought to my attention by a mediator and trainer at UMAC who has been involved in dealings with the KCPF. According to a member of the executive committee of the CPF in Nyanga, their approach is similar to the one in Gugulethu. Through observation and an interview with the chairman of the CPF in Mfuleni, it

appears that their trend is similar to Nyanga and Gugulethu. That is: they do not avail themselves for problems between individuals, but leave that to street committees.

12. Personal communication.
13. This, however, is only true for the part of Khayelitsha where Peace Committees operate.
14. Kwandebele was a homeland for the Ndebele tribe in the old South Africa. There were ten homelands of which four were granted independence and Kwandebele was one of those not granted such independence.
15. This is according to Nkosi Nonkonyana (now the national coordinator of Contralesa) as quoted by E. Naki in the *Dispatch* of 2 October 1997. Online: www.dispatch.co.za/1997/10/02/page%252012.htm.
16. The word 'skollie' means a criminal or just someone who is deviant in a way bordering on criminality.
17. 'Lobolo' is payment (in good, livestock and/or money) made by a groom to the bride's father at the conclusion of a marriage.
18. See Mangokwana (ibid.) for a detailed discussion of a rural life where each member of the community is subjected to the authority of chieftainship.
19. See Mangokwana (ibid.). Makgotla in this sense is used in its general application as '... a generic term for all sorts of non-state, traditionally-derived dispute-resolution and/or governance structures ...' (ibid.).
20. MK and APLA were the military wings of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress, respectively.
21. The founders of Peaca are the members who were responsible for its formation and called the rest to join. They appointed other office bearers and there is no provision for duration in office, which implies permanent position in office as confirmed by the Coordinator.
22. I interviewed the Deputy Director, the Co-ordinator and another member without a specific portfolio.
23. 'Sisi' and 'buti' are Xhosa names translating into English as 'sister' and 'brother' respectively.
24. For world-wide experiences see two volumes of essays by Abel (1982).

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Matriliny, Patriliny, and Wealth Flow Variations in Rural Malawi

Abstract

Literature on African kinship political economies suggests that under matriliny, wealth flow would be biased towards a matrilineal line in that children would engage in transfers with their maternal more than their paternal relatives. Under patriliny, the reverse would be the case. We explore these propositions using data from a sample survey of 1257 respondents in rural Malawi, 29 percent of whom were from a predominantly matrilineal ethnic group, 36 percent were from an ethnic group that is transforming from matrilineal to patrilineal practices, and 35 percent were from a patrilineal ethnic group. These data were complemented by qualitative interviews of 18 respondents from the matrilineal ethnic group, 20 from the transforming group, and 18 from the patrilineal group. Results reveal little evidence to support the propositions. We think that the increasing privatisation of production and consumption, that has over the years penetrated rural Malawi, has led to some individualistic tendencies among rural Malawians and weakened both matrilineal and patrilineal influence on people's wealth transfer behaviours.

Introduction

Descriptions of matrilineal and patrilineal descent systems suggest that wealth flows would follow different patterns. Under the matrilineal system, children would be transferring more of their wealth to maternal relatives than paternal ones. The reverse would be the case under the patrilineal system. This paper tests these propositions with the objective of contributing to our understanding of the role of kinship in family wealth transfers, focusing on whether patterns of and factors that influence wealth flows differ by kinship lineage definitions.

Wealth is defined here in the broader sense of money, goods, services, and guarantees (Caldwell 1976). We define kinship as the network of people with relationships and ties around common parenthood (Evans-Pritchard 1950; Fortes 1969; Keesing 1975; Levi-Strauss 1949; Stack 1974). The kin networks of ties are conduits for resource pooling and wealth exchanges; they are mechanisms through which people deal with problems they experience. The strong norms of filial support among the kin ensure that obligations are respected and acted upon (Douglas 1990; Peterson 1993; Agree et al. 2000).

Stronger ties between children and their maternal relatives characterise the matrilineal kinship system while under patrilineage stronger ties are between children and their paternal relatives (Mandala 1990; Phiri 1983; Miller 1996; also see Colson and Gluckman 1968; Raha 1989). These contexts of the matrilineal and patrilineal kinship systems have implications for wealth exchange processes among the kin in that each system has its own ideology, the 'room within which the kin manage their affairs and respond to concerns, and the pattern in the distribution of products of labor' (Poewe 1981: p.11). In this sense, that is, in its influence over the use of resources and products of labour, kinship has a political economy function. The matrilineal system has matriliny as its political economy while the patrilineal system has patriliny. Under matriliny, the precepts of a matrilineal ideology pattern kin relations, the use of resources, and the distribution of kin's products of labour. Under patriliny, the patrilineal ideology patterns the distribution of these resources and products of labour.

In this paper, we explore whether wealth flow is indeed patterned differently under matriliny and patriliny. Specifically, we address whether maternal relatives matter more than paternal ones in transfers under matriliny than under patriliny, and whether the reverse, that is, paternal relatives mattering more than maternal ones, is the case under patriliny. We approach the issue by contrasting transfers between respondents and their fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts across three ethnic groups in Malawi: Yao, Chewa, and Tumbuka. The three ethnic groups are located in geographically different areas. The Yao are in southern Malawi, the Chewa are in Central Malawi, and the Tumbuka are in the north. The Yao follow matrilineal practices, the Tumbuka follow patrilineal practices, and the Chewa lineage system is transforming from a matrilineal to a patrilineal type. While the Yao (matrilineal) and Tumbuka (patrilineal) are our main comparison ethnic groups, the Chewa (transforming) provide an opportunity to examine the matrilineality and patrilineality of transfers in an ethnic group undergoing change.

In the next section, we describe matriliny and patriliny, then suggest expected transfer patterns for each kinship political economy[1]. Thereafter, we describe the data, and how they were collected and analysed. We then present our findings focusing on (1) differences in the amounts of wealth exchanged, (2) determinants of these transfers, and (3) driving forces behind the transfers across the three ethnic groups. We find little evidence to support the propositions that maternal relatives under matriliny and paternal relatives under patriliny significantly influence transfer patterns. We conclude that lineage systems have little influence on wealth transfers and think that this is due to the increasing individualistic behaviour emerging from the privatisation of production and consumption activities as capitalism penetrates rural Malawi.

Matriliny, Patriliny, and Wealth Flows

Wealth flow under matriliny and patriliny are supposedly patterned differently because of differences in children's allegiance to their relatives. Under matriliny, a family is an integral part of the wife's lineage rather than the husband's. At marriage, the husband moves over from his parents to live with his wife and her relations. The authority for distributing resources and the products of a family's labour is in the hands of the wife's brothers (the eldest takes the leadership role). These brothers are *nkhoswe* whose main responsibility is to ensure their sisters' families' access to production resources, healthcare, and general welfare. Children in a family have allegiance to their maternal relatives more than paternal ones. They will consult their maternal uncles (aunts in the absence of uncles) in various decisions, including those connected to wealth transfers more than paternal ones. Because of the closer bond with maternal relatives, children would thus be transferring more of their wealth to these maternal relatives than paternal ones. Such a bond exists among the matrilineal Yao ethnic group in Malawi. Succession in this ethnic group formerly passed down the line of brothers but later changed to passing 'direct to the eldest sisters's eldest son, or to the descendants of other sisters in order of seniority' (Tew 1950: p.10). Names are inherited from the maternal line. The brothers to sisters (maternal uncles) are *nkhoswe* of the sisters and their children (their *mbumba*). The eldest brother has a priority role in the welfare of the *mbumba*. In the strict sense, senior female kin are excluded in that they are in the *mbumba* group of the mother's brother. If there is no brother, the eldest sister in the family (eldest maternal aunt) takes over the *nkhoswe* role.

Among the responsibilities of *nkhoswe* are ensuring the 'good' behaviour of their *mbumba*, arranging marriages, ensuring that the *mbumba* have access to adequate land and other productive resources, looking for medicine when anyone of the *mbumba* is ill, and overseeing funeral arrangements when there is death among the *mbumba* (Mitchell 1956; Phiri 1983; also see Crehan 1997 for similar views on matrilineal kinship processes in Zambia). These responsibilities are mechanisms through which wealth flows. Husbands/fathers play a minimal role in these responsibilities mainly because their productive activities are under the control of the *nkhoswe*. For example, husbands produce their crops on land allotted to them by their wives' *nkhoswe* but have little control over the use of what they produce on this land. It is not surprising therefore that among matrilineal societies, a man achieves his status, recognition, and influence through his *mbumba* or as Mitchell (1956: p.136) puts it, 'a person identifies himself most closely with the members of his matrilineage from whom he expects most help and whom he, in turn, is expected to help'. Thus, the maternal line would be more influential in patterning wealth flow and such a flow would favour maternal relatives. Among the Luapula people in Zambia, for example, Poewe (1981: p.46) found that the matrilineal inheritance system ensured that wealth accrued to the matrilineage such that a man's control over the labour power and products of his children and wife was frustrated. We expect therefore that under matriliny, children would be exchanging significant amounts of their wealth with maternal relatives (mothers, uncles, and aunts) more than with their paternal ones (fathers, uncles, and aunts).

The reverse would be the case under patriliny, that is, children would be exchanging more wealth with paternal relatives than maternal ones. The Tumbuka are an ethnic group whose political economy is characterised by a paternal ideology that gives tremendous advantage to the paternal lineage. At marriage, husbands remain in their villages of birth and wives move from their villages of residence to the husbands', a move that, as Tew (1950) remarks, involves changing their affiliation from their kin to that of the husband. A family becomes an integral part of the husband's rather than wife's lineage with children being the responsibility of the male line. The eldest male on the husband's line plays the role of *nkhoswe*. With inheritance going through the eldest son of the eldest wife in the family, children owe their loyalty to their father's line (Miller 1996). Whereas the *mbumba* are the main vehicle for achieving status among the matrilineal Yao, the bond between children and their patrilineage is a main way of achieving status among the patrilineal Tumbuka. Children have rights to their father's wealth to the extent that at the death of a father, the eldest son is in charge of the father's wealth (Tew 1950, also see Meinhard 1975 and Stafford 2000).

With their powerful influence, paternal relatives would be main beneficiaries of the wealth from children since the strong patrilineal affiliations engender firm control by paternal relatives over produced wealth and other products of labour in families. Thus, while children among the matrilineal Yao are expected to engage in wealth transfers mostly with their maternal line, children among the patrilineal Tumbuka would be engaging in wealth transfers mostly with their fathers, paternal uncles, and paternal aunts. We think that in an ethnic group like the Chewa, which is undergoing change from matrilineal to patrilineal practices, there would be more leaning towards the incoming patrilineal kinship system than the old matrilineal one.

The Chewa have historically been matrilineal in their practices[2]. *Nyau*, an exclusively male dance, has heavily influenced their kinship practices (Phiri 1983). By participating in the dance, husbands have been able to be above matrilineal authority. Through *nyau*, patriarchy was much more entrenched in Chewa matriliny than was the case for Yao matriliny.

Nyau, which was unique to the Chewa ethnic group, was just one of the factors that may have led to changes in Chewa kinship practices. Phiri (1983) suggests five other factors. First, the Chewa practiced cousin marriages, which meant that upon marriage, men did not have to change villages of residence drastically as cousins were mostly within the same village. Further, after some time of living in the wife's village and proving to be responsible, husbands could ask to take their wives and children to their villages of origin, a practice in which the wife is said to have engaged in *chitengwa*. This led to increasing virilocal marriages. Second, the slave trade provided opportunities for further change in marriage practices. Female slaves were married virilocally as they were persons without *nkhoswe*. Taking advantage of the situation, lineage leaders obtained female slaves and married them to male members of their matrilineage. Men were thus able to build independent families. Third, matriliny changed because of the influence of patrilineal ethnic groups with whom the Chewa came into contact, particularly the Ngoni. Initially, as was their practice, the Ngoni successfully stamped their social system on the Chewa but as they stopped their war-like behaviour they moved more into Chewa practices. The result was a kind of dual kinship system as still seems to be currently the case. Fourth, missionaries emphasised the view that the husband is the head of the family. They also put the emphasis on paternal authority and control over children. Fifth, the hut tax introduced by the colonial administration way back in 1893, which men had to pay but not women, forced men to seek or be forced into outside employment where they earned income but also acquired new experiences and value systems. The introduction of cash crops like tobacco made men much more influential as they were the sole producers of these crops with women engaging mostly in the production of food crops.

As a result of these factors, the roles of a husband among the Chewa have changed. You do not find the wife's brother (*nkhoswe*) exercising as much control as it used to be the case. For example, 'fathers fulfill educational obligations more readily and willingly than the maternal uncle ... and as a result, the father's influence has grown correspondingly' (Phiri 1983: p.273). Although some matrilineal practices such as matrilocal marriages can still be found[3], it seems the Chewa kinship political economy has become significantly patrilineal. We thus expect children to be exchanging their wealth with paternal uncles, aunts, and with fathers more than their maternal relatives. Since matrilineal influences are still substantial, resource exchanges between children and their maternal relatives among the Chewa should be higher than among the patrilineal Tumbuka but lower than is the case among the matrilineal Yao.

Data and Methods

We use quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were collected through a Family Transfers survey conducted in Malawi from June to August 1999. The survey was administered to a random sample of 717 ever married women and 540 of their husbands totaling 1257 respondents in three rural areas, one in each of the three regions of Malawi: Ulongwe in the southern district of Machinga, Mkanda in Mchinji district in Central Malawi, and Mhuju in Rumphi district of Northern Malawi. About 29 percent, 36 percent, and 35 percent of the sample was in each of the three areas respectively representing the matrilineal Yao, the transforming Chewa, and the patrilineal Tumbuka.

The survey explored wealth flows between respondents and their parents, parents in laws, uncles and aunts (paternal and maternal), fellow siblings, and their children aged 10 years or older. For purposes of this paper, we focus on respondents' exchanges with their fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts. Since wealth flow measures are sensitive to time factors and specificity in people's involvement in exchanges (McGarry and Schoeni 1995), we used the agricultural calendar to be specific in our time references, asking respondents if they had given or received gifts since the beginning (October/November) of the1998/99 growing season. We were specific in how we referred to the particular relative. Instead of asking 'what did you give to/receive from your maternal uncles?' we first listed these uncles and made reference to each listed uncle asking, 'what did you give to/receive from _______?' making reference to the uncle mentioned by the respondent. The various valuable things, defined here as wealth, that people exchanged were given monetary values. Our dependent variable, wealth, is the total value of these goods and the actual money exchanged. Using ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates, we regress a number of variables on the amounts of transfers (wealth) given to or received from fathers, mothers, uncles and aunts (maternal and paternal) by ethnic group.

All measures are with reference to respondents. Based on the matrilineal ideology, we expect more transfers between respondents and their mothers, maternal uncles, and maternal aunts under matriliny, that is, among the matrilineal Yao, than is the case under patriliny, that is, among the patrilineal Tumbuka. Based on the patrilineal ideology on the other hand, we expect more transfers between respondents and their fathers, paternal uncles, and paternal aunts under patriliny than is the case under matriliny. For the Chewa who are changing from matriliny to patriliny, we expect more patrilineal processes, more paternal influence in wealth flow.

To shed more light on wealth transfer behaviour, in-depth semi-structured interviews of a random sample of 56 respondents (18 from the matrilineal Yao ethnic group, 20 from the transforming Chewa ethnic group, and 18 from the patrilineal Tumbuka ethnic group) from 37 households not in the sample survey were undertaken. Respondents were first asked to name the people to whom they give help and from whom they get help when they have any problem or concern. They were then asked to indicate who helped meet educational expenses for their children and when there was illness, death, or food shortage in their household since the start of the 1998/99 growing season (October/November 1998). They were further asked whom they helped in meeting educational expenses and dealing with illness, death, and food shortage. In each case, they were asked to explain why they helped the particular relative and why the particular relative helped them. We hoped to capture a maternal influence in the sharing of help in the matrilineal ethnic group, a paternal influence in the patrilineal ethnic group, and something in-between for the ethnic group undergoing change from matriliny to patriliny. Thus, the qualitative data were expected to confirm our expected findings from the quantitative data, that maternal and paternal relatives influence wealth flows under matriliny and patriliny respectively.

We used the nudist program in analysing our qualitative data. This analysis involved a summary of the magnitude of helping each other among these relatives, specifically fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts across the ethnic groups. After documenting the magnitude of helping each other, we analysed why the relatives helped each other, exploring reasons and driving forces for the exchange of help through describing case stories of households engaging in transfers, randomly picking a household to represent each of the three ethnic groups.

Results

We first present the quantitative results that show the amounts of exchanges and OLS estimates of the effect of a number of variables on these exchanges. Thereafter, we turn to qualitative data, which actually support the quantitative findings.

Quantitative Findings:

We start by exploring the size of transfers by examining the value of goods exchanged as tabulated in Table 1. Generally, respondents in the patrilineal ethnic group gave more to their parents, uncles, and aunts than respondents in both the matrilineal and transforming group; the patrilineal respondents also received more from these relatives than their counterparts (see upper part of Table 1). We note from these findings that there was higher level of gift-exchange among the patrilineal ethnic group than both the matrilineal and transforming ethnic groups.

We used the gift giving/receiving ratios (see the lower part of Table 1) to start examining whether the gift exchanges are biased towards the maternal or paternal lineage. We developed parents (fathers and mothers) to uncles or aunts gift giving/receiving ratios. The father to maternal uncles giving ratio was 1.40 for the matrilineal group – that is, for every MK1.00 respondents gave to the maternal uncle, they gave MK1.40 to the father. This ratio is 2.53 for the transforming and 2.63 for the patrilineal group. We expected the matrilineal ethnic group respondents to be giving to their maternal uncles more than to their fathers. This is not the case. Also, contrary to our expectations, matrilineal ethnic group respondents (as well as respondents in other ethnic groups) received much less from their maternal uncles than fathers: the father to maternal uncle receiving ratio was 2.37, that is, for every MK1.00 respondents in the matrilineal ethnic group received from their maternal uncle, they received MK2.37 from their father. The ratios for the transforming ethnic group and the patrilineal one were 1.09 and 1.32 respectively. There is a similar trend for the

Table 1: Mean value of gifts in Malawi Kwacha (MK)* respondents gave and received from parents, uncles, and aunts and gift-giving ratios by ethnic group

Relative	Gifts given by Respondent				Gifts received from Respondent			
	Matrilineal Group	Transforming Group	Patrilineal Group	All Ethnic Groups	Matrilineal Group	Transforming Group	Patrilineal Group	All Ethnic Groups
Value of Gifts:								
Father	88 (213)	134 (309)	168 (318)	132 (290)	116 (430)	110 (367)	164 (551)	129 (451)
Mother	120 (363)	135 (269)	258 (508)	172 (394)	75 (255)	101 (303)	115 (416)	98 (334)
Maternal Uncles	63 (167)	53 (161)	64 (171)	59 (166)	49 (132)	101 (376)	124 (311)	93 (305)
Maternal Aunts	38 (95)	58 (191)	71 (205)	56 (173)	61 (327)	45 (117)	81 (225)	60 (228)
Paternal Uncles	45 (124)	42 (153)	60 (146)	48 (143)	34 (114)	88 (614)	152 (786)	91 (585)
Paternal Aunts	43 (146)	53 (144)	81 (149)	58 (147)	38 (215)	42 (217)	90 (279)	55 (236)
Gift Giving and Receiving Ratios								
Father to Mat. Uncles	1.40	2.53	2.63	2.24	2.37	1.09	1.32	1.39
Mother to Mat. Uncles	1.90	2.55	4.03	2.92	1.53	1.00	1.42	1.05
Father to Mat. Aunts	2.32	2.31	2.37	2.36	1.90	2.44	2.02	2.15
Mother to Mat. Aunts	3.16	2.33	3.63	3.07	1.23	2.24	1.42	1.63
Father to Pat. Uncles	1.96	3.19	2.80	2.75	3.41	1.25	1.02	1.42
Mother to Pat. Uncles	2.67	3.21	4.30	3.58	2.21	1.15	0.76	1.08
Father to Pat. Aunts	2.05	2.53	2.07	2.28	3.05	2.62	1.82	2.35
Mother to Pat. Aunts	2.79	2.75	3.19	2.97	1.97	2.40	1.28	1.78

*The exchange rate at the time of the research was US$1=MK42. Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Table 2: Descriptions, means, and standard deviations (SD) of independent variables explored in resource transfers across the three ethnic groups

Variable	Description	Mean			
		Matrilineal Group	Transforming Group	Patrilineal Group	All Ethnic Groups
Demographic:					
Age	Years in 1999	34.7 (10.8)	31.7 (9.4)	33.8 (10.6)	33.3 (10.34)
Sex	Dummy variable, 1 for female and 0 male	-	-	-	-
Marital status	Dummy variable, 1 if married, 0 if divorced or widowed	-	-	-	-
Residence proximity	Dummy variable, 1 if respondent and relative are living in same village, 0 if not. Only assessed for father and mother.	-	-	-	-
Kin ties:					
Surviving children	Number of respondent's children 10 years and older still alive	3.5 (2.6)	3.2 (2.6)	3.6 (2.8)	3.4 (2.7)
Surviving maternal uncles	Number of maternal uncles still alive	1.2 (1.2)	1.5 (1.3)	1.1 (1.1)	1.3 (1.2)
Surviving maternal aunts	Number of maternal aunts still alive	1.1 (1.3)	1.6 (1.4)	1.01 (1.1)	1.3 (1.3)
Surviving Paternal Uncles	Number of paternal uncles still alive	1.1 (1.3)	1.3 (1.3)	1.0 (1.1)	1.1 (1.3)
Surviving Paternal Aunts	Number of paternal aunts still alive	1.1 (1.3)	1.2 (1.1)	0.9 (1.0)	1.1 (1.2)
Socioeconomic Status:					
Household possessions	Bed + mattress + radio + paraffin lamp + pit latrine.	2.2 (1.2)	2.0 (1.4)	2.0 (1.5)	2.1 (1.4)
Livestock ownership*	Value in MK of cattle + goats + pigs + goats + chickens owned.	1333 (2396)	4015 (10150)	12489 (34586)	6066 (21522)
Education	Highest grade level attained	4.6 (2.8)	5.3 (2.6)	7.4 (2.2)	6.0 (2.7)
Health Status:					
Respondent	Health status on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 for very poor health and 10 for very good health. Health status of respondent's relatives assessed by the respondent. Health status for uncles, aunts, and children are averages for the number of surviving uncles, aunts, or children for the particular respondent.	7.9 (2.0)	8.3 (1.8)	8.2 (2.0)	8.1 (1.9)
Respondent's					
Father		6.9 (2.3)	5.9 (2.2)	6.7 (2.3)	6.4 (2.3)
Mother		6.0 (2.4)	5.9 (2.2)	6.2 (2.3)	6.1 (2.3)
Maternal uncles		7.3 (2.2)	7.3 (1.9)	7.6 (2.0)	7.4 (2.0)
Maternal aunts		6.8 (2.2)	6.8 (2.0)	7.2 (2.0)	6.9 (2.1)
Paternal uncles		7.4 (1.9)	7.1 (1.8)	7.1 (2.0)	7.2 (2.1)
Paternal aunts		6.5 (2.2)	6.6 (2.0)	7.0 (2.1)	6.7 (1.9)
Children		8.6 (1.5)	8.6 (1.7)	8.7 (1.3)	8.6 (1.5)
Total sample size (n)		365	452	440	1257

*The exchange rate at the time of the research was US$1=MK42. Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Table 3a: OLS unstandardized coefficients of respondent's giving to their fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts by ethnic group

Variable	Respondent given gifts to:					
	Father	Mother	Maternal Uncles	Maternal Aunts	Paternal Uncles	Paternal Aunts
Demographic:						
Matrilineal Group	-86.4 (33.5)**	-14.7 (70.2)	-63.6 (45.9)	-23.7 (21.9)	-28.8 (15.0)	-52.1 (14.3)**
Transforming Group	-38.3 (30.4)	54.2 (53.8)	-19.4 (34.2)	-15.6 (20.9)	-41.2 (13.5)**	-51.0 (13.0)**
Age	0.1 (2.0)	3.6 (3.3)	—	2.01 (1.4)	—	—
Sex	-94.5 (27.6)**	-86.6 (50.0)	-53.3 (27.3)	-38.3 (18.4)*	-26.2 (11.7)*	-8.2 (11.2)
Marital status	8.2 (45.2)	64.3 (84.7)	—	—	22.9 (20.5)	14.9 (20.5)
Residence proximity	—	72.3 (46.0)	—	—	—	—
Kin ties:						
Surviving children	-2.1 (7.4)	-19.7 (12.4)	—	-6.2 (4.9)	—	—
Number of maternal uncles	7.8 (9.9)	—	34.4 (12.3)**	—	3.9 (4.3)	-0.5 (4.1)
Number of maternal aunts	-3.2 (9.5)	—	-16.8 (10.2)	-7.9 (7.6)	4.1 (4.3)	-2.7 (3.9)
Number of paternal uncles	19.4 (9.9)*	—	—	—	16.2 (5.6)**	5.6 (4.1)
Number of paternal aunts	-2.7 (10.4)	—	—	—	1.01 (4.7)	5.3 (5.0)
Socioeconomic Status:						
Household possessions	24.3 (9.1)**	40.7 (15.9)**	—	—	11.9 (4.0)**	9.4 (3.8)**
Livestock ownership	—	2.5E-03 (0.001)*	—	1.8E-03 (0.00)**	—	—
Education	—	27.4 (9.0)**	-7.9 (5.7)	—	—	—
Health Status:						
Respondent	6.0 (6.9)	10.3 (12.0)	12.4 (7.0)	—	—	1.5 (3.0)
Fathers	—	14.4 (9.6)	21.1 (5.2)**	7.9 (3.8)*	-4.2 (2.5)	3.3 (2.2)
Mothers	—	7.0E-02 (10.0)	-10.6 (5.6)	—	—	—
Maternal uncles	—	—	-7.1 (6.9)	—	—	—
Maternal aunts	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paternal uncles	—	—	—	—	-2.5 (3.1)	—
Paternal aunts	—	—	—	—	—	—
Children	—	—	-6.8 (9.8)	—	—	—
Constant	86.6 (102.7)	-421.9 (208.3)*	53.9 (118.0)	-6.5 (51.2)	27.8 (36.8)	2.2 (38.9)
Prob>F	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
R^2	0.08	0.16	0.31	0.09	0.11	0.11
Sample size (n)	655	846	835	814	708	747

**p<0.01 and *p<0.05. Sex, marital status, and residence are dummy variables; reference categories for sex is male, for marital status is divorced or widowed, and for residence is respondent not residing in same village with relative. Reference ethnic group is the patrilineal group. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. A — means that if the variable was included, the model fit was compromised.

mother to maternal uncles, father to paternal uncles, mother to paternal uncles, and father to paternal aunts. These findings suggest that parents engage in gift exchanges with their children more than uncles and aunts regardless of the type (matrilineal or patrilineal) of ethnic group.

To further explore these unexpected findings, we ran OLS estimates on respondents' giving to and receiving from fathers, mothers, maternal uncles and aunts, and paternal uncles and aunts setting the patrilineal ethnic group as a control. Table 2 lists, describes, and gives means and standard deviations of independent variables by ethnic group we use in predicting wealth exchanges between respondents and their parents, uncles, and aunts.

These variables fall into demographic, socioeconomic, kin ties or affiliations, and health status categories. Research has shown the importance of these variables in predicting transfer behaviour (Peterson 1993; Agree et al. 2000; Weinreb 2000). We expected health status to be a critical factor in wealth flow because of the high incidence of AIDS in rural Malawi.[4]

The OLS estimates in Tables 3a and 3b reveal interesting findings[5]. Table 3a shows that patrilineal respondents (control ethnic group) gave more to their fathers and paternal aunts than matrilineal respondents when other variables are controlled for.

These patrilineal respondents also received significantly more from their fathers than their matrilineal counterparts as shown in Table 3b. What is of significant interest here is that matrilineal respondents do not give to or receive from their maternal uncles and maternal aunts more than their patrilineal counterparts as both Tables 3a and 3b reveal. Even more interesting, there are two main factors that significantly influence the flow of gifts. The first is the respondent's sex: women generally gave and received less than men. The second is the respondent's socioeconomic status, particularly in terms of household possessions. The more household possessions a respondent had, the more the respondent gave to relatives. Household possessions did not, however, significantly influence how much respondents received from their parents, uncles, and aunts (see Table 3b). In terms of health status, better health of the father allowed for more giving to maternal uncles and aunts.

We then focused on exchanges with fathers, mothers, and paternal aunts as these showed significant differences in gift exchanges with respondents across the ethnic groups (see Table 3a and 3b). For these relatives, we tested whether different factors influence gift exchanges in the ethnic groups. We found that sex and socioeconomic status, with household possessions still standing out, remained the main factors in gift exchanges in all the ethnic groups (Tables 4a-4c).

The quantitative results do not support the contention that matrilineality and patrilineality have any influence on gift exchanges or wealth flow. We use the qualitative information to find out whether there is any support for the quantita-

Table 3b: OLS unstandardized coefficients of respondent's receiving from their fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts by ethnic group

Variable	Respondent received gifts from:					
	Fathers	Mothers	Maternal Uncles	Maternal Aunts	Paternal Uncles	Paternal Aunts
Demographic:						
Matrilineal Group	-534.3 (179.0)**	195.4 (89.6)*	-5.3 (57.0)	49.1 (51.7)	-111.5 (83.7)	-44.5 (26.1)
Transforming Group	-349.5 (145.2)*	-85.4 (75.7)	-70.7 (45.6)	-18.0 (41.1)	-48.9 (60.8)	-40.6 (24.0)
Age	—	-7.2 (5.3)	6.2 (3.6)	—	—	1.01 (1.4)
Sex	-263.3 (125.1)*	-52.8 (71.5)	-72.0 (42.8)	-37.0 (35.6)	-133.8 (52.4)**	-65.6 (20.6)**
Marital status	—	-332.5 (107.0)**	38.0 (76.0)	—	—	—
Residence proximity	—	-171.4 (64.0)**	—	—	—	—
Kin ties:						
Surviving children	—	12.0 (14.7)	-31.4 (12.0)**	5.6 (7.3)	9.5 (10.2)	-2.1 (4.8)
Number of maternal uncles	—	—	65.0 (16.5)**	27.7 (13.5)*	—	—
Number of maternal aunts	—	—	—	10.1 (14.4)	—	—
Number of paternal uncles	—	—	—	—	—	—
Number of paternal aunts	—	—	—	—	—	8.9 (9.5)
Socioeconomic Status:						
Household possessions	—	22.9 (20.3)	9.2 (13.6)	—	—	-6.5 (7.0)
Livestock ownership	-3.8E-03 (0.004)	—	—	—	—	—
Education	—	3.7E-02 (14.2)	1.3 (8.0)	11.9 (7.3)	—	—
Health Status:						
Respondent	-30.3 (33.4)	20.2 (17.1)	—	—	—	—
Fathers	23.6 (26.1)	13.1 (13.2)	15.9 (8.5)	—	—	—
Mothers	-9.0 (26.7)	-16.7 (14.1)	-10.1 (9.1)	11.9 (7.9)	—	—
Maternal uncles	-9.5 (30.9)	—	-7.0 (10.7)	—	—	—
Maternal aunts	—	—	—	17.5 (8.9)*	—	—
Paternal uncles	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paternal aunts	—	—	—	—	—	10.4 (4.6)*
Children	-115.5 (43.5)**	-23.7 (20.5)	—	—	—	—
Constant	1863.3 (496.0)**	766.5 (350.0)*	-152.8 (173.1)	-238.2 (105.7)*	151.1 (83.7)	30.4 (65.5)
Prob>F	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.01
R^2	0.19	0.24	0.15	0.06	0.02	0.04
Sample size (n)	654	843	835	814	708	747

**$p<0.01$ and *$p<0.05$. Sex, marital status, and residence are dummy variable; reference categories for sex is male, for marital status is divorced or widowed, and for residence is respondent not residing in same village with relative. Reference ethnic group is the patrilineal group. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. A — means that if the variable was included, the model fit was compromised.

tive findings, and to explore possible reasons for the lack of maternal and paternal biases in gifts exchange.

Qualitative Findings:

People exchange gifts with a wide range of relatives and friends. Asked to mention the people they help most, 29 of the 56 respondents mentioned friends, 18 respondents mentioned sisters, 16 mentioned mothers, 13 mentioned nieces/nephews/cousins, 12 mentioned brothers, 12 mentioned sisters-in-law, 10 mentioned mothers-in-law, eight mentioned children, and seven mentioned sisters-in-marriage. Although most respondents had fathers, fathers-in-law, maternal uncles and aunts alive, these were not mentioned very much as recipients of help. Only three respondents indicated to have helped fathers, four helped maternal uncles, and four helped maternal aunts. Of note, six respondents (three respondents in the transforming ethnic group and three respondents in the patrilineal group) indicated to have helped nieces and nephews, their *mbumba*, as a respondent remarked. In regard to receiving help, five indicated to have received help from their fathers, four from maternal uncles, and four from maternal aunts.[6] Of note again, six respondents (four from the transforming ethnic group, one from the patrilineal group, and one from the matrilineal group) indicated to have received help from their nephews/nieces. Most of the help exchanged between relatives and friends, across all three ethnic groups, involved everyday needs and chores. People helped each other in nursing the ill and taking them to hospital or traditional healers, buying drugs, providing some food, helping with household chores, and providing money to help with educational expenses. Of the 56 respondents interviewed, 28 reported to have helped others with food, 28 with money to meet educational expenses or take an ill person to hospital/traditional healer, 24 helped with nursing the ill, and 13 with various household chores. The main reasons for helping one another included compassion, obligation, and responsibility. Involvement in the exchange of help was very much contingent upon the socioeconomic status of the helper. The well-off economically tended to help relatives and friends more than those not as well off. What was quite surprising to us was that there was little variation across the ethnic groups in gifts exchanges between respondents and their fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts. The following case stories seem to reveal why there was little variation in gift exchange processes among the three ethnic groups.

The first case we discuss is that of Mtosa, 41 years old, and his wives Nephie who is 36 years and Ebula who is 29 years from the matrilineal ethnic group. Mtosa has been married to his first wife Nephie for thirteen years and to the second for three years. In responding to his grief over the loss of his mother followed by death of his sister within a month, Mtosa's first wife agreed to a patrilocal marriage arrangement with the understanding that at some point in the future, they would move back to Nephie's village, that is, changing into a

Table 4a: OLS unstandardized coefficients of monetary transfers between respondents and their fathers by ethnic group

Variable	Given to Father			Received from Father		
	Matrilineal Group	Transforming Group	Patrilineal Group	Matrilineal Group	Transforming Group	Patrilineal Group
Demographic:						
Age	—	—	-12.9 (4.8)**	—	-13.4 (5.4)**	—
Sex	-84.5 (33.0)**	-127.7 (39.5)**	297.5 (77.6)**	-112.3 (54.1)*	-129.7 (54.3)*	-239.2 (107.4)*
Marital status	—	-93.5 (89.9)	103.5 (145.8)	—	—	—
Kin ties:						
Surviving children	—	-0.6 (8.6)	—	15.4 (10.6)	23.9 (16.6)	—
Socioeconomic Status:						
Household possessions	—	42.9 (13.9)**	76.7 (24.7)**	-6.6 (18.9)	—	-27.3 (36.0)
Livestock ownership	—	—	—	-9.2E-03 (0.01)	—	—
Education	—	-7.2 (7.6)	-28.0 (17.1)	21.8 (8.6)*	—	—
Health Status:						
Respondent	—	—	—	-22.2 (9.8)*	—	—
Respondent's						
Father	-4.1 (6.9)	-3.2 (8.4)	—	—	—	57.9 (22.5)**
Mother	—	—	-14.2 (15.4)	—	—	-32.1 (23.2)
Maternal uncles	—	—	-34.4 (19.4)	—	—	—
Paternal aunts	—	—	—	-10.1 (11.2)	—	—
Constant	169.5 (54.9)**	254.8 (125.4)*	1000.0 (323.7)**	307.2 (135.8)*	510.7 (140.1)**	264.4 (220.0)
Prob>F	0.04	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.01
R^2	0.04	0.13	0.21	0.33	0.04	0.07
Sample size (n)	177	263	215	176	263	215

$^{**}p<0.01$ and $^{*}p<0.05$. Sex and marital status are dummy variables; reference categories for sex is male and for marital status is divorced or widowed. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. A — means the variable was not included as it compromised the model fitness.

Table 4b: OLS unstandardized coefficients of monetary transfers between respondents and their mothers by ethnic group

Variable	Given to Mother			Received from Mother		
	Matrilineal Group	Transforming Group	Patrilineal Group	Matrilineal Group	Transforming Group	Patrilineal Group
Demographic:						
Age	0.9 (1.1)	3.3 (4.1)	-2.2 (4.7)	-1.0 (2.6)	-9.2 (4.2)*	—
Sex	—	-68.6 (47.8)	-305.3 (73.8)**	-59.0 (56.1)	—	1.07 (54.0)
Marital status	—	—	—	-325.0 (103.9)**	—	-355.6 (98.5)**
Kin ties:						
Surviving children	-8.3 (5.7)	-13.1 (13.5)	-7.4 (17.0)	—	13.4 (8.4)	—
Surviving maternal uncles	-6.0 (9.1)	—	—	—	—	2.0 (21.4)
Survival paternal aunts	—	—	—	—	—	33.0 (25.5)
Socioeconomic Status:						
Household possessions	24.1 (8.6)**	32.1 (16.1)*	70.7 (24.2)**	—	-41.9 (14.8)**	—
Livestock ownership	—	—	—	—	—	—
Education	8.2 (4.0)*	19.0 (9.3)*	22.8 (16.9)	-0.7 (9.4)	6.6 (8.5)	-9.7 (12.3)
Health Status:						
Respondent	—	15.0 (12.8)	19.9 (17.6)	—	—	—
Respondent's						
Father	-2.2 (4.8)	—	—	—	-6.3 (7.1)	—
Mother	-3.5 (4.6)	—	—	—	—	—
Children	—	—	—	—	-37.8 (11.3)**	
Constant	9.1 (56.9)	174.4 (170.8)	-11.7 (265.9)	464.6 (142.7)*	755.1 (154.6)**	484.9 (152.4)**
Prob>F	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.01
R^2	0.27	0.09	0.14	0.07	0.51	0.05
Sample size (n)	244	318	284	243	318	284

**$p<0.01$ and *$p<0.05$. Sex and marital status are dummy variables; reference categories for sex is male and for marital status is divorced or widowed. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. A — means the variable was not included as it compromised the model fitness.

Table 4c: OLS unstandardized coefficients of monetary transfers between respondents and their maternal aunts by ethnic group

Variable	Given to Paternal Aunts			Received from Paternal Aunts		
	Matrilineal Group	Transforming Group	Patrilineal Group	Matrilineal Group	Transforming Group	Patrilineal Group
Demographic:						
Age	—	4.7 (1.6)**	-2.1 (1.8)	—	7.3 (3.7)*	—
Sex	—	-6.3 (24.1)	-48.6 (29.0)	-134.9 (56.3)*	-54.7 (46.2)	-65.4 (38.5)
Marital status	—	36.8 (62.6)	70.4 (70.1)	—	-84.3 (76.7)	—
Kin ties:						
Number of maternal uncles	-15.0 (6.3)*	-4.8 (10.8)	—	39.7 (18.3)*	-6.4 (18.4)	43.4 (16.3)**
Number of paternal aunts	—	—	—	21.4 (10.9)*	10.1 (21.5)	—
Socioeconomic Status:						
Household possessions	—	—	30.6 (9.2)**	-27.5 (21.6)	—	—
Livestock ownership	9.7E-03**	3.9E-03 (0.002)**	—	—	7.1E-03 (0.00)**	—
Education	10.7 (3.6)**	5.6 (4.6)	—	—	—	—
Health Status:						
Father	14.7 (4.3)**	—	—	—	—	—
Mother	—	—	-9.6 (6.1)	-22.4 (10.9)*	9.9 (11.1)	-19.2 (8.7)*
Maternal uncles	—	14.6 (6.4)*	—	—	—	—
Paternal aunts	—	-3.6 (5.8)	-3.6 (6.4)	24.7 (12.8)*	—	-7.1 (9.5)
Children	13.7 (8.0)	—	—	—	-21.8 (10.4)*	—
Constant	-229.0 (85.2)**	-227.6 (106.6)	101.1 (118.5)	64.5 (113.1)	-13.4 (200.4)	-232.8 (83.6)**
Prob>F	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.00
R^2	0.62	0.17	0.11	0.15	0.24	0.09
Sample size (n)	226	308	213	226	308	213

**p<0.01 and *p<0.05. Sex and marital status are dummy variables; reference category for sex is male and for marital status is widowed or divorced. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. A — means the variable was not included as it compromised the model fitness.

matrilocal marriage arrangement culturally expected of them. After three years of their patrilocal marriage, Nephie reminded Mtosa of his promise to revert to a matrilocal marriage. Mtosa agreed to revert to a matrilocal marriage arrangement. He was in this marriage arrangement for four years then married a second wife Ebula on a patrilocal arrangement. He now has his first wife on a matrilocal arrangement and the second one on a patrilocal arrangement. He spends most of his time with his second wife at his village of origin. He remarked that Nephie is on a matrilocal marriage arrangement because her mother gets ill frequently and so she needs to be near her mother. As he put it,

> Nephie used to stay here in my village with me. Because her mother gets ill frequently, she requested that she goes back to her village of origin to be helping her mother. Hence, she asked me to go and build a house for her at her mother's place, which I did, and now she stays with her mother.

Based on Nephie's views, it seems Mtosa does not like the matrilocal marriage arrangement. He was unable to just get out of it after agreeing that he would revert to a matrilocal arrangement later. He thus opted for matrilocal and patrilocal marriages. Nephie feels that she will soon lose him as he does not help her as much as he used to.

Mtosa though sees himself as responsible for his wives and children but depends mostly on his female and wives' relatives to help with household chores and nursing care when his wives are ill. Both his first wife and second one were bed-ridden with illness for a continuous period of about two weeks in the 1998/99 agricultural season. In the case of the first wife, he relied on his mother-in-law to nurse her. This is understandable as they are in a matrilocal marriage arrangement. In the case of his second wife, he relied on his sister, perhaps because the marriage is patrilocal. In both situations, he was responsible for taking his wives on a bicycle to hospital for treatment. He indicated having received little help from the wives' uncles, fathers, and brothers as well as his own relatives (father and uncles).

Mtosa's wives indicated that they get help from their husband mostly when they are ill, and for items that need cash like salt, soap, and clothes. With regard to illness, the help mostly involves being taken to hospital or finding drugs. Mtosa confirmed that he is responsible for buying clothes for his wives; he also indicated that he is responsible for meeting educational expenses of his children and has received little help from anyone. The wives exchange help, particularly with regard to household chores and nursing tasks, mostly with their mothers, sisters, and female friends. For example, Nephie helped in nursing her mother and niece when they were hospitalized.[7] She had been nursing her mother in hospital when her niece got admitted. Her mother got discharged but she stayed on to nurse the niece, explaining that it was proper for her younger sister (mother of the admitted girl) to go home with the discharged mother while she stayed in the hospital, as she was the older one of the two. Nephie has two other sisters and two brothers but no uncles. The brothers did not extend any help to her during the 1998/99 agricultural season. Nephie thinks they were busy taking care of their families. Although Ebula, Mtosa's second wife, has an uncle, she is more or less in a similar situation to that of Nephie in that she does not receive much help from her uncle.

No one in rural Malawi is without *nkhoswe*. During Nephie's marriage, her brothers acted as *nkhoswe*. Mtosa's maternal uncles were his *nkhoswe*. Ebula had her maternal uncle as *nkhoswe*. In line with Mitchell's (1956) remarks, these *nkhoswe* are involved in advising their *mbumba* about marriage, settling disagreements between the couples, and following through with divorce if the marriage cannot be saved from dissolution. They are also responsible for burial arrangements if death occurs. Parents play a similar role – they are counselors and guides with the actual expenses for all activities being the responsibility of the household. Of course the *nkhoswe* and parents do help if able but do not seem to be obligated. The nephews/nieces too do not seem obligated to help their uncles or *nkhoswe*. Mtosa did not help his uncle in the previous year nor did Ebula. Nephie did not give or receive help from her brothers (her *nkhoswe*) during 1998/99. We think the *nkhoswe* and parents among the matrilineal Yao ethnic group mainly play the role of counselors or guides, advising their *mbumba* or children what is expected of them but not responsible or obligated to meet any costs the *mbumba* or children incur.

Moving on to Briford and his wife Susan, respondents from the Chewa ethnic group in central Malawi that is changing from matrilineal to patrilineal practices, we find more or less a similar situation. Briford is 41 years old; his wife is 40 years. Their marriage is patrilocal. They both remarked that marriages used to be matrilocal but have changed recently to being more patrilocal. Asked to explain the reasons for the change, they suggested that people do not favour matrilocal marriage arrangements, 'it is out of date' as Briford put it.

Briford and Susan have five children. The oldest child is 20 years old and the youngest is eight years. They had six children. Their first child died when only three days old. They reported that it took three years for Susan to be pregnant again. Difficulties of getting pregnant are believed to have arisen because they had not followed the proper rites for burying the three-days old deceased baby. They consulted their *nkhoswe* about the problem, who helped them to identify a person who knew some traditional medicine to correct the situation. After taking the medicine, which Briford and Susan paid for, Susan was able to get pregnant again.

Susan mentioned sisters-in-marriage, sisters-in-law, sisters, and a brother who has a paid job as the ones who help her most frequently. The female relatives she mentioned mostly help with household chores especially when Susan is ill or has an ill member in her household. The brother sometimes gives her some money for various needs, especially to help in dealing with illness in the household. Briford mentioned mostly nephews, brothers, and friends as the ones who most frequently help him when he experiences problems. When illness strikes his household, he mainly relies on his sisters for household chores while he sees it as his responsibility to find money and take the ill member to hospital. His wife was bed-ridden with illness for a whole week during the 1998/99 agricultural season and Briford had to take her on his bicycle to hospital. Also, one of their children was seriously ill for some three weeks during 1998/99. Briford and his wife had to take the child to hospital. Many relatives came to check on how the child was doing especially when they came back but only Susan's brother and Briford's nephew provided some financial help.

Asked what happens when they have marital problems in their household, they both explained that they consult their *nkhoswe* (maternal uncles) as they did when Susan was unable to get pregnant. Briford remarked that the *nkhoswe* are mainly involved in marriage arrangements and problems, serious illness, and funerals. They hardly provide material or financial help. With regard to serious illness and death, their role is that of a counselor and guide. For illness, for example, they check on how an ill person is doing and suggest what the father and mother could do. With regard to funerals, they ensure that burial rites are properly followed. During Susan's problem about getting pregnant, for example, the *nkhoswe* helped to find the medicine but Briford and Susan paid for it themselves. We find therefore that wealth flow processes among the transforming Chewa ethnic group are similar to processes among the matrilineal Yao ethnic group.

Briford and Susan were quick to explain that it used to be the case that the *nkhoswe* provided significant material help; they also had a lot of say about what goes on in their *mbumba's* households. This is no longer the case. The father and mother are responsible for providing whatever is needed to take care of an ill one in their household or to bury the dead member, but extensively consult their *nkhoswe* and parents for counsel and advice. The *nkhoswe* as well as parents may help materially contingent upon their economic status. Extending the discussion to friends, Briford and Susan indicated that help from friends depends on the benevolence of those friends and how the beneficiary has been extending his or her help to the friends.

The situation among the patrilineal Tumbuka in northern Malawi seems to follow a similar trend. Husbands and wives are responsible for dealing with problems in their household with the *nkhoswe* (not uncles but parents in the case of this patrilineal ethnic group) playing the role of counselor and guide. Elita and her husband Geoffrey, respectively 38 and 44 years old, have five children. The oldest is 17 and the youngest is 3 years old. They also live with a 16 years old niece, Elita's brother's daughter. Elita's brother and wife passed away leaving behind a daughter who had nowhere else to live hence came to live with Elita's family.

With regard to household chores and nursing care when someone in the household is ill, Elita gets help from the mother-in-law mostly but also sisters, the niece, friends, and sisters-in-marriage. Recently, her father-in-law passed away. The time he was ill, Elita and her husband took him to hospital. While her husband organised some money and transport, Elita was the main one responsible for various chores at home and at the hospital. It was not right for her mother-in-law to be 'running up and down', as she put it, with her around. At his death, Geoffrey and his brothers had the burden of ensuring that there was enough food for the mourners, and had to find money needed to buy the coffin and other things for burial. Elita, her sisters-in-law, and her sisters-in-marriage were responsible for preparing the food.

Elita has an interesting history. Both of her parents died when she was very young. She and her brother were taken care of by their maternal aunt. The aunt and her brother acted as *nkhoswe* during her marriage. Elita seems to be following the example of her aunt in taking care of her niece since the death of her father and mother. With no primary kin member on her side, Elita depends mostly on her husband, cousins, and friends for anything that requires money. Geoffrey, like husbands in the matrilineal and transforming ethnic groups, sees himself to be responsible for anything that demands money in his household including supplying the needs of his wife and children. He receives a lot of help from his brother, a priest, and another one who is an agricultural extension officer. He also receives frequent help from his maternal uncle who is a teacher. Geoffrey indicated that he did not receive much help from his father, except as a counselor or guide on how they were supposed to do something. The father was of course the *nkhoswe* and played a central role in Geoffrey's marriage and resolving any disputes between Geoffrey and his wife or brothers, but never provided material or financial help.

From the qualitative findings, we find little evidence of variations in the exchange of gifts among the three ethnic groups. We found that in all the three ethnic groups, the *nkhoswe* (and parents) are mostly involved in marriage arrangements, dealing with marital problems, serious illness, and death, not necessarily in terms of meeting expenses households incur but providing the needed guidance on how burial, for example, should be carried out. Husbands and their wives in each household are the ones responsible for the expenses or ensuring that things actually happen as expected. The *nkhoswe* as well as parents play more of an advisory rather than a decisional role in how wealth in their *mbumba's* and children's households is used. Also, it seems obligation, compassion, and responsibility are the foundational factors in people helping each other contingent upon the socioeconomic status of those involved in the exchange of help. A wealthy uncle is obviously expected to help materially when his *mbumba* are in need of that help. We also found that friends are a critical component in the exchange of help; most respondents exchanged significant help with friends.

We come to the conclusion that both quantitative and qualitative findings do not provide any convincing evidence that paternal relatives under patriliny (the case of the patrilineal Tumbuka ethnic group in northern Malawi) or maternal relatives under matriliny (the case of the matrilineal Yao ethnic group in southern Malawi) play a significant role in wealth flows. We think that husbands and wives or primary household members, whether under matriliny or patriliny, make the serious decisions on wealth flows. We suggest that this is due to the increasing privatisation of production and consumption behaviour among households engendered by capitalism that is penetrating rural Malawi. We think that inherent in capitalism are mechanisms for diminishing matrilineal and patrilineal kinship influence over wealth flow.

Kinship, Capitalism, and Wealth Flow

Kinship is a relational term not only at the genealogical level but also at the code of conduct level, particularly in regard to sharing of food, labour, money, time, land, and services as people deal with problems and respond to opportunities (Holy 1996). While the genealogical aspect of kinship ties people on the basis of common parenthood, the code of conduct aspect of kinship ties people on the basis of what they share and struggle against. A father is genealogically connected to a son; the two are members of the same primary kin circle. They are also related in what they share and struggle against in producing necessities of life. They will therefore respond to each other's needs as deemed culturally appropriate. To this extent, genealogy is a source of obligation among the kin. Those related genealogically are obligated to ensure the well-being of each other. Among patrilineal ethnic groups, fathers and the paternal line of relatives may indeed be the ones obligated to ensure the well-being of their kin. Likewise, among the matrilineal ethnic groups, the uncles/aunts may be the ones with such an obligation. There may be change in who bears the responsibility for the well-being of kin, e.g., from uncles to fathers as is happening among the Chewa who are changing from matriliny to patriliny (Phiri 1983). For our argument here, it matters little who bears this responsibility. The critical factor is that they fulfill that genealogical obligation.

While genealogy is a source of obligation among the kin, fulfilling the obligations involves transfers. Engaging in transfers generally means following an expected code of conduct, that is, responding to the needs and requests of the kin as culturally expected. In terms of transfers, bad children are those who do not engage in transfers with their relatives. The children's transfer behaviour may be influenced by the bond they enjoy with their relatives contingent upon their resource base and views on what would be considered the most appropriate use of their resources. This children-paternal relatives link may indeed be the fundamental transfers leverage in patrilineal ethnic groups. The children-maternal relatives link may be the important leverage in matrilineal ethnic groups. Both leverages weaken with the advent of capitalism.

It has been observed that in societies not disturbed by capitalist social relations, goods and services tend to be distributed more or less equally and on the basis of need (Lenski 1966: p.46) with those in positions of authority facilitating the distribution of the resources and products of labour (Polanyi 1968). As capitalism enforces its ideals on society, social life becomes much more rationalised; exchange behaviour is driven by selfish goals involving calculations of rewards/benefits and punishments/costs rather than collective preferences.

We think that during the pre-colonial pre-slave trade era, the likelihood that parents, uncles, and aunts among patrilineal and matrilineal ethnic groups influenced their children and nephews/nieces' exchange of labour and its products in rural Malawi was high as the rationalisation of social life may not have been very high. Mandala (1984), for example, remarks that during the pre-slave trade era, egalitarian agricultural practices were common and the elders' control over the labour of the youth was firm among the Mang'anja, a southern Malawi ethnic group. Colonial imperialism in the 1800s introduced the cash economy, amongst other things, into rural Malawi, which essentially transformed the social landscape, bringing forth individualistic lifestyles as the rationalistic capitalist culture invaded rural Malawi. We think that capitalist practices in which behaviour becomes driven more by self-interest, have over the years been sabotaging collective processes. Giving and receiving behaviour is thus changing from being driven by collective preferences to increasingly being a private household matter. Parents as well as uncles and aunts end up becoming less decisional and more advisory in their roles over their children and *mbumba's* wealth. Resource use and the distribution of products of labour become more rationalistic. We think that the advent of capitalism into rural Malawi, characterised by the increasing production of cash crops like tobacco and cotton, wage labour as another means of livelihood, business ventures, and various forms of cash generating activities, is leading to an increasingly individualistic lifestyle and contributes to the weakening of the influence of parents, uncles, and aunts (maternal or paternal) over transfer decisions of adult children.

We think, in line with Godelier (1972) and Poewe (1981), that society indeed experiences various contradictions. Poewe (1981: p.120), for example, suggests that under matriliny, there is a contradiction 'between the increasingly individual or private nature of the forces of production [economic activities in the production of necessities of life] and the still communal or social character of appropriation' among the Luapula people of Zambia. We argue, in the case of Malawi, that both production and consumption are steadily becoming private activities; central authorities have less influence over individuals' activities. The introduction of the cash economy progressively encouraged private production activities, undermined communal appropriation processes, and compromised parents' and uncles/aunts' influence over their adult children, nephews, and nieces' wealth transfer actions. Mandala (1990) speaks of such influence of the cash economy among the Sena and Mang'anja people of southern Malawi when cotton was introduced as a cash crop and wage labour became an important means of livelihood. The tobacco cash crop brought about similar contradictions among the then matrilineal Chewa ethnic group as men got more involved in tobacco growing leaving most of the food production farm work to women (Phiri 1983).

With specific reference to transfer decisions that people make, we think that as capitalism asserts its presence in rural Malawi, people increasingly embrace two contradicting sets of values. On one hand, they have to follow a code of conduct that affirms the authority of parents, uncles, and aunts in wealth flows, a code of conduct that would affirm communal appropriation processes. On the other hand, they have to follow a code of conduct that asserts private appropriation processes that capitalism engenders in which transfer behaviour is influenced more by rationalised choices rather than communal imperatives. From our findings, we think respondents are progressively embracing the private appropriation values and compromising on the communal ones hence the lack of fathers' and uncles/aunts' influence on respondents' transfer decisions. We suggest that over the years, fathers, uncles, mothers, and aunts have become counselors in transfer activities rather than the main decision-makers. We contend that the new system (capitalism) weakens the old one leading to declining influence of maternal as well as paternal relatives over wealth transfer behaviours of their adult children.

Poewe (1981: p.121) suggests that matriliny and capitalism accommodate each other among the Luapula people in that 'matrilineal inheritance remains the symbolic keystone of Luapula matriliny' even as capitalism has shored its presence. We do not think capitalism accommodates matriliny and patriliny in rural Malawi. Instead, it is encouraging a different set of values in the economic production and use of necessities of life, values that weaken matriliny and patriliny.

Conclusion

This paper has not been about whether matriliny gives greater power to women than patriliny or such other interesting gender related questions but on whether transfers are patterned differently among matrilineal and patrilineal societies[8]. To test the proposition, we examined wealth transfers among the matrilineal Yao, patrilineal Tumbuka, and the Chewa who are changing from a matrilineal system to a patrilineal type in rural Malawi, hoping to find that paternal relatives give and receive more from their adult children among the patrilineal Tumbuka ethnic group than the matrilineal Yao ethnic group, that maternal relatives give and receive proportionately more from adult children among the Yao than among the Tumbuka, and that the transforming Chewa are somewhere in-between. Much as the descriptions of matrilineal and patrilineal kinship arrangements suggest that transfer patterns would favour maternal relatives under matriliny and paternal relatives under patriliny (see works in Colson and Gluckman 1968; Holy 1986; Mitchell 1956; Poewe 1981; Raha

1989), we find no evidence for such a situation. Patterns of wealth flows under matriliny and patriliny are actually similar.

Why the similarity in wealth flow patterns? We think they arise because of capitalist values that have penetrated rural Malawi. The capitalist ideology, which encourages individualistic tendencies in transfer behaviour, is weakening the rather collective matrilineal and patrilineal ideologies. We argue against Poewe's (1981) point that capitalism accommodates matriliny (and, by extension, that it could accommodate patriliny). Because capitalism has different sets of values in the allocation and use of means of production from those of kinship political economies (matriliny or patriliny), capitalism may seem to accommodate these economies but essentially acts as a parasite that undermines the values of these kinship political economies replacing them with the class-oriented individualistic mode of production.

Notes

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1. Our description of matriliny and patriliny on the three ethnic groups under discussion in this paper (Yao, Chewa, and Tumbuka) draws heavily on works by Tew (1950), Mitchell (1956), Marwick (1965), and Phiri (1983). Mitchell's work on the Yao is extensive. We draw mainly on his 1956 book. Note: there is very little recent works on the various ethnic groups in Malawi hence the lack of more recent literature in our discussion.
2. The Tumbuka too were matrilineal until the mid 1800s when the Ngoni, a patrilineal ethnic group, conquered them and stamped its patrilineal practices on them (Tew 1950). Ever since, the Tumbuka have been patrilineal. Of note: the Ngoni fought the Yao but never really conquered them so as to significantly influence their kinship practices.
3. Schatz (1999), for example, reports that 72.7 percent of the Chewa in Mchinji District of Central Malawi follow patrilineal lineage processes and 33.2 percent of their marriages are patrilocal.
4. From the time the first AIDS case was diagnosed in April 1985 to the end of 1999, an estimated 70,000 people have died from the disease and about 760,000 people aged 15 to 49 years (15.96 percent of prime adults) are living with it in Malawi (UNAIDS 2000). The disease is striking the most economically productive age group (20-50 years), who are also the most involved in gift exchanges. We thought that this would compromise wealth flow from respondents, most of whom were between 25 and 45 years of age, to their relatives.
5. Comparing the matrilineal and patrilineal groups, we find that respondents in the patrilineal group tended to have more livestock wealth and attained higher education on average than those in the matrilineal group. This may explain the higher level of gifts exchange among the patrilineal than the matrilineal group as discussed earlier on.

6. The question asked in the qualitative interviews was who they helped most and whom they received help from the most. We were surprised that close relatives, especially fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts, were rarely mentioned as sources and recipients of help. When we probed about whether they do not give or receive help from these relatives, one respondent remarked, 'one does not keep score of the help one gives to a father, mother, or uncle … we are always helping them anyways'. This somewhat explains why there were few people in the qualitative interviews who indicated to have helped or received help from fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts. In the quantitative survey, the questionnaire 'forced' respondents to indicate what they gave to and received from these relatives.
7. Nursing staff are so inadequate in Malawi such that relatives undertake a significant amount of nursing work (such as escorting patients to bathrooms and giving them baths) if they have a sick person admitted in hospital.
8. Crehan (1997) and Peters (1997a, 1997b) have made wonderful contributions to gender dynamics within patrilineal or matrilineal societies.We do not get into that discussion here.

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Trade Union Responses to the 'Flexible' Workforce in Namibia: Incorporation or Marginalisation?

Abstract

It is now widely recognised that a key feature of current restructuring is an increasing polarisation in employment conditions and a growing differentiation of the workforce. The changing social composition of the workforce associated with employment 'flexibility' poses serious challenges to the modes of organisation that have long served the labour movement. Available evidence suggests considerable variation in the nature and efficacy of trade union responses to the casualisation of work. This heterogeneity highlights the extent to which choices are structurally determined and underscores the tensions that can arise between different union strategies. A meaningful explanation of this diversity must therefore be rooted in the existence of different 'types' of trade unions. Prevailing typologies of trade unionism, however, cannot adequately account for the variety of union responses to 'flexible' employment. By linking the various responses to specific trade union 'identities' and by highlighting the limiting factors which serve to constrain choice, the approach adopted here represents an advance over alternative accounts. It allows us to proceed beyond mere taxonomies of trade unionism and to explore their conditions of possibility, reproduction, and propensity for transformation.

Introduction

When the first democratically-elected government of Namibia entered the global marketplace in 1990, the calls for increasing the 'flexibility' of labour markets and intensifying the processes of deregulation had become increasingly shrill. In addition to these international pressures, attempts to eradicate the vestiges of institutionalised racism in post-independence Namibia are severely hampered by vast social inequalities and extensive economic dependence on its old colonial master. The pre-independence expectations among black people of significantly improved earnings and standards of living remain largely unfulfilled as the Namibian economy fails to sustain adequate levels of growth. Namibia's hard-won freedoms of political emancipation and national liberation are bound to be illusory for the bulk of the poor in the absence of a radical transformation of the inherited structures of economic ownership and control. The struggle to overcome inequality, poverty and unemployment while ensuring that the economy is diversified and becomes internationally competitive has generated distinct sets of winners and losers. The first decade of independence was characterised by both a strengthening of the legal and social safety net covering full-time, organised employees and a proliferation of 'flexible' labour at the margins of this regulatory framework*.

Internationally, the current conjuncture is one in which the labour movements of many countries are under attack, trade unionism is on the decline in its traditional strongholds, and management has seized the initiative in both the restructuring of production and the transformation of industrial relations. An increasingly prominent aspect of managements' drive to become globally competitive is the *casualisation* of employment – understood not only in the narrow sense of an expansion in the proportion of persons classified as casual workers, but also in the broader sense of a spread of casual conditions of employment within the labour market. The rise of a so-called 'flexible' workforce – i.e. temporary, part-time and a variety of self-employed workers – marks the movement from a dominant pattern in which internal labour markets shielded workers from market forces, to a new employment relationship where pressures from product and labour markets are used to mediate the labour-management relationship.

It is now widely recognised that a key feature of current restructuring has been a growing differentiation in employment conditions and an increasing polarisation of the workforce (see Córdova 1986; Dickens 1988; Lane 1989; Fevre 1991; Felstead and Jewson 1999). As Hakim notes in her extensive review of workforce restructuring, strategies varied from one country to the next and followed different paths depending on local factors, but 'all pointed in the same general direction of increasing ... segmentation of the labour market and exploring new forms of differentiating wage/labour relations' (1990:167). As just-in-time organisation of inventory and production has spread, so too has just-in-time human resource management. These initiatives add up to an emergent industrial strategy that places low-waged, poorly-regulated labour at the forefront of attempts to improve the competitiveness of certain firms and sectors. The track-record of these policies reveals that relatively little is achieved in terms of the alleviation of poverty, skill shortages or structural unemployment. The shift from in-house jobs to outside contractors, for example, amounts to 'a shift in the lines that divide labour, rather than straightforward growth in employment' (Allen and Henry 1996:65).

The multiplication of divisions among workers poses a grave challenge to the unions. As fault lines develop amongst workers, union capacities for effective action are severely tested as 'established foundations for solidaristic social and political action are eroded' (Yates 1998:120). Despite a few notable exceptions, union policies to combat the increasing differentiation in terms and conditions of employment have met with very little success. These divisions become especially portentous where, as in Namibia, employers' primary target for outsourcing is those rungs of the occupational hierarchy that have historically been fruitful union recruiting grounds. If the trade unions in Namibia are to expand their influence and consolidate their gains, an effective strategy to confront the casualisation of work must be found. Such a strategy should address the causes and not merely the symptoms of casualisation. A successful response to the casualisation of work is therefore premised as much on the strategic resources of the labour movement as it is on an adequate conception of the labour market processes that generate the supply of and demand for 'flexible' labour.

Labour Market 'Flexibility' in Namibia

Unravelling the connections between changes in the employment relationship and the wider socio-economic context must start with the structures of the labour market. A prominent characteristic of most developing countries is the division between a relatively small, advanced sector and a large underdeveloped and impoverished sector. This social polarisation is reflected in the dichotomous structure of the Namibian labour market.[1] First, there is a high-wage urban sector (public and private) in which labour is organised by trade unions. Existing comparisons of Namibia's labour costs with its neighbours show that the wages of semi-skilled employees are more than four times as high as those in Zimbabwe (Hansohm *et al* 1998:5). Relatively high wages combined with low levels of labour productivity act as a major brake on competitiveness. Second, the rural and subsistence sector includes unskilled labourers, domestic workers, communal farmers, and the lowest paid agricultural labourers, whose incomes are 7 percent of those of semi-skilled workers and less than one percent of those of senior managers in the private sector (Hansohm *et al* 1998:5). Several structural and other factors reinforce this duality in the labour market. Some two-thirds of the population live in (rural) areas characterised by a chronic lack of adequate infrastructure and basic services. Namibia has a relatively young population with more than 40 percent below 15 years of age and more than 50 percent below 20 years (Ministry of Labour 1998:44). The levels of educational attainment in Namibia are also extremely low, with no more than two percent of the population having attained higher education.

Increased market competition, greater employment instability, and changes in the organisation of work have added momentum to fragmentary tendencies within the labour market. New bases of division flourish and old divisions are augmented and transformed. On the one hand, high levels of unemployment[2] and under-employment[3] mean that many workers have lost the prospect of ever finding secure employment in the formal sector. With a combined rate of unemployment and underemployment of almost sixty percent, a sizeable majority of the Namibian labour force was available and looking for more work.[4] The increased uncertainty and volatility associated with globalisation has further reduced the incentives to invest and innovate, and reinforced the reliance on low pay and casualised employment as the only means of survival. Vulnerability to casualised employment is grounded in absolute poverty, a lack of work experience and skills, and little or no history of collective organisation. On the other hand, unionised workers have often gained substantially from the restructuring of employment in the formal sector. Many workers have had their skills upgraded, are more secure in their jobs, and have earned rising real wages. Prevailing economic policies also disproportionately favour permanent, full-time employees in the more skilled public, mining and manufacturing sectors.

High levels of unemployment, combined with the virtual absence of both a viable subsistence sector and comprehensive welfare provision, have forced many workers to take whatever jobs are on offer and not to report abusive labour practices and non-compliance with minimum standards. Unemployment has encouraged the growth of casualised employment in two ways: (a) it has forced governments to devise new strategies for job creation[5]; and (b) it has predisposed some workers to accept alternative employment forms, no matter how unstable or precarious they may be. A persistently high level of unemployment not only provides employers with the power to vary terms and conditions of employment since workers are in a diminished bargaining position, it also forces many workers to accept forms of employment outside the normal or standard employment relationship. The high population growth rate, combined with limited growth in the formal sector labour force, means that conditions in the labour market are bound to deteriorate for the more vulnerable sectors of society. To make matters worse, the HIV/AIDS pandemic threatens to drastically reduce the institutional stability and allocational efficiency of the Namibian labour market in the short- to medium-term.[6]

Collapsing all poorly-regulated forms of employment into the category of 'flexible' labour obscures as much as it reveals (Pollert 1988). Studies of the interaction between the labour market and the restructuring of employment at the level of the firm reveal that 'atypical' forms of work cannot simply be equated with employment 'flexibility' – i.e. the capacity to respond rapidly to volatility and uncertainty in markets (Harrison and Kelley 1993; Peck 1996). Managers face the general problem of converting the purchase of labour power as a commodity into actual work performance. The spread of casualised job forms has greatly increased employers' freedom over the financial costs of employment and, in so far as it supplants union regulation, over the disposition of labour in the workplace. By shielding the permanent workforce from the adverse effects of fluctuations in demand and workload, the disposability of casual employees enables management to circumvent the re-organisation of internal staffing practices. The use of a casualised workforce also allows employers to (amongst others) cover unsocial hours; reduce their commitment to permanent staff; decrease the need for managing labour; and concentrate areas of competitive advantage. The social costs of these benefits to employers can be seen in the extent to which instability, insecurity and vulnerability have become permanent features of employment for the working poor at the bottom end of the labour market.

When we distinguish between *standard* and *non-standard* employment, the primary concern is not the length of service or position in the occupational hierarchy, but rather the broader issue of lack of entitlement.[7] The thresholds set by labour legislation distribute rights among employees in a manner that benefit the standard employment relationship and discriminate against non-standard job forms. Many non-standard workers are excluded from a core of employment rights (e.g. protection against unfair dismissals, maternity leave, unemployment insurance and sick pay) because they do not meet the stipulated qualification requirements such as length of continuous employment. The standard versus non-standard employment classification is thus based on a regulatory and entitlement norm (see Mückenberger 1989). As such, 'non-standard' is a less ideologically loaded and a more precise term than, for example, 'flexible' or 'peripheral' labour.

Since non-standard employment is not necessarily marginal in status, it is not the form of work that should be resisted but the conditions often associated with it. Even where labour legislation offers some protection to non-standard workers, they still face fewer promotion and training prospects, less convenient working hours, less functional adaptability and job security, and more repetitive tasks. The social and/or legal regulation of non-standard employment does not signal protection, it merely ratifies the absence or limits of protection. It establishes what Campbell (1996:582) aptly describes as a 'regulated precariousness'. Non-standard employment is often devoid of many of the usual accompaniments of a standard employment relationship, such as a written contract of employment and an itemised pay statement. Crucially, many non-standard employees cannot freely dispose of their labour power:

> Some of my people work for long periods – say, nine months – with the same client ... The longer the guy works with me and becomes used to the job, the more selective he becomes – 'I don't want to work here, I want to work there' – which he is actually not allowed to do. He must go where we send him ... They get comfortable with the work and prefer jobs where they don't have to work very hard. We battle to get workers for some clients because they know what work is waiting there for them. Unfortunately, this is usually some of our best clients: the big production people (labour broker).

Insights into the composition and distribution of non-standard labour accentuate the need for a greater appreciation of the open-ended and complex nature of changes in the workplace. In particular, a more adequate understanding of the employment policies of firms demands the consideration of a wider range of strategic options than has typically been the case. The study of non-standard work also sheds light on the dynamics of the employment relationship itself. For example, it has been shown that the regulation of employment conditions within the firm has a major bearing on the extent of and motivations behind the casualisation of labour (see Abrahams and Taylor 1996). The sectoral distribution of non-standard labour indicates that internal equity considerations constrain the relative wages paid to employees within a single internal labour market. High-wage firms cannot easily pay low wages to their own employees and low-wage firms cannot easily pay high wages to workers in selected occupational groups. Hence the former are more likely to casualise low-skill work while the latter are more likely to outsource high-skill services.

A progressive critique of casualisation cannot remain content with a description of its various forms and their effects. Attention must be drawn to the structural functions and contradictions of such emergent patterns of labour regulation. To this end, we need to identify the underlying social and economic relations that must exist in order to account for the observable patterns in the use of non-standard labour.[8] The historically- and spatially-specific origins of the various forms of non-standard employment suggest that they are generated within a specific ensemble of institutional structures. It is only on the basis of a delineation of these structures that we can explain why particular types of non-standard labour flourish in some places or industries rather than others. A serious analysis of the social and political conditions under which labour market structures evolve must complement an examination of the trends towards 'flexibility' and casualisation. In particular, we need to understand the extent to which the rise of 'flexible' employment policies are the product of wider structural constraints and opportunities. Understanding the conditioning effects of structural relations over managerial behaviour, however, has not been greatly assisted by the current penchant for models of 'strategic choice'.

The available evidence provides little support for the contention that employers are systematically pursuing a 'flexible' or 'core-periphery' model of employment practices (see Pollert 1988; Marginson 1991; Robinson 1999). The bulk of employers lack a coherent and long-term employment strategy, hiring workers on an *ad hoc* basis and in response to particular problems and circumstances as they arise (Hakim 1990:184). In Namibia, as elsewhere, workforce restructuring is generally understood and justified by employers in terms of conventional staff-planning principles and not in grand terms of new 'flexible' strategies. That is, actual changes in employment practices have been less dramatic or proceeded more hesitantly than the ideology of 'flexibility' suggests.[9] A rise in the use of non-standard forms of employment is therefore seldom the product of any qualitative change in employment policy. Rather it appears more the result of an intensification of existing practices, a reaction to unfavourable economic conditions, and an expansion of those industries that have always utilised a non-standard workforce.

> We haven't taken any jobs out of the hands of permanent workers. The work that is there has always been there. What we have done is to take over the client's own temporary workers or casuals. Everybody uses casual workers and, as I have said, the guy does not get paid his overtime or his Sunday work. The network, I think, is perhaps getting a bit small and the companies know they are going to get into trouble. That is why they switch over to us (labour broker).

In contrast to countries where non-standard employment is a small-scale phenomenon confined to cases of short-term employment to meet exceptional or irregular work demands in industries such as retail and construction, non-standard job forms are found in most industrial sectors in Namibia. The term *casual labour* has gained widespread currency.[10] It carries connotations of an 'unusual' employment relationship with inferior or sub-standard terms and conditions of work. As such, the category of 'casual' labour combines work that is short-term and insecure with work that is more long-term and regular (Campbell 1996:576). While it may conflate the variety in terms of job security or degrees of precariousness, the value of the concept of 'casual' work lies in the fact that it highlights the existence of employees with long-term service for whom there appears no compelling grounds for denying the benefits and entitlements of permanent status.

The picture that emerges from the YCW survey (Table 1) is one of a workforce that has some continuity of employment and standard working hours, but is deprived of most of the other concomitants of full-time employment. The majority of non-standard workers are employed predominantly by the same employer, work on average nine hours per day and five days per week, and have been in continuous employment for more than six months.[11] However, most non-standard workers are denied overtime pay, social security benefits, regular pay increases, vacational and sick leave, and compensation for occupational injuries and diseases. The overriding motives for the employment of non-standard workers therefore seem to be a reduction in employment costs and the evasion of statutory obligations. The overwhelming majority of non-standard workers surveyed were also not members of a trade union, depriving them of any collective agency to mediate in their employment relationship. The prevailing legal and institutional framework has clearly failed to prevent employers from using non-standard workers as a source of low-cost labour and employing them on markedly inferior terms. Not only is there a need for existing employment rights to be restructured, but a new approach to their enforcement and application also needs to be found.

The main findings of my interviews with personnel and industrial relations managers in the private sector can be summarised as follows. First, the majority of the companies surveyed use or have used casual workers over the last ten years. The reasons cited for these employment practices ranged from irregular or excessive work loads to absenteeism and pressures to reduce the permanent staff complement. Second, the number of casual workers employed and the duration of their employment vary greatly: as few as one to as many as several hundred workers were employed on non-standard contracts ranging in duration from a few days to as long as several years. Third, most firms experienced an increase in the use of casual labour since 1990, although some noted a decrease. Of particular significance is the rapid expansion of non-standard employment in the manufacturing and retail sectors. Fourth, casual workers were almost invariably concentrated in the lowest-paid and most menial jobs. In Namibia the central direction of change is towards 'numerical flexibility' (e.g. reducing the costs of and obstacles to hiring and firing workers) and not 'functional flexibility' (e.g. pursuing multi-skilling through a reduction in job demarcations). Fifth, casual workers were not regarded as a part of the company's workforce and their terms and conditions of employment were not open to negotiation. Non-standard work is thus largely a no-frills-attached, take-it-or-leave-it type of employment:

> The way the employers are treating their casual workers is bad ... Sometimes we are harassed and threatened because our wage is the only thing we are living on. The bosses are taking advantage of that by saying: 'if you don't want to do it, then go'. As a casual worker, you don't even have the courage to talk if you see that something is wrong. If you talk and they take away your only bread, how will your family live? ... As a casual worker, if you don't even have the right to say something, how will you claim your rights? If you don't have a union, how will you fight? If you say something, you are told: 'you can go if you want to' (casual worker, manufacturing).

Table 1. Key Indicators of Non-Standard Employment in Namibia

	YES	NO	UNSURE/ NO RESPONSE
Member of a union	17	111	45
Work for nine hours and less per day	131	39	3
Paid overtime	59	65	49
Work more than three days per week	118	48	7
Engaged in shift work	48	111	14
More than six months continuous employment	115	50	8
Work for more than one employer	36	128	9
Registered with social security	39	119	15
Receive regular pay increases	41	123	9
Leave entitlement	56	107	10
Signed contract of employment	73	92	8
Paid treatment if injured on the job	45	115	13

(Source: compiled from *YCW Casual Labour Survey* 1999).

The lack of comprehensive data on employment in Namibia means that it is exceedingly difficult to determine the precise size of the ineffectively or poorly regulated and unprotected component of the non-standard workforce. The *Labour Relations Survey* found that, among the workplaces studied, 86 percent of workers in the private sector and 94 percent of those in the public sector had permanent employment status (Klerck *et al* 1997). According to the Ministry of Labour, 78 percent of working Namibians were employed full-time, or considered themselves to be employed full-time, in their main job (1998:41). The subsequent establishment and growth of temporary employment agencies suggest that these figures no longer reflect the true extent of non-standard employment. In the light of figures that are available, the use of non-standard forms of employment is clearly differentiated according to sector, occupation, gender and size of workplace. The highest number of casual and temporary workers were employed in the construction industry, followed by the fishing, retail and manufacturing sectors (LaRRI 1999). We should not, however, allow the quantitative dimension of non-standard work to conceal its qualitative impact on particular occupations and groups of workers. The increasing fragmentation of labour markets associated with the proliferation of non-standard employment forms has profound implications for social inequalities and decisively shapes political ideologies and managerial discourses. The casualisation of employment also has a significant impact on the experiences and identities of non-standard workers:

> It is like slavery over there. They [employers] treat us like children, like dogs I could say ... The casuals can lose their jobs for anything ... They say that if you go someone else will come in, and it is true. People only do this work because there is so much unemployment ... We are also not allowed to join the unions because we are casuals, dogs or whatever ... Sometimes when we don't have time to go on lunch, then you must eat while you are standing and working. You cannot sit down and eat ... They tell you: 'you are a casual and you must be satisfied with whatever money you get'. You don't negotiate with them ... If you go to the manger to complain about your pay, they just tell you to take your things and go. That's all. It is better just to be quiet and to be satisfied with what you get (casual worker, retail).

Working class fragmentation is, of course, not a new phenomenon. Hyman (1992) outlined an inverted U-curve of unionisation which reflects variations in employment status and labour market position. Employees with professional qualifications or high levels of technical skill may perceive little need for trade union support; while the growing number of workers in precarious forms of employment lack the resources and cohesion for collective organisation. Unions have historically been strongest among intermediate categories of employment such as semi-skilled machine operators. The labour movement is thus flanked by two significant groups of non-unionised employees: the rising middle layers of skilled, white-collar and semi-professional workers and the increasing number of people in non-standard employment. The latter can potentially form a bridge between the marginalised and unemployed members of the working class and the relatively more privileged workers in permanent, full-time employment. The active incorporation of non-standard workers into the unions is thus of great political significance.

Trade Unions and the 'Flexible' Workforce

The Namibian labour movement is fragmented into about thirty different unions, with the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) as the country's largest and most influential trade union federation. The NUNW-affiliates cover most of Namibia's major industries and account for almost 80 percent of all recognition agreements. The service sector and white-collar workers, however, remain poorly organised. The rate of unionisation is about 26 percent among the employed labour force, but some 8 percent of the unemployed are also members of one or another type of union. There are significant variations in this regard: trade union density is roughly twice as high in urban areas compared to rural areas and the rate of unionisation of men is about one-and-a-half times that of women. The highest rate of unionisation (40 percent) is that of employed males in urban areas, while the lowest (6 percent) is that of unemployed females in rural areas (Ministry of Labour 1998:30-1).

The prevailing organisational and ideological framework of the labour movement inhibits its capacity to mount an effective campaign against the spread of unstable and poorly-regulated employment. Virtually all NUNW-affiliates negotiate terms and conditions of employment on a decentralised basis, even in industries where they dominate in all companies. The highly decentralised nature of collective bargaining results in the unions spending the bulk of their time and meagre resources on a multitude of separate negotiations with predominantly small companies. The predominance of workplace industrial relations (and the corresponding lack of industry-wide regulation) also means that the broader processes of political exchange are heavily weighted against the unions. Decentralised bargaining tends to confine employees' perspectives and actions within the enterprise. Such confinement reinforces the dominance of 'bread-and-butter' issues on the collective bargaining agenda and encourages employers to redefine the firm as the point of reference for workers' collective interests and loyalties. As a result of weak central coordination and direction, workplace unions are often forced to adopt highly pragmatic positions in relation to employer demands for greater 'flexibility'.

The neo-liberal, 'free-market' policies promoted by government and business provide a hostile environment for improving the legal and social protection of non-standard workers. The Namibian government's industrial and monetary policies seem more concerned with managing the economic crisis by creating an investor-friendly climate than with a commitment to extensive regulation and structural change. 'The whole reform process is driven by the question: how do we deal with conflicts in a way that they do not shatter investor confidence?' (director, LaRRI). When challenged, employer decisions and managerial prerogatives are routinely upheld, and where employees do succeed the available remedies are generally inadequate. An inevitable consequence of this emphasis on attracting foreign investment is a redistribution of the costs of economic uncertainty and instability to the detriment of weaker sectors in the labour market. The resulting reproduction of a second-class workforce not only undermines the foundations of collective industrial relations and attenuates the legitimacy of labour law, it also imposes a number of constraints on the unions' ability to defend the interests of non-standard workers:

- the difficulties associated with the proper inspection of non-standard employment;
- the individualised forms of conflict associated with non-standard labour are not readily amenable to established dispute-resolution procedures;
- traditional forms of employee representation are often inadequate to meet the distinctive needs of non-standard workers;
- the prevailing mechanisms for employee participation are usually inapplicable or unsuited to non-standard employment;
- the social security systems designed to cover the risks inherent in regular, full-time employment are ill-suited to precarious and intermittent forms of employment; and
- complications often arise in determining which employer is liable for the health and safety of non-standard workers in cases involving a triangular employment relationship.

Together with labour law, trade unions are the principal mechanisms for regulating the unfettered exercise of employer power in both market and authority relations. Union-negotiated employment conditions act as a system of protection against the untrammelled operation of the market, supplementing the more partial protections offered by labour legislation. The joint regulation of work rules operates like high wages to raise labour costs, giving unionised employers a stronger incentive to outsource than otherwise similar non-union employers. For managers, the goal is to reduce or eliminate some or all of the guarantees and protections governing specific aspects of the employment relationship. By counteracting the homogenising effects of labour law and collective bargaining, the mobilisation of cheap and disposable labour through non-standard employment allows employers much greater individualism in the employment relationship. The changing social composition of the workforce poses serious challenges to the efficacy of the modes of organisation that have long served the labour movement:

> I think outsourcing makes life for the unions much more difficult. In the traditional way that unions are organised, how do you organise a very flexible and liquid worker? I think unions must start adapting to this more flexible system ... The unions have traditionally

> organised in very rigid and well-defined fields. Now all of a sudden you have a worker who is hired once in the public service, once he is in the fishing industry, the next day he is in the metal industry. How do you organise the guy? It is very difficult (permanent secretary, Ministry of Labour).

The Namibian trade union movement concentrated most of its energy and resources on the organisation of (predominantly male) black unskilled and semi-skilled workers in permanent, full-time employment. One unintended consequence of this organising strategy – despite its inherent logic and priority – was to cement the divisions between black and white, skilled and less skilled, and standard and non-standard workers. In sharp contrast to the unions' successes in organising semi-skilled employees in the manufacturing and mining sectors, union organisation in sectors (such as retail and construction) with a long-standing prevalence of non-standard labour has historically been largely inconsequential. Moreover, as the view of non-standard employees as 'marginal' or 'peripheral' to the core activities of the enterprise takes hold, the social distance between these workers and full-time, organised employees is strengthened. Part of the problem facing the labour movement in its attempts to incorporate non-standard workers resides in the fact that the unions themselves often pursue a strategy of exclusion as a means of protecting the interests of permanent workers.[12] An important reason for this strategic orientation by the Namibian trade unions stems from the dilemma posed by the high expectations of their *existing* membership and their limited organisational and financial capacity. The regular use of casual workers as strike-breakers has also significantly reinforced trade union opposition to non-standard employment:

> I think it is right that companies should hire casuals during a strike. If you are my client and you phone me to say that your workers are striking, I will send workers because the country's economy suffers if you cannot produce. That is part of why we have many clients – if he has problems with his workers then I am there to send people to him ... My people won't have problems with that, it is work for them (labour broker).

Evidence of a deep-seated reluctance to organise non-standard workers is not hard to find. Unions on occasion also appear to share employers' conceptions of such workers as disposable in an attempt to protect the jobs and conditions of their members. In other words, the unions have struggled to strike a balance between representing non-standard workers and maintaining their historical opposition to these forms of employment. Despite the variation in the approaches adopted by individual unions to the challenges posed by recruiting non-standard labour, the main approach remains one of avoiding the challenge. Most unions have devoted very little time and resources to grappling with the difficulties of organising non-standard employees. This has been reinforced by the belief (a) that a union's core commitment and main source of income and strength resides with full-time permanent employees; (b) that non-standard employment is a threat to the job security and conditions of full-time permanent employees; and (c) that there is a fundamental divergence of interests between full-time permanent and non-standard employees.

> The introduction of these labour hire companies has severely increased job insecurity as businesses do away with permanent jobs and hire casual labour to do the work. This has hampered union membership ... We have launched a campaign against these flexible labour policies. We call these labour hire companies a 'slave trade' here because they are in fact selling people to do work for other people. ... The unions have already decided that such labour policies will not be allowed anywhere in Namibia. In the companies that are organised by NUNW unions, we will definitely fight any such initiatives (general-secretary, NUNW).

Since the unions face different problems with respect to non-standard employment, there is invariably considerable diversity in the practices of individual unions. While some trade unions have reacted to the challenges of non-standard labour, unions in industries that are dominated by full-time, permanent employment have been slow to respond. The 'traditional' trade union policy towards non-standard employment is centred on the defence of full-time permanent employment and a hostility towards all non-standard forms of employment (Campbell 1996). The use of non-standard labour is viewed as a symptom of employer greed, a threat to the numbers and conditions of permanent workers, and as a veiled attempt at undermining the unions. Traditional trade union policy proved to be undiscriminating in its approach to the various forms of non-standard employment and tended to regard them as a homogenous category. All non-standard employment is rejected irrespective of its employment conditions, whether it is voluntary or not, and whether it is structured in terms of permanent or casual status.

The unions have often sought to negotiate agreements that prevent or restrict the ability of employers to casualise work. The substantive provisions of collective agreements constitute a floor of minimum labour standards and impose a standardisation that serves trade union interests in minimising competition between individual employees. These provisions are, however, largely couched in terms of permanent, full-time employment. Collective bargaining has historically been geared towards establishing minimum labour standards to support and protect workers in standard employment. Collective agreements often sanction differential treatment for full-time and part-time or temporary workers, usually to the detriment of the latter. Where they provide for non-standard employment, collective agreements typically also seek to limit its use (see Campbell 1996). This can be achieved by specifying proportional limits or quotas (calculating non-standard employees as a proportion of the workforce or non-standard hours as a proportion of total workforce hours) or by establishing restrictions on how, when, under what circumstances, and for how long non-standard employees may be used. Some agreements also specify a 'casual loading' on the hourly rate of pay, intended as compensation for the lack of standard entitlements and as an additional barrier against the reliance by employers on non-standard workers at the expense of permanent workers.

Traditional trade union policy is valuable in so far as it sets out to defend some notion of 'permanency' in the employment relationship. A defence of employment relations that are expected to be continuous, signals that employees have certain rights in the workplace. But to defend standard employment at the expense of *all* forms of non-standard employment is problematic for at least two reasons (Campbell 1996:591). First, the traditional policy of seeking to limit or exclude non-standard employment has clearly failed. The best index of this failure is the rapid expansion of non-standard work in almost all sectors of the economy. Second, undiscriminating hostility and opposition to non-standard employment reduces it simply to an expression of employer preferences and ignores changing employee interests. For example, traditional union policy cannot account for employees who voluntarily enter into part-time employment. This policy therefore prevents the unions from developing strategies to improve the conditions of part-time workers and to integrate part-time and full-time work.

A 'blame-the-victim' attitude is slowing giving way to a perception that the interests of full-time, regular members may be served by measures designed to improve the position of non-standard workers. There is widespread recognition among trade unionists that the numerical strength of the unions is bound to decline as casualisation targets the middle and lower ranks of the occupational hierarchy, the bulk of whom has traditionally constituted the union membership. Furthermore, labour market 'flexibility' policies do not so much 'raise the level of employability across the labour market as a whole as increase the rate of exploitation in its lower reaches' (Peck and Theodore 2000:132). Increasing competition in low-wage labour markets is thus likely to create a downward pull on both wages and regulatory norms. Since the emergence of a growing sub-stratum of employees with poor employment conditions and high levels of precariousness constitutes a direct threat to the conditions of the core membership, it is now commonly argued that the unions can only ignore them at their own peril.

> The membership has been declining quite drastically. The introduction of these labour hire companies has severely increased job insecurity as businesses do away with permanent jobs and hire casual labour to do the work. This has hampered union membership (general-secretary, NUNW).

At the NUNW's Second National Congress in 1998 a resolution was adopted calling for greater regulation of non-standard labour. It was noted that 'many' firms employ non-standard workers as 'a means of cheap labour', often in blatant violation of the country's labour legislation. 'Some employees', the resolution continues, 'have been employed as casual labourers for more than five years, working five days a week, receiving monthly salaries, and [are] still being regarded as casual workers' (NUNW 1998:22). In an attempt to alleviate the plight of non-standard workers, Congress stipulated that a person who works continuously over a cycle of twelve months or more should not be regarded as a casual worker. The Congress also resolved that a policy on the matter must be formulated and called for tripartite consultations on 'this ugly scenario' (NUNW 1998:23). This resolution has not, however, been translated into practice in any sustained or coherent fashion.

Through a sheer force of numbers, some NUNW affiliates – e.g. Namibia Food and Allied Workers' Union (NAFAU) and the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers' Union (MANWU) – were compelled to recruit non-standard workers. NAFAU's paid-up membership varies by as much as 5 000 when seasonal workers in the fishing industry are without work (LaRRI 1999:6). This translates into a unionisation rate that varies between 25 percent and 45 percent depending on whether or not the measure is taken during the fishing season. The social composition of this seasonal workforce is revealing:

> The majority of casual workers are women. Maybe eighty percent are women and twenty percent are men. They are also only looking for young people ... because they can work much faster (national organiser, NAFAU).

The industries organised by MANWU – metal, construction, etc. – consist of many small firms with a large share of non-standard employees. Although it organises in sectors that have historically constituted the backbone of labour movements elsewhere, MANWU's unionisation rate stands at only 13.1 percent (LaRRI 1999:7). In the first of its kind in Namibia, MANWU entered into centralised bargaining with the Construction Industries Federation in 1996. An agreement has recently been struck in this forum which seeks to regulate the employment conditions of casual workers. Even where non-standard employees have been organised, however, their interests are not necessarily well represented nor are their needs and conditions adequately understood. All too often, the actions of organised employees serve to perpetuate the subordinate status of non-standard workers:

> The casuals have to do what the permanent worker tells them to do. The permanent workers also see themselves as our bosses. There is no cooperation between us ... Because they are permanent and we are casual, they are also kind of using us ... Maybe they act like that because they are permanent workers. If they do something wrong, the union will come and fight for them. If a casual worker and a permanent worker have an argument, then the shop steward will come and help the permanent worker. They would not help the casual worker ... The problem is that we casuals have too many bosses (casual worker, retail).

The 'new', emerging approach adopts a less hostile and more discriminating approach towards non-standard employment (see Campbell 1996). In particular, it distinguishes between forms of employment that are beneficial to those involved and forms that are detrimental. This approach seeks to move from opposing non-standard employment to upgrading it by adopting policies such as full pro-rata pay and benefits. To this end, collective agreements are geared towards establishing a clear ratio of non-standard and permanent jobs with a view to increasing casual loading as well as reconstructing conventional restrictions on and incentives for casualised employment. Likewise, union policies on membership are often amended to reflect a commitment to recruiting new categories of employees more actively and to represent their interests more effectively. This commitment is frequently underwritten by a 'decasualisation' campaign which aims to restrict non-standard employment to those cases where employment is necessarily short-term, seasonal or irregular, and to convert the remainder (majority) to a permanent status. The unions in Namibia have also sought to temper the dictates of increased economic competitiveness with the demands for greater social equality:

> The outsourcing of non-core departments is a major challenge facing us ... The companies are increasingly saying that to be competitive in the global market, they have to get rid of the non-core business and they want more labour flexibility ... You cannot talk of labour market flexibility without addressing the imbalances in wages which were created by past discriminatory laws (assistant general-secretary, MUN).

There are three broad limitations in the new trade union approach to the regulation of non-standard employment and its associated principles of decasualisation (Campbell 1996:594-5). First, the new approach to regulation is too narrowly focused on redesigning the text of collective agreements. The negotiation of collective agreements is *the* channel into which most trade union activity has been directed. Non-standard labour flourishes not only in the spaces marked out by the text of agreements, but also emerges in the interstices left by limits in enforcement and reach of labour regulation. The narrow channel of single-employer bargaining appears increasingly inadequate as a mechanism for combatting the expansion of casualised employment. Second, the new approach to regulation is too narrowly focused on the distinction between casual and permanent status. While the conversion from casual to permanent status is an important part of any decasualisation policy, the decisive issue for the unions must be terms and conditions of employment. A focus on employment *status* rather than employment *conditions* is likely to miss or mask significant features of non-standard work. Third, the new approach has proved largely unsuccessful in practice. The main direction of change has been towards a degradation in the conditions of non-standard employment. Labour market deregulation, neo-liberal economic policies, the promotion of small businesses, and employer restructuring at the workplace have all significantly reduced the space for the implementation of trade union policies on casualisation. The latter is increasingly confined to islands of union strength.

Too little debate has taken place within the ranks of organised labour on the design and implementation of strategies specifically geared towards the recruitment and retention of non-standard employees. Recruiting workers who have no tradition of collective organisation and are subjected to personalised and despotic forms of managerial control is fraught with difficulties. This is particularly evident where employees are engaged through a cascading series of subcontracting relationships (e.g. construction) or where the contractor has minimal infrastructure (e.g. security). Different tactics are being used reflecting differences in recruitment problems, potential membership, and areas of organisation. In Namibia's retail sector, for instance, a lack of job descriptions is seen as both the root cause of the vulnerability of casual workers and the most significant obstacle to the prevailing ('job control') model of union organisation in the workplace:

> For casual workers to have a say, to say 'this is my job, I'm only supposed to work here'; they must have contracts with job descriptions. That is the only way we are going to protect them. If they don't have that, they can be chased anywhere like the bosses want. They [managers] can say: 'you work here, you work there, it is all the same' (regional organiser, NAFAU).

Trade union recruitment strategies have made little impact, especially where non-standard workers are not seen to be in direct competition with full-time, permanent workers. Unionisation rates are markedly lower for non-standard workers in every size of workplace and industrial sector. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, trade union practice seems primarily orientated to 'defending the relative advantages of the stronger sections of the working class against possible encroachment by the weaker (whether unionized or not), rather than challenging the system on behalf of the class as a whole' (Hyman 1996:68). This is clearly evident in the extent to which the consequences of excessive wage demands, such as job losses, are accommodated by a buffer of non-standard workers.[13] Union policy cannot afford to be confined to the realm of the effectively regulated sectors of employment at the cost of policies to deal with problems outside this realm. To be fair, there are several formidable barriers that impede the recruitment and retention of non-standard employees. The factors that contribute to making non-standard employees difficult, expensive and unattractive to organise include:

- their varied, unsocial and limited hours of employment make non-standard workers hard to find and retain;
- the distinctive, often unfamiliar problems associated with non-standard employment;
- the extensive demands on the time of organisers make it almost inevitable that collective issues will gain precedence over individual complaints;
- the reluctance by some non-standard employees to become union members for fears of victimisation by employers;
- the divergence in the needs and interests between non-standard and permanent employees;
- an ambivalence towards trade unionism due to their perceived reluctance to cater for the needs of non-standard workers;
- union dues are often viewed as an excessive deduction from meagre wages; and

- high turnover complicates recruitment strategies.

It is no surprise, therefore, that accommodating the interests of non-standard employees has assumed a number of forms between and within different regions. These vary from attempts to regulate their employment conditions in an effort to prevent undercutting, and seeking to obtain pro-rata terms and conditions of employment through legislation and collective agreements, to making certain categories of non-standard employees (e.g. female part-time workers) a priority target for recruitment and organisation. Other areas of potential union action include issue-based campaigns such the demand for a living wage; reduced union membership fees to certain groups; and rule and policy changes to facilitate the recruitment of temporary staff. The Namibian trade unions have pursued many of these organising strategies – albeit with varying degrees of commitment and proficiency – primarily in an attempt to limit the adverse effects of casualisation on the conditions of organised workers. The success of these strategies, however, hinges on their ability to sell the idea of trade unionism to non-standard employees. Bargaining issues that are of interest to the under-represented groups which the unions wish to attract must be prioritised. For example, shop steward structures in the workplace need to elevate the profile of working time and job security within shopfloor politics. Demonstrating the ability of the unions to 'deliver' on these issues is crucial in a context where non-standard workers view the unions at best as irrelevant, and at worst as a threat:

> When you want to approach these casual workers ... and if you want to intervene, the bosses will retrench them. They will say: 'the guy was just helping us temporarily' ... Later on the workers look at you and think that you want to take their jobs from them. When you approach them to maybe organise them, they say: 'if the subcontractor comes here we will lose our jobs' (general-secretary, MANWU).

The efficacy of new recruitment strategies is also vitally dependent upon closer collaboration between the various unions and between the labour movement and organs of civil society. The 'representation gap' created by the influx of unorganised, non-standard labourers into the workplace has led to an active role by voluntary agencies (such as legal assistance centres and youth groups) in advising and representing non-standard workers. The unions need to act in concert with these agencies. Union resources must be utilised in a co-operative rather than competitive recruitment of workers who, in retention terms, are 'high risk'. In the mining industry, for example, the sheer variety of jobs that are outsourced (e.g. cleaning, catering, medical services and engineering) has created recruitment problems associated with the sectoral demarcation of the industrial unions:

> You want to organise these workers, but management just says that we are in the mining industry and under our constitution we can only operate in this industry ... One of the impacts of outsourcing is the creation of more unions per industry. You find a cleaning

> company now which used to fall under the mine but has been outsourced. The cleaning workers' unions will claim those workers and come and organise them. Through this you create tension among the unions and you create room for unions to multiply. You might find unions changing their scope of operations to cater for all this outsourcing. This will result in many unions duplicating their scope of operations (assistant general-secretary, MUN).

Since they are not generally well organised, non-standard workers do not know or enforce their rights as actively as standard employees. Workplace organisation among non-standard workers is likely to be weak with a considerable reliance on trade union organisers. Diverting resources from permanent to part-time and temporary employees poses a dilemma in terms of democratic practice within the trade unions: 'whatever commitment unions may have to the protection of vulnerable workers, they are also required to promote and protect the interests of the majority of their members' (Dickens 1988:151). If the interests of non-standard workers conflict, at least in part, with those of permanent, full-time employees, then the question arises as to how their separate interests can be effectively articulated within the unions. Heery and Abbott (2000:170) argue that two developments are necessary if unions are to respond adequately to the needs of non-standard workers: (a) representing diversity by developing structures of representation within the unions which are designed to reflect the specific interests of non-standard workers; and (b) centralising decision-making processes within the unions in order to redistribute resources from the core to peripheral groups of the labour movement. The gains in democratic representation achieved through the former may, however, be thwarted by the tendencies towards oligarchy generated by the latter.

The design and defence of more appropriate forms of labour regulation will pivot on the ability of the labour movement to resolve the weaknesses of existing efforts to implement policies of decasualisation; to actively promote greater social regulation of the labour market; and to effectively coalesce the exigencies of economic competitiveness and the imperatives of social equality. In other words, the struggle against the casualisation of labour must be an integral part of the broader challenge to consolidate and expand the power and influence of the labour movement. In particular, pressure needs to be brought to bear on the government to amend labour legislation in a manner that limits the opportunities for evading minimum standards and provides mechanisms to ensure greater compliance with regulations. According to Wilson and Ewer (1996:137-41), a more practical expression of trade union opposition to casualised employment might include: (a) giving a voice to workers' experiences of non-standard labour through a serious research programme; (b) highlighting the occupational health and safety problems faced by non-standard employees; (c) mobilising union members to oppose the fragmentation of work and to develop strategies to ensure that non-standard workers are able to acquire training and have career options; (d) defending jobs by way of policies aimed at redistributing work and combatting unemployment; and (e) promoting industrial democracy through campaigns against casualisation aimed at increasing the extent to which management's prerogative is genuinely open to joint regulation.

There is clearly a need to move beyond the neat dichotomy of 'traditional' versus 'new' in accounting for the variety of trade union responses to the casualisation of work. Common to much of the literature on casualisation is the claim that unions can adopt one of the following approaches towards non-standard workers: (a) ignore them; (b) exclude and oppose them; (c) limit their numbers and regulate them; and (d) recruit and integrate them. This customary classification of union responses fails to account for the interaction between different approaches and cannot explain why a trade union adopts a particular strategic orientation. The implication that unions can simply 'choose' a particular orientation or approach ignores the structural determination of viable options and downplays the contradictions that can arise between different union strategies. That is, the identification of multiple responses to non-standard labour should not conceal the fact that structural forces enable certain choices while ruling others out. Although they do not determine our performances, social structures impose limits on the acts we can preform. An adequate account of the tendency for responses to labour market changes (such as casualisation) to vary between unions must therefore be grounded in the existence of different 'types' of trade unions. The prevailing typologies of trade unionism, however, cannot adequately account for the variety of responses to 'flexible' employment within a particular trade union or sector, let alone a national labour movement.[14]

Employee Representation and Trade Union Identities

A pivotal process in any analysis is that of taxonomy: dividing things up and classifying them into things that are similar or different. Considerable theoretical and empirical work has been invested in the classification of the different forms of trade unionism associated with specific historical conjunctures (e.g. Scipes 1992; Munck and Waterman 1999). Unfortunately, these labels readily acquire a life of their own as the characteristics of a labour movement are simply read off the central features of the prevailing model.[15] Trade unions, like all other social phenomena, have just those causal powers that they do and not others by virtue of their respective inner structures. The concept of 'causal power' indicates what a given kind of thing can do, given the right conditions (see Bhaskar 1989). This allows us to recognise that some outcomes may be impossible within a given social structure. An effective response to the challenges posed by casualisation, for example, is simply beyond the capability of a narrow workplace trade unionism. In fact, direct action by trade unions to preserve jobs has generally not met with much success. The ability to undermine the conditions that facilitate the trend towards casualisation and to bolster those that subvert this trend presupposes a more inclusive trade unionism akin to a social movement. In other words, the various types of trade unions possess different capacities and limitations.

The concept of *political* unionism is often applied to the Namibian labour movement given the NUNW's origins within SWAPO, its role during the struggle for national liberation, and its continued affiliation to the ruling party. An inevitable consequence of political unionism is that the divisions between unions tend to reflect political affiliations, raising the question whether such affiliation should gain precedence over worker unity. This strategic orientation has important consequences for the unions' role in both the workplace and the wider society. As Bauer noted:

> Whereas unions in Britain and America, and elsewhere in Africa, preceded the formation of labor or other major political parties, this was not the case in Namibia; nor have trade unions in Namibia taken the step that party-created unions in Germany eventually took, emphasizing their political independence ... Given that trade unions in Namibia were largely organized from above and primarily with a political objective in mind, more attention to the shop floor would do much to improve the living and working conditions of a sizeable segment of the labor force – and by extension of many others. Ultimately a social movement unionism of the type emerging in other developing countries might prove the most efficacious in Namibia (1998:136-7).

Prior to independence, SWAPO and the NUNW subordinated working class demands to the struggle for national liberation. Since independence, the NUNW-unions have concentrated on 'bread-and-butter' issues through the consolidation and extension of shopfloor organisation. However, this increased shopfloor presence has not translated into any significant impact on the national policy-making arena. The Namibian labour movement has not yet developed a form of unionism that would allow it to mount a serious campaign for more radical social change. The *Labour Relations Survey* revealed that most organised workers expect their trade unions to represent their interests inside as well as outside the workplace (Klerck *et al* 1997). However, the prominence attached to trade unions by rank-and-file members in taking up broader socio-economic and political issues 'is not matched by the unions' capacities and track records to date' (Murray and Wood 1997:195). Namibian trade unions very rarely make meaningful contributions towards macro-economic and national development policy-making. The labour movement's limited influence on economic and social planning has drastically curtailed its strategic options in the struggle against the casualisation of work.

Trade union representation has historically been concentrated at the workplace, based on the development of a permanent workplace organisation. The defining characteristic of non-standard employment, however, is that employees become detached from particular places of work or particular employers. A shift in the locus of union representation beyond the workplace towards labour-market-wide organising involving inter-union, cross-sectoral attempts to increase union membership and set minimum employment standards is potentially the most effective response to the casualisation of work (see Heery and Abbott 2000). Trade unionists are increasingly acknowledging the inherent limitations of workplace trade unionism:

> After independence the question emerged: what role do we play now? There was a lot of activity around the land question where the unions really played the role of a social movement. But after that it became more and more quiet. Even the living wage campaign was almost dropped and it was left to individual unions to address through collective bargaining ... We are in danger of allowing unions to be very much concentrated on their sectors and dealing with their companies ... The weakness of regional structures is a big problem. You have action taking place around the factory and policy debates and so on at head-office level. The link between the two is not always happening (director, LaRRI).

Of concern here is the extent to which attempts to promote the security of existing union members is compatible with attempts to organise non-standard employees. Hyman's (1994, 1996, 1997) typology of trade union 'identities' outlines a number of different forms of union representation which derive from a particular conception of employee interests.[16] Unions are faced with a strategic choice between (a) focussing primarily on the workplace and conferring priority on the defence of their existing members (i.e. the marginalisation of non-standard labour); or (b) becoming more inclusive in the interests they represent and redirecting their activity beyond the workplace (i.e. the incorporation of non-standard labour). The primary contrast is between approaches to employee representation which are based on exclusive and inclusive definitions of employee interests. Central to Hyman's argument is the claim that workers possess a wide range of diverse and often competing interests. Interest representation therefore involves a difficult process of aggregation and the selection of priorities, leaving room for strategic choices and internal conflict. Hence unions can choose to be more or less inclusive in defining their constituency, more or less restrictive in the issues they pursue, and can adopt strategies of representation based on member mobilisation or passivity. This allows for a more nuanced account of union responses and facilitates an analysis of the underlying mechanisms that constrain and/or enable different identities.

Each of the identities outlined by Hyman will tend to preference a particular response to the casualisation of work (see Heery and Abbott 2000). By linking the various responses to specific trade union identities and by highlighting the limiting factors which serve to constrain choice, this approach represents a significant advance. It allows us to proceed beyond mere taxonomies of trade unionism and to explore their conditions of possibility, reproduction, and propensity for transformation. The five responses to insecurity that are likely to emerge from the separate identities are the following. First, a common reaction to employer-led flexibility initiatives has been to *exclude* these workers from employment and union membership. This reflects the social distance between non-standard and permanent workers as well as the formal union policies and informal workplace rules which deny union membership and representation to 'outsiders'. In Namibia, as elsewhere, the unions that have adopted this approach have generally failed in their attempts to prohibit the use of non-standard employment.

Second, drawing non-standard workers into trade unions through the provision of *individual services* such as advisory services and reduced union subscriptions. Collective representation at the workplace may be difficult to achieve for subcontracted, casual or self-employed workers because they are dispersed and often highly mobile. A further constraint on this strategy is that many employees remain committed to a more collective conception of trade union purpose. Research shows that relatively few union members are decisively attracted by such consumer, advisory and labour market services.

The third approach targets the employer and seeks to furnish existing members with guarantees of future employment through a *partnership* between management and workers. A commitment to promote the competitiveness of the enterprise is underpinned by employee involvement, training and skills development, and profit-sharing. The degree of employment security afforded through partnership agreements varies, but generally falls short of an open-ended commitment. An essential feature of such partnerships is the externalisation of risks and costs: the union and management protect existing employees by passing off the costs of absorbing business cycles to 'outsiders'. Long-term partnership arrangements are also undermined by systems of corporate financing and governance which place a premium on relatively short-term performance.

The fourth response to worker insecurity consists of attempts by unions to influence government policy and secure changes in employment law through a process of *social dialogue*. Political exchange of this kind is aimed at conserving the jobs of existing union members and at reducing the insecurity experienced by workers on non-standard contracts. The NUNW's approach to casualisation relies heavily on using its influence within the ruling party to secure legislative changes and policies for a more general regulation of the labour market. In the political arena, as the labour movement has learnt to its cost, working class demands are inevitably diluted by the dictates of social stability and economic growth within the confines of a 'free' market.

The fifth response identified by Heery and Abbott (2000) is the *mobilisation* of union members, other employees and wider public opinion against injustices at the workplace. 'Social movement' unionism has two connected aspects. On the one hand, there are attempts to re-create trade unions as social movements such that their purpose is defined in terms of the mobilisation of members. This aspect can be seen most clearly in attempts to extend trade unionism to the non-standard workforce through militant organising campaigns aimed at recruiting new members as well as mobilising them around grievances and developing effective workplace organisation. On the other hand, there are attempts to submerge trade unionism in a broader social movement such that the boundaries of the labour movement become blurred as it operates within a progressive alliance of organs in civil society. This aspect involves the development of labour-community alliances which seek to draw upon the resources of the community in the pursuit of union goals and to develop a broader vision of union purpose which embraces community and environmental objectives alongside improvement in terms and conditions of employment.

There are significant constraints on the pursuit of union policy through mobilisation: the risk of counter-mobilisation by employers and/or the state; internal opposition within unions as resources are shifted towards community-based structures and campaigns; and the fact that the interests of union members do not always coincide with those of consumers, civic bodies or environmental groups. The prospects of discord or quiescence loom large where organised employees perceive the costs of collective action to outweigh any real or potential benefits. Moreover, since they inevitably raise macroeconomic issues, we can also expect some correlation between the level of economic growth and the willingness or ability of employers and the state to concede to the demands of social movement unionism.

Hyman (1996) clearly acknowledged the schematic nature of his typology of trade union identities, based as it is on ideal types of the main representative choices available to unions. The implication that individual trade unions or even national labour movements will approximate to a particular identity is contradicted by the fact that unions tend to develop complex strategies of representation which draw upon several of these identities. The development of new services and campaigns on behalf of part-time and temporary employees, for instance, operates alongside a continued opposition to the use of non-standard labour. The union responses outlined above are thus reinforcing and often amount to parallel initiatives with regard to employees (organising and servicing), employers (partnership), government (dialogue) and civil society (mobilisation). The relative success of these initiatives, however, will tend to vary between trade unions given a differential capacity to mobilise the necessary organisational resources and affect the requisite reformulation of strategic orientations. In short, the 'identity' of a trade union or labour movement is contradictory, multi-faceted and dynamic.

The efficacy of social movement unionism depends in large measure on its ability to address the socio-economic needs of the entire working class and not simply the interests of its more skilled and better paid sections. In this regard, the trade union movement in Namibia is at a cross-road:

> In Namibia it could go either way. It could go further into a trade union movement that looks more and more at bread-and-butter issues only, that is largely on the defensive, defending members' interests and fighting retrenchments. Enterprise unions could be the one danger. But then there is likewise the opportunity to revive the social movement unionism because of the possible and almost natural links with communal farmers. Many

> workers have their families in the rural areas ... But it [reviving social movement unionism] would need a specific decision to do it, and it would need a lot of effort in terms of binding your structures together, getting the debate going at local level again, and getting mandates from workers which can be transformed by the national leadership into campaigns (director, LaRRI).

The necessary preconditions for an effective social movement unionism in Namibia are only weakly present in the current conjuncture. The high level of demobilisation among organs of civil society has been a striking feature of the post-independence era. As a result, employers and the state tend to dominate national policy debates. Perhaps the clearest indication of the NUNW's status as SWAPO's junior partner is the negligible impact made by the labour movement on the macro-economic policies pursued by the state. 'A government as strong as ours should not worry about losing a couple percent of voters because it is not seen as going all out to promote the interests of workers against the interests of the economy' (president, Namibian Employers' Federation). In particular, the Namibian government is not crucially dependent on union cooperation to regulate industrial conflict or moderate wage inflation. Both are in large measure offset by the rise in non-standard labour, high levels of unemployment, divisions within the labour movement, the predominance of decentralised bargaining, and the declining significance of tripartite structures such as the Labour Advisory Council.

Conclusion

A comprehensive reform agenda is urgently needed: blanket opposition to non-standard employment is not necessarily progressive or likely to be effective. Such an agenda should underwrite income and employment security; redistribute work in favour of the disadvantaged and marginalised; redistribute incomes to impoverished areas; and promote sustainable, high-quality jobs rather than condemning the under- and unemployed to working poverty and dead-end jobs. This calls for more fundamental changes than simply widening the coverage of labour legislation and collective bargaining.[17] Attempts to increase the efficacy of legal and collective regulation in the protection of individual employees and trade unions are bound to fail in the absence of a meaningful extension in the social regulation of employment. The labour market needs institutions designed to increase its coherence, transparency and efficiency, and to decrease segmentation through the provision of universal standards and stable employment practices. There is a pressing need to construct a collective consensus around what constitutes appropriate labour market institutions and standards.

While an increase in non-standard labour's share of total employment may lead to a rising propensity to casualise work, there are distinct limitations to the extent that employers and the state are willing to pursue the goals of labour market 'flexibility'. Nowhere have managers or politicians been intent on a full dismantling of the rights which labour had acquired under the Fordist mode of regulation. The demands of new technology and high quality standards require a skilled, dependable and cooperative labour force. Most managers are aware that the maintenance of internal adaptability depends on a satisfactory degree of employment security and would therefore hesitate to go too far down the road towards a 'flexible' firm. In the long-term, an increasing reliance on non-standard labour can become a serious obstacle to economic competitiveness as it inhibits the introduction of more productive technologies and innovative work practices. The use of non-standard labour thus incurs its own penalties in the form of some loss of control, potential conflicts between non-standard and permanent employees, and problems in maintaining quality and co-ordination. The capacity of management to effectively deploy a casualised workforce as a bulwark against the growing uncertainty and instability in product markets must be conceptualised in the context of these constraints.

An expansion in casualised employment feeds off rising unemployment, mobilises new sources of labour supply, increases profits and managerial control, lessens the impact of declining demand, and widens the compensation gap between high-skill and low-skill workers. Since non-standard workers are more vulnerable to exploitation and often experience harsh forms of discipline and work intensification, their growing presence in the workplace may stimulate new demands for representation through trade unions and create the conditions for a renewed wave of worker mobilisation (see Kelly 1998). Increasingly, the choices available to unions are couched in terms of resistance to business through militant mobilisation *or* accommodation and a search for mutual gain within a rhetoric of partnership (see Bacon and Storey 1996; Heery and Abbott 2000). For workers who do not perceive a serious conflict of interests with their employer, or alternatively are so fearful of losing their jobs that they dare not challenge management's authority, appeals to militancy are not likely to prove an effective recruitment tactic (Hyman 1996). In fact, unmitigated militancy is a recipe for defeat and exclusion, while unconditional collaboration invites rank-and-file alienation and rebellion. Any effective system of representation is therefore always a contradictory combination of conflict and accommodation.

The prevailing institutional and normative landscape – which includes the racial, ethnic and gender divisions inherited from the past and the predominance of bread-and-butter issues on the bargaining table – has significantly constrained the ability of Namibian trade unions to develop an effective strategic vision to inform their interaction with employers and the state. As a result, the union movement has been 'unable to institutionalise the gains it has made at the shopfloor level, and has found itself marginalised from the national policy formulation arena' (Murray and Wood 1997:159). In other words, the structural and ideological framework of the labour movement has decisively qualified the form of trade unionism that is possible or feasible in Namibia. The present organisational matrix and strategic focus of the Namibian labour movement are not readily amenable to a systematic and effective response to the plight of non-standard employees. In particular, the NUNW and its affiliates need to counter the threats posed by a growing division between membership and leadership, a decline in worker control over decision-making processes, the marginalisation of local and regional structures, increasing bureaucracy and a corresponding decline in accountability, and a deteriorating organisational capacity.

Notes

* The research on which this paper is based took place during October-November 1998 and April-May 1999. Extended, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve personnel managers in the private sector, five general secretaries and eight organisers in the major private sector unions, four labour brokers, six casual workers, two labour consultants, the presidents of the national and the construction employers' associations, the director of the largest union federation's research division, and the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Labour. In addition, the findings of a 1999 survey of 173 casual workers conducted by the Young Christian Workers was made available to the author. Thanks go to all the respondents, Herbert Jauch, Ranga Haikali, Cuana Angula and Henning Melber. The financial assistance of Rhodes University is also hereby acknowledged.

1. Productivity and income distribution in Namibia are notoriously skewed. About half of the population is considered poor and, with a Gini-coefficient of 0.7, inequality is amongst the highest in the world. The top one percent of households commands the same share (13 percent) of the private consumption expenditure as the bottom 48 percent. A World Bank Country Study found the following per capita GDP per sector in 1988: white (US$12 839), black (US$585), subsistence (US$55) and total (US$921) (cited in Stone and Gaomab 1994:10). The current wage structure also reflects substantial variations both within and across industries and occupations. For example, farm workers receive on average N$366 per month, while managers in the mining industry receive an average monthly salary of more than N$10 000 (Ministry of Labour 1995:5).
2. Namibia has an official unemployment rate of 34.8 percent with 29 percent of all economic active males unemployed and 41 percent of all economic active females without work (Ministry of Labour 1998:23). Over 60 percent of the unemployed were young people aged between 15 and 24 years. The majority (57 percent) of those who are unemployed have had no previous job experience and are seeking a job for the first time (Ministry of Labour 1998:24). Unemployment in Namibia tends to be of a long-term nature: some 55 percent of the unemployed have been without work for more than a year and 40 percent for more than two years (Ministry of Labour 1998:35).
3. About half the employed population in Namibia is underemployed in the sense that they work less than 35 hours a week, do so on an involuntary basis and are seeking

additional work (Ministry of Labour 1997:3). Underemployment is highest among females and in the rural areas. The majority of those working less than the normal duration of work (35 hours per week) are employed in the private sector and in 'elementary' occupations (Ministry of Labour 1998:42).

4. The roots of unemployment and poverty in Namibia are to be found in the structural legacy of neo-colonial rule. The most salient features of this socio-economic structure include: (a) an impoverished rural sector; (b) a small manufacturing sector dominated by the production of a few primary products; (c) a capital-intensive production structure that is incongruent with the need for a labour-absorbing growth strategy; (d) a lack of foreign direct investment; (e) a severe shortage of skilled labour; (f) a highly skewed distribution of income resulting in a small domestic market; and (g) a high degree of dependence on the South African economy. Prospects for the creation of additional jobs in the short- to medium-term future are bleak. In the light of efficiency gains of about 1.5 percent per year and a population growth rate of more than 3 percent, it is estimated that economic growth of at least 4 percent is required just to maintain the current level of employment (Schade 2000).

5. For example: the *National Employment Policy for Job Creation and Protection of Workers* was recently approved by Cabinet; an *Employment Services Bill* has been drafted to consolidate the various attempts at employment promotion; and a White Paper on *Labour-Based Works* was produced to stimulate job creation. During the next five years, the Ministry of Labour intends to implement an integrated approach aimed at reducing poverty through employment creation, that includes the *Jobs for Africa Programme*. The need for more effective policies for job creation, according to the Ministry of Labour, should be regarded as 'a national priority of the highest order' (1998:45).

6. The spread of HIV/AIDS could deter potential investors from investing in the region by: (a) increasing the costs of labour and exacerbating skill shortages; (b) reducing labour productivity, either on account of extensive sick-leave or because employees have to take care of family members infected with the virus; (c) inducing a rise in training costs as terminally-ill employees are replaced; and (d) increasing employers' contributions to medical-aid schemes as the number of claims mounts. Moreover, HIV/AIDS will reduce the demand for consumption goods because more money will be spent on health care and the number of consumers will decline. Finally, it will reduce Namibia's workforce by up to 35 percent, affecting mainly qualified staff (see Schade 2000).

7. Many of the categories in use tend to focus on one aspect of casualisation to the exclusion of others (see Felstead and Jewson 1999). *Contingent* work emphasises the indeterminate duration and unplanned nature of 'non-standard' jobs. *Precarious* employment highlights the fact that these jobs can be readily terminated. *Peripheral* work signifies the jobs that are not central to the core business of an enterprise. *Flexible* labour accentuates the need of employers to make rapid short-term adjustments to the supply of labour in response to changes in demand. This proliferation of concepts for job forms that deviate from the 'standard' employment relationship indicates a lack of both theoretical precision and concep-

tual clarity which has profound implications for data gathering and the interpretations of trends.

8. In contrast to both induction and deduction, *retroduction* proceeds through a process of rational inference from some aspect of reality to one or more generative mechanisms which must exist for the former to be possible. Since these mechanisms are only tendential and may not always be manifested, or in the same manner/events, it is necessary to specify the facilitating and countervailing conditions under which they produce their contingently necessary effects (see Bhaskar 1989).

9. An extensive survey of employment practices in New Zealand, for example, found that the picture that emerged from the findings was not one of innovative working practices that benefitted both employers and employees. Rather, the most common 'flexibilities' involved 'crude methods of reducing labour costs such as retrenchments and reducing hours of work'(Anderson *et al* 1994:502).

10. According to the proponents of 'flexibility', the development of semi-permanent and lucrative relationships which allow for a considerable degree of autonomy belie the connotations of insecurity and dependence associated with the term 'casual' labour. These benefits, however, only accrue to skilled consultants, freelance agents, etc. and derive almost entirely from a shortage of reliable skills (see Klerck 1994; Jones 1996). The overwhelming majority of casual workers in Namibia possess few skills and minimal work experience.

11. This is a blatant contravention of section one of the Labour Act which defines a 'casual' employee as: 'day worker who is employed by the same employer on not more than two days in any week'

12. While collective bargaining has certainly improved the lot of organised workers in Namibia, it seems that these gains were made largely at the expense of other (especially non-standard and unorganised) workers rather than profits.

13. Workplace industrial relations in the post-independence era have been punctuated by a number of protracted and militant disputes characterised by excessive demands and a reluctance to compromise. Several respondents argued that the intractable, short-sighted and reckless nature of industrial action by organised labour is best exemplified by the strike at TCL in Tsumeb which contributed significantly to the closure of the mine.

14. Sayer (1984) has convincingly argued that a coherent classification schema has to be by causal rather than empirical grouping. The latter commonly disregards the underlying structures of the objects in a group which possess distinctive causal powers and liabilities.

15. A question that is seldom adequately addressed in the construction of the various models of trade unionism is how micro diversity and contingency are translated into macro uniformity and regularity.

16. These identities are: (a) *guild* – the focus of representative effort is on preserving the relatively privileged position of a craft or profession; (b) *friendly society* – seeks to provide mutual insurance, representational and consumer services to individual employees; (c) *company union* – develops a productivity coalition with management and seeks, through cooperation, to enhance company performance

and the terms and conditions of members within a particular enterprise; (d) *social partner* – defines broadly both its constituency and workers' interests and seeks to promote social welfare and economic growth through interactions with government; and (e) *social movement* – orientated towards a broad definition of its constituency and worker interests, but seeks to pursue these through mobilisation and campaigning.

17. The Australian experience demonstrates that extensive labour regulation, a powerful trade union movement, and a sympathetic government were not sufficient to undermine the trends towards an increase in non-standard jobs, a decline in the security of employment, and a strengthening of the position of employers in the labour process (see Burgess and Strachan 1999).

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ADDRESSES

Inaugural Address, Eastern Cape Technikon. Butterworth, 22 May 2002

Blade Nzimande
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Butterworth
South Africa

Introduction

Vice-Chancellor, Prof Mjoli, invited guests and dignitaries, members of management and staff, students, the Technikon assembly and members of the university and surrounding communities. I feel particularly honoured by the invitation to serve as Chancellor of Eastern Cape Technikon. When I first got the invitation, I was not sure how to respond to it. Initially I thought it was a hoax. On re-reading the invitation, I decided to accept this honour mainly because I believe that higher education in general, and institutions like yours in particular, have got a very special role to play in the broader transformation of our higher education landscape. In particular I am of the opinion that not enough attention is being paid to the importance and centrality of technikon education in human resources development and the growth and development of our economy.

Much as university education is very important and highly needed, it has been overemphasised at the expense of the role of technikons and the unique contribution they can make in transforming the landscape of higher education and human resources development that had arisen under apartheid. As a result of this overemphasis technikons have tended to develop an inferiority complex about their possible roles, mainly, and wrongly, regarding themselves as junior cousins of the universities. I would at least hope that my participation as part of the family of Eastern Cape Technikon is also guided by a commitment to an agenda of properly locating technikons in their rightful place.

My speech today is therefore going to raise some of the issues that perhaps need to be taken into account in defining and redefining the role of this institution within the context of the processes for the transformation of higher education currently underway in our country. To this end I will touch on the issues relating to the overall systemic and specific institutional transformation of higher education and its institutions, particularly on the question of the relationship between systemic and institutional transformation. I will try in so doing to locate the place and significance of an institution like this technikon.

The second main theme of my address will be on the very central and key challenge of placing the question of the production of black intellectuals and managers, within the overall context of transforming the relations of knowledge production. I will essentially argue that the role of this technikon should also be located within this very urgent imperative and national priority. The third theme will be on the relationship between institutions of higher education and their immediate environs and some of the specific issues that these institutions in general, and this technikon in particular, might want to consider, taking up. In essence this would be locating the role of this institution in the overall struggles for poverty eradication in our country, particularly in this region of our country.

Lastly, and flowing out of the above, the question of curriculum transformation as an essential component of repositioning higher education institutions in general, and technikons in particular.

Globalisation and the challenge of development and underdevelopment

I cannot pretend that my inauguration is not taking place in the midst of almost unprecedented debates about the transformation of higher education in South Africa. It is fundamentally a debate about how to depart radically from and overcome the Verwoerdian higher education system without at the same time restricting the parameters set by the very same system. It is a period that requires innovative and bold thinking by the whole country, government, higher education institutions, students, the labour movement and our communities. It is also a period characterised by uncertainty. Therefore our task and challenge is that of not succumbing or seeking to run away from the uncertainties, but to confront these with a view to make bold steps, without sacrificing our overall goals.

There is no doubt that our higher education system requires fundamental transformation and restructuring. It is a system whose continuation as it is can only frustrate our goals of creating a democratic and prosperous South Africa. Even more seriously, to postpone this transformation might actually lead to the destruction of the very institutions we have.

The current debate about the transformation of our higher education system is also taking place at a time when capitalist globalisation is the overwhelming reality and its ideology threatening to dominate the whole intellectual and transformation discourse. This is an important reality that we have to properly understand and be clear about. Though this capitalist globalisation is a reality that we have to confront, its assumptions and prescriptions are not the only nor the most desirable route through which we can develop our societies and meet the needs of the overwhelming majority of ordinary people of the world today. Current globalisation is essentially an imposition of a single idea – that of a market economy as an equivalent to freedom and prosperity and a panacea for all problems.

The current globalisation period is one characterised by immense inequalities between developed and developing countries, as well as sharp inequalities within nations themselves. At the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s we were promised 'freedom' and 'prosperity', yet we end the 1990s with even more countries poorer than was the situation at the beginning of the last decade. The prescriptions of liberalisation and privatisation have not brought about the better life that ideologues of current globalisation had promised us. The people of the world are even poorer, with now more than half of the world's population, for instance, without clean drinking water. The disparities in wealth are also increasing. For instance it was estimated that in 1996 Europe alone spent more than $10bn on ice cream alone, and this was more than the total debt of a country like Ethiopia. In the same year the US alone was estimated to have spent more than $18bn on cosmetics, an amount enough to wipe out the world illiteracy at that time by ensuring that every world's child is able to undergo primary school education.

This global reality has not left our higher education institutions unaffected. In fact today, some of the push for higher education transformation is to turn it more into a commodity principally responding to the needs of business and the large multinational corporations, at the direct expense of development of our communities. The very growth of private higher education is a direct threat to the sustainability of our own public higher education system. The ideology of capitalist globalisation also places the developmental concerns and issues of people, particularly in developing countries, as subsidiary to the interests of multinational corporations and the rich countries. The very idea of defining developing countries as 'emerging markets' shows a dangerously one-sided emphasis on processes of private economic accumulation – conceived simply as 'markets' – at the expense of the very huge social and developmental challenges facing these societies. Therefore the challenge of globalisation today is that of seeking to advance developmental agendas beneficial to our people rather than to accept it uncritically as the most fashionable thing around. Our institutions of higher education need to interrogate and debate these realities and help our students and communities to properly understand the phenomenon of globalisation.

Identifying the critical and priority issues in the debate over higher education transformation

As a country we are currently faced with the twin task of systemic and institutional transformation of higher education. It is rather unfortunate that the current debate seems to be overwhelmingly preoccupied by whether to have mergers or not – important as this may be – instead of identifying the most critical challenges that face higher education transformation. As a result the debate has tended to polarise over two extremes. The one position is that of seeking to anchor higher education transformation around what have been known as 'centres of excellence' and merging other institutions around these centres. The other extreme has been that of protecting institutional turf irrespective of the viability of institutions themselves. Both extremes are problematic. The first position does not deal with the fundamental question of what transformation is needed in these very 'centres of excellence' thus running the risk of reproducing the inequalities in education with the previously disadvantaged remaining, more or less, in the same position as under apartheid. The other position, whilst correctly pointing out at the need not to structure everything around essentially formerly white institutions, tends to defend institutional turf at the expense of focusing of what we have to deal with as priorities of transformation in higher education.

For instance one of the key challenges facing our country is that of eradication of poverty through the development of a broadly accepted growth and development strategy to tackle unemployment and job losses in our economy. The question might as well arise to what extent are the respective positions in the higher education debate informed by positioning our institutions to play a meaningful role in this regard. Concretely, as a country we are faced with the challenge of human resource development, particularly to reverse the racial and gender inequalities in the human resources profile of our country. This is a key challenge for our higher education institutions and even more so for an institution like the Eastern Cape Technikon.

There are indeed many other challenges facing our higher education institutions, but I would highlight what I regard as one of the most important ones, that of producing progressive black intellectuals and managers. One of the most enduring legacies of apartheid is that of a racially and gender based production of knowledge, thus leading to a skewed production of white and male intellectuals. This will have to change as a matter of priority. In addition, statistics point out that black managers still make just over 15 percent of the managerial strata in South African society.

This reality is a reflection of the fact that South African society is still faced with the task of addressing three interrelated contradictions, in an integrated manner: the racial, gender and class contradictions. Racial inequalities, gender inequalities and the bias of powerful institutions towards those who own wealth, to the exclusion of those who do not, still remain huge challenges in our country. This is worsened by the dominance of the neo-liberal discourse that the market is a solution to all problems of our society. Yet, the logic of the market tend to reproduce and reinforce the very same racial and gender inequalities inherited from apartheid. Ours is not a task of accepting the market in order to correct racial and gender distortions, since the market – the very origins of these disparities – will tend to exacerbate them. Let us debate these issues, frankly and honestly, as part of addressing the apartheid legacy that we inherited. Institutions like yours have an important role to play, because you are located right at the centre of the realities of the legacy of apartheid.

We would also like the prioritisation of the production of black public sector managers and managers able to lead the community efforts towards the eradication of poverty. One of the problems with our higher education institutions, particularly those located in rural areas, is that of training for the private sector and consequently for the urban areas. This has to change. We do need, particularly black, public sector managers committed to public service as a career and commitment and service to rural communities, rather than the public sector being used as a waiting station to get the first chance into the private sector. We need simultaneously to challenge the dominant ideology that all that is private is good and all that is public is evil. Eradication of poverty will centre on our capacity to create a public service and a state best able to respond to the needs of the ordinary working people, the poor and the marginalised.

Institutional transformation as the key to higher education transformation

Our transformation of higher education at the systemic level cannot succeed unless we also concentrate our efforts on transformation at the institutional level. An issue that I would like to highlight in this regard is that of the role of various social players (stakeholders) in institutional transformation. During the apartheid years we waged relentless struggles, with the students and workers being at the forefront of these, for the creation of what we then called broad transformation forums. These were struggles aimed at democratising decision making at institutional level as well as ensuring that the voice of the different stakeholders is seriously taken into account.

Since the passage of the Higher Education Act, we have at least won this struggle at legislative and institutional level. But unfortunately the institutional forums we have set up seem to be not working for a number of general as well as institution-specific reasons. This is indeed very disturbing. Some of the reasons these are not working include a mode of engagement between various institutional stakeholders outside of a commonly defined vision for various institutions. As a result this engagement becomes adversarial even where it is not supposed to be or is characterised by pursuance of sectoral interests outside of the broader institutional interests. This needs to be corrected. Some of the challenges outlined above are central in trying to forge a common agenda around institutional transformation. Sometimes the whole restructuring processes have been premised on retrenchment of workers and marginalisation of students even where there should have been genuine consultation and engagement towards restructuring.

The institutional forums, important as these are, will not work unless they are grappling with real substantive issues about repositioning of institutions to address the major transformational challenges at systemic and at institutional level. One of the challenges therefore is to make these forums to work as key platforms for turning around our institutions. This is a challenge we earnestly need to take up.

Another key component of institutional transformation – and indeed the entire transformation of our higher education system – is the relationship between institutions and their immediate social and economic environment, in particular communities. One of the sad realities of our higher education today is that a lot of what happens and taught in our institutions does not relate to the immediate reality facing our people on the ground. For me this is a very important role for technikons.

For example, given the extent of poverty in our country, and not least in this region, our people are normally involved in do-or-die struggles to maintain what we can call sustainable livelihoods. Our people have for instance formed stokvels, burial societies, networks of street vendors, etc, to try and create sustainable livelihoods. The question that arises is to what extent are our higher education institutions studying these and seeking to strengthen them? To what extent are our departments structured in such a way that they can help the very same students who are going through higher education from savings generated from *umgalelo* to understand and strengthen these? I believe that technikons have a particular role to play in studying these, and producing students better capable of strengthening these as important pillars in the struggle for sustainable livelihoods in our communities. I do not see the reason why we cannot incorporate into our curricula, as I will point out below, the study of sustainable livelihoods in poor communities. For example it is estimated that about R60m from stokvels and burial societies is banked from Soweto alone! Street vendors and spaza shops incorporate about 3,5 million people, and this is bigger than the entire retail sector in our country. We need to build knowledge and strengthen these as part of the overall struggle to eradicate poverty in our country.

The other critical question is that of the role of higher education institutions in the moral regeneration movement. This is one of the most important challenges facing our country today. We need to struggle for the creation of a caring society based on social solidarity rather than individualistic and selfish models of societal development. We need to critically re-evaluate what we teach on the basis of what values are these transmitting.

Curriculum transformation

One of the most important implications that flows out of the above is that one of the key challenges of higher education transformation is that of curriculum change in line with the developmental needs of our country and our immediate environs. In many instances we teach engineering, economics and so on from American and British textbooks that do not at all relate to these daily realities and economic innovations of our people in their struggles for sustainable livelihoods. We need curriculum transformation, using the best of knowledge available globally, but also relating to our own struggles for development, for example, the study of co-ops, stokvels, burial societies and many other means of eradicating poverty and people's innovation for sustainable livelihoods. The question is what role can this technikon play in relation to its own curricula as well as linking up with communities around it.

For example, one of the key obstacles to rural development, as identified by the Strauss Commission appointed by former President Nelson Mandela and reported to him in September 1996, is that of access to financial services and credit for development. This Commission, amongst other things, pointed to the legal and other disadvantages faced by rural women, the very same section of our rural communities that bears the brunt of poverty and struggle to keep the fires burning at home. The question of rural financial services is one of the most important issues that needs to factored very strongly in your own training and research programmes as part of management training in general. Perhaps this might as well become one of your niche areas.

Build on your strengths

I have no doubt that this institution has a lot of potential and strengths that it needs to exploit to reposition itself for the future. Ironically, the very disadvantage of being located deep in the countryside, is a potential source of strength precisely because you have been dealing with students coming from some of the most disadvantaged communities. This experience is something you need to reflect upon and strengthen the capacity of the institution to play an important role in training a new kind of student and future managers who best understand the challenge of development. It is also for this reason that I decided to accept this appointment.

It is to some of the issues outlined above that our engagement with higher education transformation should be based, including institutional transformation. I am happy to join the family of the Eastern Cape Technikon and look forward to jointly tackling the challenges facing this institution as we move into the future. With these words, I accept the appointment as Chancellor of the Eastern Cape Technikon.

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DEBATES

Supra-Ethnic Nationalism: The case of Eritrea

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Introduction

Nationalism is our epoch's powerful force for mobilising human beings. The urge to form one's own nation represented by its own sovereign state has been enough reason for people to endure unimaginable sufferings. That people are ready to die for their nation is a conundrum to which scholars still have not found a satisfactory answer, yet it shows its power. Certainly nationalist sentiment and the quest for creating one's own nation have been one of the main driving force in shaping human history. As Gellner (1983) argues, nationalism invents nations not the other way round. The objective of this article is to investigate whether or not poly-ethnicity constitutes a constraint to the formation of nations and nationalism. It is my contention Eritrea represents the model of a civic nation.

Eritrea: An Empirical Overview

Concerning the definition of the concept of nation we have two common understandings. One is the mundane popular understanding where all independent states are considered as nations. The other rests on a strict technical definition. According to the latter certain specific characteristics should be fulfilled in order for a group of people to be considered as a nation. The criteria are quite often grounded on the epistemological and ontological development of the West. Hence, societies outside this view are considered anything but nations. Another point, which needs to be stressed, is that there is no commonly accepted definition on which scholars of nationalism can lean. To the contrary, the concept of the nation is characterised by fluidity and malleability giving rise to confusion.

The prevalence of multi-ethnic groups in a socially recognised and confined territory means the existence of two levels of identities – subnational (ethnic) and national (civic). While the first refers to a particularistic cultural identity, the latter involves an overarching supra-ethnic, civic, national identity. I will discuss these two levels of national identity – duality of identity – by reference to the Eritrean national setting, which by implication is also germane to all polyethnic societies.

Since its territorial genesis Eritrea has incorporated nine ethno-linguistic groups which pay allegiance to their territorially based civic identity. Yet they also pay due attention to their ethno-linguistic affiliation and belonging. Therefore, the basis of nationhood in the Eritrean setting is civic. Before discussing this civic basis of Eritrean nationhood I will discuss the ethno-linguistic element.

Ethno-linguistic Diversity

The debate on the primordialist-modernist perspective, in relation to Eritrea, is intended to serve instead of its either/or bifurcation, in a complementarity relation, to describe the different levels of collective identities. Therefore, it is interpreted in a manner that the primordialist premise serves to analyse the sub-national/ethnic level of identity, while the modernist premise serves to analyse the national/civic level of identity. The modernity view agrees with the colonialist view. Accordingly, it serves to explain the transformation process under colonialism and the resultant Eritrean nationalism. It is contended that ethno-linguistic diversity does not constitute an impediment in the formation of nationhood.

I have elsewhere shown how colonialism brought together the various communities of Eritrea, which had their separate primordially based collective identities (Bereketeab 2000). As the result of colonial rule, thus, a territorially based polyethnic corporate identity that transcended the primordial based identity emerged. The development, however, is characterised by the coexistence of primordial identities and modern identity. In other words, the sub-national identities exist side by side with the national. In general, an identity based on civic/modernist premises is grounded on territorial identification, which does not negate the primordialist features.

It is in this sense that the notion of complementarity would be useful for Eritrea, that is, in describing the relationship between the various ethno-linguistic groups. Unlike the notion of dichotomisation, which rests on the dimension of exclusion of an interethnic relation, the notion of complementarity is founded on the principle of mutual recognition and accommodation. Deriving from this theoretical conceptualisation we will examine the various ethno-linguistic groups in Eritrea.

In general we are able to identify two categories of conceptualisations: a) a bipolar, which sees the society as divided into two blocs; b) the multi-polar, which views the nine ethno-linguistic groups as exclusive entities with nothing in common. Both conceptualisations fail to reflect the reality adequately. Indeed, they lead to gross misrepresentation and distortion.

In terms of the bipolar view, the usual socio-cultural terms used in analysing the social and cultural composition of the Eritrean society are the 'highlanders' and the 'lowlanders' (*Kebessa* and *Metahit*), or the 'Christians' and 'Moslems'. This is a dichotomisation of the whole Eritrean society, as if by an intentional social engineering the society is mechanically bisected into twins. It is not to be denied that to a certain degree these categorisations are tenable. But they conceal some significant characteristics. For instance, if we take the category of *Metahitawian* (lowlanders), the various ethno-linguistic groups are put into one bloc on the ground of their faith with no consideration of the profound ethnic and linguistic elements which differentiate them. Moreover, groups of non-Moslems are also coerced in the category. Similarly if we take the *Kebesawian* (highlanders) we will discover that there are other non-Christian and non-Tigrinya speaking communities.

The usage of these terms quite often reflects the politicised nature of the categorisation, the roots of which can be traced to the period of British rule. Basically, the division embodies a geographical distinction, but it also coincides with socio-economic modes and religious differences. Since the era of parties, in the aftermath of the demise of Italian colonial rule, these terms have been in operation charged with political values. The British used it as the underpinning for their conviction of the non-viability of Eritrea as an independent state. Further, the occasional instrumentalist manipulation by various intellectual and political actors for political power purposes in the liberation movement reinforced its political dimension. The latter phenomenon increased in magnitude after independence. The power relation expression of ethnic and religious differentials has taken bizarre forms with extremist ideas coming from individuals and groups – the latest one being the description of the Tigrinya ethno-linguistic group as 'Tigrean Eritreans'.

On one hand, we have this dichotomisation approach, on the other hand, a stark tendency is manifesed to treat each and every ethno-linguistic group as an exclusive entity – the multi-polarity view. No doubt, in a general terms, we are able to identify nine ethno-linguistic groups based upon the three fundamental criteria, notably, linguistics, ethnicity, territoriality. Nine languages, Tigrinya, Tigre, Saho, Nara, Kunama, Hidareb, Bilen, Afar, and Arabic are spoken. Nevertheless, in addition to the close relationship of genealogy between some of the languages (Tigrinya-Tigre, Saho-Afar, Kunama-Nara), many people have a working knowledge of the larger languages like Tigre and Tigrinya. Moreover there are some ethno-linguistic groups which use other languages as their own. The criterion of ethnicity or ethno-linguistics, thus, is not a sacred cow that is pure and fixed. To the contrary it is characterised by fluidity and flexibility. There is some primarily oral, but also documented evidence, that shows a cross-ethnic and cross-linguistic hybrid. This has taken the form amongst other things, of individuals or groups (family) crossing geographical boundaries and starting to live in an alien environment. With the passage of time they begin to inherit the language, culture, value, norms and belief-systems of the group(s) of the geo-ethno-linguistic space to which they moved. After some generations the group sheds all its original anthropological features and is entirely assimilated in the new milieu. What seems to remain or what it retains from its past is memory that has been passed from parents to their offsprings, in the form of oral narratives and rituals. This could be witnessed in the celebration of certain symbols and rituals – like Moslems observing Christian holidays or vice versa.

In the Beni Amer region, for instance, we find clans or tribes who claim to be or identify themselves as *Kebilet Hamasien* (meaning the tribe of Hamasien – which originated from Hamasien). We have also Ad Bijel (which means Adi Bidel in Tigrinya), indicating that these groups have originated from the village of Adi Bidel in Hamasien. Another group is the Deki Shihay (sons of Shihay – from the Saho ethno-linguistic group) (Pollera 1935: 44). A corroboration of this comes from Michael Hasama's book *The History of Eritrea* (1986) where it is claimed that all the ethno-linguistic groups of Eritrea are interconnected by blood and origin. The author maintains that the various ethno-linguistic groups not long ago originated from some common area or families. As an evidence of this he gives a detailed account of the names of many clans, families, and villages, showing a common origin. In addition to this, the communities' belief of presumed descent and various archaeological remains further testify to the view that the Eritrean society, contrary to the multi-polarity view, is mixed.

The relationality of identity is clearly displayed in the fact that it manifests a cluster of properties among which are the transcendance of religious and ethnic boundaries. Besides a common religion (perhaps because of the common religion) which transcends the formal or informal ethnic frontier, two groups ethnically considered to be different manifest kindred cultural traits or vice versa. As an illustration we can mention the closeness of the Blin Moslems to the culture of the Tigre speakers, while the Christian Blin are closer to the Christian Tigrinya culture, the same ethnic group but which, because of religious differences, manifests a diverse culture. Another example is the closeness of the Nara and the Beni Amer, a case of ethnic difference but cultural similarity. These examples concerning linguistic and cultural similarity and interaction between the various ethno-linguistic groups, are clear indications of the prevalence of the 'field of complimentarity', a field where there is a binding space in which ethno-lingistic groups interact and process their relations.

Nevertheless, regarding for instance, habitat or territoriality, in a very general aspect, we find a relative consistency, notwithstanding the emigration of certain individuals or groups in search of job, farm land, grazing areas, etc. That is the different regions, lately known as provinces, are predominantly inhabited by the original indigenous ethno-linguistic group, or at least assumed to, thereby preserving the relative homogeniety of territorial ethno-linguistic nature. This excludes urban centres, which more or less, particularly since the beginning of European colonial era, have become an ethno-linguistic neutral habitat, in turn contributing to social integration of the society as a whole. During the armed struggle for liberation the blending of ethno-linguistic groups even in the rural areas increased considerably. This was due to the fact that some regions were safer from the military and security reach of Ethiopian forces, and people were compelled to seek refuge in regions which are conventionally viewed as not their natural habitat – thereby giving rise to the emergence of a mixed habitat. In spite of this conflation, however, the identification of a specific region with a specific ethno-linguistic group and the communities affiliation is still strong.

From this we could safely conclude that the tendency to present the Eritrean society in the fashion of mechanical aggregation of purely isolated ethno-linguistic groups, in the form of bipolarisation, on the one hand, or in the manner of multifocal ethno-linguistic centres which have few things in common, on the other, fails to capture the reality.

Nationalist discourse and ideology invariably attempts to minimise difference. Eritrean nationalist political rhetoric during the liberation struggle presented the cleavages related to the ethno-linguistic discrepancy as vestiges of the colonial divide and rule artefact. The contradictions that invoke their foundation from the primordial aspects were perceived as an artificial magnification perpetrated by successive alien powers to protect their own interests (Sherman 1980: 67). This interpretation is only conditionally valid – that is if it means that the perpetrators of alien rule manipulated and exploited the socio-cultural content to the benefit of their own vested interest. Otherwise the multiplicity of the social composition of the society is there.

It is widely believed that colonialism generated a transcending identity based on the common historical experience of colonialism. Scholars of colonialism emphasise the role of territorialisation in the development of a consciousness of belonging to a commonly inhabited territory. Referring to Indonesia, Benedict Anderson, for instance, describes the effect of colonialism as follows:

> From all over the vast colony...from different, perhaps once hostile, villages in primary schools; from different ethnolinguistic groups in middle-school; and from every part of the realm in the tertiary institutions of the capital...they know that from wherever they had come they still had read the same books and done the same sums... To put it another way, their common experience, and the amiably competitive comradeship of the classroom, gave the maps of the colony which they studied... a territory specific imagined reality which was every day confirmed by the accents and physiognomies of their classmates (Anderson 1991: 121-22).

It is possible to relate Anderson's description to the situation in Eritrea where the various ethno-linguistic groups were brought together and subsequently were able to develop a transcending common identity. After the legal emergence of Eritrea's territoriality in 1890 the different ethno-linguistic groups were amalgamated to constitute a society by the same process and the same political forces as those described by Anderson in the situation of Indonesia. They intermingled and interacted in one or another way, in various spheres of social life at school, in the market place, in the workplace, in the Mosque, in the Church, in the bureaucracy, in the army and the police force; in death and in life, shared happiness and sorrow in the NLM: matters that consequently enriched their common history, common memory, identity and destiny. All this is internalised, objectified and externalised to form a dialectical part of the repertoire of the national social psychology expressed in the way everyone describes themselves as an Eritrean.

Further, this process was enhanced by the national liberation struggle. The NLM played an important role in the integration of the various ethno-linguistic groups. Elsewhere, using the metaphor of the field as a melting-pot (Bereketeab 2000) I have tried to describe the role the NLM played in the integration of the society. There are no statistical data which show the quantitative participation of the various ethno-linguistic groups. Thus it is difficult to provide an accurate number. However, one thing is clear that the participation of the various ethno-linguistic groups varied in degree and intensity. The participation of some groups was relatively more than others, and some groups started to participate earlier than others. The case of two groups can be raised here – the Kunama and the Afar. The participation of the former was marginal, whereas in the case of the latter they were among the early participants although there had also existed an aspiration for a united Afar nation.

From a theoretical frame of analysis, and viewed from the conception of cultural and political community dimensions, the various ethno-linguistic groups can be categorised by the cultural category. Cultural communities, in the literature of nation formation, are perceived as non-nations (Smith 1986). They should, according to the proponents of this proposition, be transformed into political communities if they are to be considered as nations. Their location in the hierarchically structured duality of identity is therefore in the ethnic sub-national level.

A point of great significance for our aim is that the various ethno-linguistic groups undertook the struggle for national independence on the premise of a common overriding civic identity. They shared not only extreme adverse conditions, but also acted collectively to make their common civic history – a history that laid down a foundation for the emerging overarching civic identity.

Eritrea: A Civic Nation

Two social forces – European colonialism(1890-1991) and the national liberation movement (1961-1991) – acted upon the common social history and the consequent national identity of Eritreans. This identity is by necessity of a multi-ethnic nature. The compound term multi-ethnic/polyethnic is used to illustrate that the nation is composed of two or more ethnic groups. Moreover the designation multi-ethnic political nation (Krejci and Velimsky 1981: 87) is used to distinguish the difference between what is sometimes called the cultural nation or uni-ethnic nation from the political or even sometimes the territorial nation (Smith 1986, 1991). The former refers to the homogeneity of language, religion, ethnicity, tradition, whilst the later refers to the heterogeneity of those characteristics and to the political foundation of national identity. In the discourse of nation formation these two perceptions are discerned as the ethnic and the civic perceptions respectively.

In the case of Eritrea, throughout the history of the Ethio-Eritrean conflict, we had two dominant paradigms concerning the existence of Eritrean nationhood and nationalism. These were on the one hand that of rejection and on the other that of idealisation. Further, there are those who approached the question of Eritrean nationalism from the view point that it was Ethiopia's apparent weakening of the Eritrean economy, suppressing its culture and the subsequent political suppression of Eritreans by Ethiopian regimes, which united and made the Eritrean people rally around the liberation movement (cf. Okbazghi 1991: 271). This notion appears to fit well into the now well known colonial school of thought that believes colonial rule and the resistance to colonial rule by Africans gave rise to the generation of African nationalism (cf. Hodgkin 1956, Emerson 1960, Smith 1983). One fundamental defect of this line of thought when it comes to Eritrean nationalism is that it ignores the impact of European colonial penetration on Eritrean society. To attribute the emergence of Eritrean nationalism merely to Ethiopian exploitation and suppression is to ignore the objective foundation of Eritrean nationalism that was layed down during European colonial rule. This objective foundation could be accounted for as territorial, socio-economic, politico-legal integration giving rise to a common history that led to common culture. In turn this culminated in the development of the subjective factor, the will to live together (Bereketeab 2000). It is this development that gave rise to the national struggle for independence.

Concerning the criteria the would best define Eritrea, Bondestam (1989:98-103), following Horace Davis' four premises: i) specific territory; ii) a certain minimum size; iii) some integration (centralisation and interdependence); iv) consciousness of itself as a nation, argues that Eritrea fulfils these premises which enables it to be considered as a nation. The first three premises are related to the objective criteria, while the fourth represents the subjective criterion. All four taken together constitute civic premises.

If we relate these variables with the above six variables we would be able to conjoin the first three with territorial, socio-economic, politico-legal integration; common history and common culture, whereas the fourth would be conjoined with the will to live together. One of the social forces that effected these social conditions was that of the Eritrean nationalists. At least at the later stage of the armed struggle this group made an attempt to construct Eritrean national identity on the basis of individual membership not as a collective belonging to a particular ethno-linguistic group. Pursuing a theory and practice of intentional social engineering aiming at societal transformational, the fronts embraced in their political programmes an ambitious concerted project to construct a new

Eritrean identity which would transcend all socio-cultural boundaries (cf. Sherman 1980: 98). Evidence to this can be elicited from the political programmes of ELF and EPLF (ELF 1971, 1975; EPLF 1977, 1987). Indeed the fronts in the attempt of putting into practice their vision of the prospective new nation, mapped out not only the theoretical framework, but also plan of action, a design to put it into practice.

The integration and cohesion of society, in the civic conception, is presumed to emerge as a result of the establishment and development of secular public institutions. These institutions encompass economic, social, political, legal and cultural ones. Further, these institutions, in general terms, are to embody symbols, values and norms that are the result of an overriding accumulated common historical experience that the society can identify with in order to develop the will to live together. They are derivatives of a transcending political culture.

A certain degree of economic, political, cultural and historical relation between the various ethno-linguistic groups of Eritrea prior to the beginning of Italian colonial rule cannot be denied. Yet it was under the European rule that these relations were organised and integrated centrally. Undoubtedly the territorial, political and economic centralisation that took place under Italian rule underpinned the evolution of Eritrea as cohesive geo-political entity, although the correspondence of social cognitions might not have matched the centralisation at that time. In pursuing our precepts of the civic conception of nation, then, we would be able to argue that institutions reproduced by the colonial social force, albeit weakly developed, buttressed the process of nation formation.

It is following this notion that research on Eritrean nationalism emphasises the importance of the socio-economic changes which occurred as the outcome of the penetration of colonial capital. Quite often, materialist oriented scholars stress the pertinence of the socio-economic changes in the sense that the effects of material changes on the societal integration were far-reaching. This line of argumentation is based on the assumption that economic innovation necessarily leads to a corresponding political consciousness and identity (see Leonard 1980, Houtart 1980, Bondestam 1989). This is taken as an illustration of the emergence of Eritrean national identity transcending the ethno-linguistic division, which is the outcome of the socio-economic integration and cohesion rendered possible by Italian colonialism.

The second phase (1961-1991) of the process of the development of the Eritrean nationalism differs qualitatively from the first phase (1890-1941). It is characterised by intentionality of mobilisation, participation, institution-building and societal transformation carried out by the indigenous social force of the liberation movement. That is, at this phase of the evolution of nationalism, a social agent with a specific agenda of societal transformation in the form of the NLM joined in. Terms like mobilisation, participation, institution-building and societal transformation are related to the enlightenment notion of people's sovereignty and democracy where the population is galvanised to determine its destiny.

A few Eritrean liberation fighters, theoretically and ideologically poorly equipped, yet representing the 'general will', set out to form the Eritrean nation. This social force gradually grew to a formidable one with the capacity to formulate both theoretically and ideologically the long and short-term objectives of nationalism. Mobilisation and participation as theoretical concepts, but also as acts of practice, served the short term objective of nationalism, whereas institution-building and societal transformation as long term processes and structurations harnessed the long term process of nation formation. With regard to the latter, societal transformation, which in principle is the accumulated outcome of the other categories, can be seen in the emergence of national consciousness and the will to live together.

Already at the end of European rule there were signs of the emergent Eritrean nationalism, albeit divided, resulting from the penetration of colonial capital. The readily available signs were: a) the rejection by Moslem communities of the incorporation of their part of Eritrea with Sudan, b) the rejection by many highland Christian Eritreans of total annexation of Eritrea by Ethiopia, and c) the resistance of all Eritreans to the division of Eritrea. Nationalist forces in the body of the Independence Bloc, particularly the Moslem League and the Liberal Progressive Party, demanded the incorporation of territories that were under the control of Sudan and Ethiopia and strove for the independence of Eritrea.

To conclude, the two phases in the formation of Eritrean nationalism – European colonial rule and the National Liberation Movement – can be connected with the fulfilment of the objective and subjective criteria respectively. A rough temporal allocation would enable us to assign the objective criteria as to be more or less accomplished, or rather as the grounds has been shaped during the first phase, whereas the subjective criteria could be construed as to have been fulfilled in the second phase. This division should not be misconstrued to indicate that I am proposing a clear-cut sequence. Rather the propensity is that there exists a dialectical relation between them in the sense that the one presupposes the other. But yet at a certain phase, one is more dominant than the other. In this project of the process of nation formation the attributes of what I have identified as second phase could be characterised by mobilisation, participation, building of institutions and in the final analysis the transformation of society that was institutionalised by the NLM. As a civic nation, Eritrea combines the primordialist/modernist, the ethnic/civic and ethno-linguistic distinctions. Its nationalism is, thus, based on the unity of these diversities and is by definition supra-ethnic. In the remaining part of the paper I will review the theoretical and conceptual ontology and epistemology underpinning the discourse of nation and nationalism.

Theoretical and Conceptual Reflections

Theoretical discourse regarding the emergence and development of nations seems to focus on two basic schools of thought, notably the primordialist and the modernist (Smith 1986, 1991; Hutchinson 1994). Further these are connected with two conceptions of nation – ethnic and civic – which more or less derive from them. These binary oppositions characterise the scholarship of nationalism.

To narrow the gap between and to reconcile the two schools of thought a third perspective is suggested, notably the ethnicist perspective. Anthony D. Smith (1986) is the prominent scholar of nationalism who launched the ethnicist perspective. The ethnicist perspective while accepting the modernity of nations traces back the origin of these nations to what Smith designates as *ethnies.* It argues that it is ethnic communities that grow to nations.

Criticism has been directed against the concept of primordialism. It is argued that the criteria for the phenomenon might be necessary but certainly not sufficient. Informed by the social reality of his time Max Weber (1967), for instance, posits that criteria like language, ethnicity, religion cannot be sufficient for the constitution of a nation. Weber cites the example of the Serbs and Croats who, despite religious differences, lived together; while the Irish and the English, despite a common language did not. For Weber the criterion that constitutes a nation is common sentiment which in turn is grounded on a common historical memory.

In the political and philosophical theory of nation formation the distinction between the civic and ethnic perceptions are the fundamental foundations upon which the two basic forms of nations are grounded. The bulk of the literature discussing nations and nationalism can perhaps be distinguished along these basic lines. These two perceptions are again unavoidably represented by two schools of thought, notably the modernist and primordialist. Like the primordialist-modernist duality perspective, the ethnic-civic conception rests on the distinction between the old and the new. However, it is noteworthy that the discernibility of the perception of nations resting upon these basic distinctions is not to be viewed as if they are diametrically opposites in the sense of an either/or relation. It is rather to be viewed in terms of some nations are more to be described or defined following civic criteria, meanwhile for others it may probably be more appropriate to treat them from the stand point of ethnicity. Furthermore the civic perception of nation seems more dominant in the sense that there are very few nations which are utterly based on purely ethnic contents where a culturally homogenous collective identity constitutes the basis of citizenship.

In addition, seen from a theoretical and philosophical point of view, since the period of enlightenment there have been successive moves from collectivism to individualism which have given rise to the preoccupation with the sanctity of the individual as a citizen and building bloc of the nation. Individuation of societies bestowing the atomic individual a legal personality, a civic person with duties and rights, as privileged by liberal ideology, civic identity came to define nations and nationalism, particularly the one under the designation of patriotism. The individual is celebrated as authentic and genuine against artificiality of the collective. The distinction between nationalism and patriotism was deemed necessary to emphasise the shift from collectivism as thought to be represented by nationalism to individualism as represented by patriotism. This development signifies the displacement of communalism that inevitably leads to the rise of atomism. For some writers nationalism holds a negative connotation, directed toward others – division, supremacy, chauvinism, archaic, and a cause of conflicts and wars, at times even juxtaposed with racism, whereas patriotism is given a positive connotation – love of the fatherland, sober loyalty to one's own state.

The basic distinctions between civic and ethnic perceptions of nation can be roughly stated in the following fashion. Herbert Adam (1994) in trying to highlight the distinction between the two puts the weight on the relationship between individual members and the binding elements both among individual members and the collective membership on one side and the state on the other side. Therefore, stemming from this presumption, the civic nation is viewed as 'based on equal individual rights, regardless of origin, and equal recognition of all cultural traditions in the public sphere'. Moreover, according to this notion, the civic nation is presumed to be based on consent rather than descent. Citizenship in ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, is based on blood and ancestry (Adam 1994: 17).

Citing cases of the latter, which sheds light on the ethnic perception of nation, Adam gives an account of Germany and Israel. In both nations it is not only legally permitted but it is a legal right of those who purport to possess the right ethnic genealogy, despite the fact that the putative returnees are culturally strangers to the host culture. Conversely emigrants, for instance in Germany, notwithstanding the generational habitance in the country and notwithstanding their assimilation in the German culture are denied nationality, because the determining criterion of nationhood is ethnic genealogy. Adam claims that civic nation is characterised by the paucity of nationalism, because cohesion is based on equal rights for every citizen. In the perception of civic nation, nationalist ideology is presumed to perceive members as mere individuals – not as members of ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups – but rather as individual members of the whole nation.

A terminology closely linked with the civic nation is that of the territorial nation (Smith 1983). In addition to the basic characteristics that the latter shares with the former the emphasis in the case of the territorial nation is that on the politically imposed nature of the formation of the nation. The bastion of identity here is territoriality. The imagination of commonality and social solidarity springs from the consciousness of sharing common geographical space – in Anderson's (1991) terminology, an 'imagined community'.

Following Max Weber's conceptualisation, Giddens (1985) elucidates the nation as a product of the centralising power of the nation-state. He contends that nations emerged as the result of bureaucratic, economic, legal and administrative centralisation in a territoriality where the nation-state retains monopoly of violence. Giddens, without utilising the civic-ethnic dichotomy discourse of nation formation and nationalism, starkly inclines toward the civic perception. His argument is limited to the west European historical experience and he clearly asserts that nation-state model is not exportable to the non-western societies. Yet, in spite of Giddens' attempted restriction, it is readily applicable to the non-west, since it is conceptualised as the artefact of the centralising state, which is a universal dimension.

The civic nation model would represent both the west European nation that is presumed long to have shed its ethnic content (if it has ever had) and the multi-ethnic societies of the colonial world that by historical irony were forcefully brought together by external forces. Concerning the latter it pertains to the overarching supraethnic identity. In Europe the civic nation emerged as a result of what Smith (1986: 131) calls the triple revolution – division of labour, control of administration, cultural co-ordination. In contrast the civic process in the colonial societies took place through the colonial state by 'surgical operation' amalgamating various ethno-linguistic groups. Through bureaucratic, economic, legal and administrative integration, the colonial state produced a national unit embedded in civic identity. The colonial societies cannot be other than civic nations because, firstly they constitute aggregation of different ethnic collectivities, and secondly their common identity is contingent on the territorialisation of their homeland and the acceptance of it as the creation of colonisation.

Ethno-linguistic Diversity Versus Nation Formation

After considering the binary oppositions of primordial-modernist and ethnic-civic we will now deal with the question whether the social reality of ethno-linguistic diversity could be seen as posing an impairment for the project of nation formation and nationalism. A marked characterising feature of today's societies is multiplicity of identities. In spite of all claims of uni-identity or mono-identity, even most seemingly homogenous societies display strong instances of plurality. Yet, despite this fact, the bulk of the literature on nations and nationalism treats nations as homogenous mono-ethnic and mono-cultural entities. Further we are told the developing societies fail to fit the definition and criteria of nationhood, since they comprise of multi-ethnic communities. How true is this and do our conceptual and theoretical tools enable us to accommodate societies of such type?

First, I would like to make one point crystal clear notably, out of the plethora categories of identities what concerns us here is ethno-linguistic identity and its implication to the formation of nations. When we talk about multi-ethnic societies or nations it is clear the identity we refer to is civic identity that transcends particularistic identity. The concept ethno-linguistic indicates the overlap of common ethnicity and linguistic homogeneity. That is it refers to a group displaying both common genealogical descending (imagined or actual) and a common linguistic speech. The basic characterising feature in the ethno-linguistic entity is that the following elements are displayed: a shared language which distinguishes the group; ethnic identity which members of a group commonly claim to originate from, imagined or actual descendent, an ideology of shared ancestry (see Eriksen 1993: 35); a compact territory (homeland) where the group is supposed to claim an exclusive rights of habitat for generations imagined or actual, and which reinforces the social construction of identity by keeping up the continuous renewal of the remembered attachment.

Two sets of concepts are involved in the analysis of ethnicity and interethnic relationships. These are the objective/primordial and the subjective/relational. In the objective/primordial set of concepts ethnicity is understood simply based on certain objectively given properties of a social group. While in the subjective/relational set of concepts ethnicity is understood as perpetually constructed and reconstructed in a specific societal environment, thus, assuming the nature of subjectivity, situationality and relationality (Eriksen 1993). In the latter, it is stressed that ethnicity should be perceived as an aspect of relationship, not as the cultural property of a social group. From this inference is drawn that in a solely mono-ethnic setting effectively no ethnicity is to prevail, because simply there is no other group with whom an act of communicating cultural difference can take place (Eriksen 1993: 34).

The central question that needs to be attended here is how multi-ethnicity affects the formation of nations. The study of multi-ethnic national settings presupposes treating of two dialectically interconnected aspects. On the one hand we need to investigate and determine the relationship between the various ethno-linguistic groups. And on the other it has to deal with the commonalty of identity – the supraethnic national identity. The common space the ethno-linguistic groups share imposes upon them a dialectically interrelated bond. This bond refers to the civic aspect of their identity. Social solidarity as cohesive social organisation in a civic integration rests on different principles than ethnic integration. As Durkheim (1984) in his organic solidarity notion implies, collective consciousness gave way to individual consciousness where social solidarity is characterised increasingly by social differentiation, specialisation and generalisation, with the dominance of functional interests. Modern nations, therefore, are marked by a multiplicity of identity, but where the dominant power is that of civic identity wherein ethno-linguistic diversity is a marker.

Conclusion

Nations and nationalism are more or less connected with modernity. Informed by European historical experience, scholars of nationalism define and explain the nation if not the result of modernity then at least coinciding with it. This modernity whose ontology is only associated with West European and North American societies is uniquely attributed to have produced homogenous, compact and integrated societies that came to be known as nations. Behind this development is assumed to lie the socio-economic, cultural, technological and scientific revolutions leading to rationalisation, secularisation, bureaucratisation, individuation, formalisation and homogenisation of societies.

On the theoretical and conceptual side, mainstream scholarship focuses mainly on the binary oppositions of primordial-modernist and ethnic-civic in its analysis of nation and nationalism. Since the ontological and epistemological tools informing the discourse are firmly anchored in the social historical experience of west European societies and its offshoots, many western scholars seem either unable or unwilling to extend the discourse to non-western societies. Quite often these non-western societies are described derogatively as tribes, ethnic, or simply traditional folklore, communities. The main causal explanation given for the non-qualification of nationhood of these societies is the persistent and pervasive sub-national affiliations and demands that not rarely descend to conflicts and wars.

Nevertheless the mechanisms, processes, dynamism and forces that were responsible for the emergence of the European nation were also active in the development of the colonial nation. It has been asserted that the centralising state – absolute monarchy – played a decisive role in the formation of the European nation. The colonial state in Africa took this responsibility. Undoubtedly, perhaps due to difference of time range – five hundred years in the case of Europe and barely some decades in the case of Africa – full-fledged development of nationhood, in Africa on the same footing with that of western Europe, is not yet at hand. This coupled with the persistent conflict arising from sub-national affiliations and demands is given as a reason for the rejection of nationhood in Africa. Yet how does this differ from what Eugen Weber (1977) found about the French nation: that after hundred years of the declaration of its formation a considerable size of the population could not yet speak proper French or lacked a feeling of Frenchness? Or from what is happening in Canada, UK, Belgium, Switzerland, and the Basque region of France and Spain today where centrifugal forces based on primordial affiliations are threatening the central state? Many civic nations in Europe are facing similar problems as those civic nations in Africa. This lends currency to the argument that societies in Africa are no less nations than their counterparts in Europe.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Aili Mari Tripp. *Women and Politics in Uganda*. Madison. The University of Wisconsin. 2000. Xxvii+277 pp.

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Aili Mari Tripp's book, *Women and Politics in Uganda*, is about the historical development of the women's movement in Uganda. Tripp analyses the impressive flowering of the women's movement since the National Resistance Movement's (NRM) ascendance to power in January of 1986. Using case studies, Tripp argues that the NRM administration has provided a fertile democratic ground on which the women's movement has flourished. She argues that political leaders in Uganda established a popular and inclusive democratic culture that allowed women to congregate and define their political and economic interests largely on their own terms – how they could be integrated into the new participatory political dispensation.

Thus, Tripp is concerned to demonstrate how the movement progressively gained momentum and established a foothold in Uganda's high politics as well as the grassroots. She contrasts the women's movement in Uganda with the experiences of women in other African countries such as Kenya and Ghana. She aims to show the achievements and women's attainment of political autonomy. Tripp attributes the autonomy to the democratic culture in Uganda. She is concerned with the experiences of Ugandan women under different political systems. Tripp analyses the conditions of women under various administrations from Kabaka Mutesa II through Milton Obote, Idi Amin Dada to the current NRM leadership under Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Be that as it may, the bottom line of her argument is how the women's movement has flourished under the NRM government.

In her treatise on the participation of women in the political economy, Tripp explains some factors that have frustrated the progress of the women's movement in Uganda. She cites perverse patriarchal attitudes and masculine institutions built over time in the country as the cause. Yet Tripp argues that despite the fact that androcentric values seem to be deeply rooted in the population, women have resisted moves by male leaders to frustrate their autonomy over the years. For instance, led by Rebecca Mulira, Rhoda Kalema, Pumla Kisosonkole, Yemima Kabogozaza Mukasa and Sara Nyandwoha Ntiro, women used religious organisations such as the Young Christian Women

Association (YWCA), the Anglican Mothers' Union and the Catholic Women's Guilds to provide them with the necessary skills for political action on issues that were their concern (see pp.37-38). In 1950, for example, under the aegis of religious organisations, women played a sterling role in the campaign for the return of the exiled Kabaka to Uganda. This involvement in politics gave the women the relevant political training they required on modern political management, thus improving their political skills in the process.

Tripp argues further that despite the gains women have registered in past few years, the women's organisation suffered incarcerations under the various dictators in Uganda. For instance, at the height of political excitement, Amin Dada decreed that unmarried single women should marry immediately. He also ordered his notorious soldiers to rape women as a way of controlling their supposed waywardness and disobedience (see pp. 69-70). In spite of all the hardships they experienced, women continued to agitate for more political space and to fight laws that oppressed them. For example, women in Uganda encouraged public debate on the efficacy of polygamy, sexual abuse and issues such as defilement of young girls. Women wanted serious steps taken to curb the bad tendencies that facilitated their oppression.

Moreover, women organised themselves under the umbrella of Uganda Council of Women and Interest-Group Politics with the aim of minimising differences between males and females (see p. 41-45). In fact, in more recent times, Ugandan women have demonstrated a strong resolve of ensuring that their rights are respected across the country. In 1986 after the NRM takeover of government, 20 leaders of the National Council of Women (NCW), Action for Development and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) paid President Museveni a courtesy call with a memo in hand, requesting that more women be included in the government. Given the mounting pressure exerted on him by women, Museveni conceded and asked the women leaders to make recommendations to his office of leaders of their choice. The good news for the women was that most of their recommendations were adopted immediately. These included the appointment of 9 women ministers. By 1989, 8 out of 75 ministers in the NRM government were women (see. p. 70).

Further into her text, Tripp argues that there was a proliferation of groups both at local and national level. She notes that in spite of the proliferation, women chose to maintain religious based women's groups as buffer organisations they could fall back on if needed. She maintains that these steps helped to prepare ground for women's more inclusive participation in the political process in Uganda (see p. 104-105). With their perception of the religious movement as an ally, women in Uganda continued to take steps to stem religious sectarianism, ethnic and class divisions.

Intriguingly, Tripp argues that more women than men have persistently opposed the revival of multi-party politics because of fear of resurgence of sectarianism and violence in public life. Her argument is that the politics of exclusion would only lead to turmoil and the resurgence of masculine attitudes and female oppression. But Tripp fails to convince the reader that the multi-party political dispensation would work against the interests of women. My position is that women would actually benefit from a more open political democratic system. Such a system would take on board the views of subaltern women as well.

To add flavour to her book, Tripp uses the case studies of Kampala, Luwero, Kigezi and Busoga to illustrate how women's experiences differ from those of men. She argues that when women have entered the public arena they have brought on board new concerns and interests. For instance, Ugandan women leaders have dealt more with issues concerning health, childcare, sexuality, and family planning – issues previously confined the private sphere and shunted to the political periphery (p.141). From the information that the reader obtains from the text, the reader might be led to conclude that the NRM no-party dispensation has led to increased participation of women in grassroots women's organisations. The argument goes that this is because they cater to the women's immediate existential needs of the day. This is highly debatable, however.

What, then, are the strengths of Tripp's book? She engages thoroughly with grassroots women's organisations, identifying reasons why women have succeeded in the NRM government and the women's movement. She skillfully uses sociological and historical tools to analyse the success of grassroots women's organisations. Clearly, her study is a significant contribution to women's studies. More importantly she demonstrates the discrepancy of using the same yardstick to measure the success of women's movements across the globe without taking into account the specific conditions that shape women's activities in different geographical and political spaces. But the author must be criticised for presenting women as a homogenous group under the NRM. In this regard, Tripp ignores the class-based interests that shape human alliances, including women's groups. Certainly, Ugandan women are not a homogenous group!

Glenn Adler (ed.). *Engaging the State and Business: The Labour Movement and Co-determination in South Africa*. Johannesburg. Witwatersrand University Press. 2000.

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The concept of 'co-determination' has enjoyed a considerable popularity among industrial sociologists during the 'South African transition'. This parsion would only lead to turmoil and the resurgence of masculine attitudes and female oppression. But Tripp fails to convince the reader that the multi-party political dispensation would work against the interests of women. My position is that women would actually benefit from a more open political democratic system. Such a system would take on board the views of subaltern women as well.

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The concept of 'co-determination' has enjoyed a considerable popularity among industrial sociologists during the 'South African transition'. This partially follows on theorisations about corporatism that have in the past decade accompanied debates on the role of organised labour in the new democracy. Common to the two concepts is the definition of institutional spaces where worker organisations are recognised as autonomous participants in processes of consultation or joint decision-making over production, industry-related or broad socio-economic issues. These academic interests reflect a shift from an emphasis on working class activism as the capacity to mobilise grassroots constituencies in support of demands antagonistic to capital towards an approach privileging the nature of trade unions as partners and critical voices inside a process of socio-economic modernisation. In this framework the democratic representative state and interactions with business can guarantee progressive outcomes in exchange for workers' co-operation, also in the absence of fundamental systemic changes. The importance of these trade-offs, on the other hand, is underlined by academics who, while sympathetic towards labour, point at the fact that the South African democratisation takes place in a context of economic liberalisation and neoliberal ideological hegemony. These have turned out to constitute a harsh predicament for both historically entrenched national labour movements and trade unions in developing countries (Adler and Webster, 1999).

The fashionable aspect of co-determination for this line of argument is given – as I have noticed elsewhere (Barchiesi, 1998) – by the reconciliation that the concept allows of imperatives of adaptation to, and transcendence of, the globalised capitalist order, imperatives that would otherwise be in uncomfortable relation, if not open contradiction. Instead, the use of 'co-determination' in South African debates promises a solution that, while accepting the need to adapt to requirements for liberalisation and competitiveness on the global markets, identifies labour as a strategic asset and a vehicle, not an impediment. This is allowed by the unions' acceptance of productivity, co-operation and non-adversarialism in production as tools to advance the interests of waged workers. It is also made possible by the institutionalisation of labour's independent power in structures with a capacity to shape not only wages and working conditions, but investment strategies, patterns of innovation, forms of corporate social responsibility. In this way liberalisation is turned into a 'win-win' game that transcends the borders of unilateral managerial decision-making and appropriation of workers' input. The peculiarity of co-determination in this scheme is that it focuses specifically on the workplace dynamics that should parallel and reinforce similar developments at the level of macroeconomic policy-making (through institution like NEDLAC) and sectoral negotiations for industrial restructuring.

These ideological assumptions underpin what is to date the most systematic attempt at elaborating the concept of co-determination in different South African institutional and productive environments. The book *Engaging the State and Business: The Labour Movement and Co-determination in Contemporary*

South Africa, edited by Glenn Adler combines case studies from various industrial sectors with analyses of the current state of the implementation of co-determination, the obstacles it faces, and the prospects for its advancement as an agenda for change in industrial relations. The book is the result of a research project by the National Labour and Economic Development Institute (NALEDI), whose results have been presented during the past few years in various academic and union forums.

Common to all the contributions for this book is the aim to understand co-determination as a set of arrangements and practices that do not merely reproduce experiences that flourished in (especially northern) Europe, particularly during the three decades of post-war welfare capitalism's 'golden age'. Rather, the book tries to conceptualise South African experiments with co-determination as creative elaborations of different European dynamics and debates in ways that define a normative and institutional framework that primarily responds to South African peculiarities. In this way, workplace-based processes and interactions between workers and managers are part of a broader system of 'engagement', which includes also forums for industrial restructuring and tripartite corporatist decision-making. 'Engagement' is defined as institutionalised regular interactions that prevent unilateral decision-making by capital or the state. The South African reality has been characterised in the past by the unions' long history of grassroots radical militancy and self-organisation, and by the fact that conflict has led to a 'stalemate' between labour and capital, implying the impossibility for one of the two to prevail in a confrontational game. At the same time, economic liberalisation faces labour and business with a common challenge, providing also opportunities to enter negotiated deals and trade-offs between decision-making powers and co-operation and commitment to enhance competitiveness. These deals are arguably facilitated by a long-standing culture of negotiation shared even during periods of conflict by the two social actors. In fact, they take place in a context that does not deny the existence of conflicts, but it assumes them as a starting point to search for common grounds where the strength and the independence of the organisations involved should provide a legitimacy unusual in African contexts marked by co-opted or emasculated worker organisations.

The long introductory essay by Glenn Adler provides the programmatic outline of this project, not just in terms of analysis of concepts, but also in what is ostensibly a progressive labour agenda for social transformation. In this chapter, in particular, 'engagement' emerges quite clearly in its double meaning as an element of interpretation of current trends and as an advocated strategy for the union movement. However, the co-existence of these two meanings proves extremely problematic in the book, especially in some valuable empirical contributions, and it shapes a number of serious shortcomings that severely question the validity of this kind of approach. In fact, the assumptive logic of co-determination and engagement – and the concern with the minimisation of social conflict in general – as the most effective ways to define a progressive role for organised labour in a 'globalised world' easily prevail in most of the chapters. This is to the detriment of a thorough investigation of other possible scenarios opened for co-determination in the present phase, and it enters an unresolved tension with substantial empirical evidence from the cases discussed, which often contradicts that very logic. The book is ultimately flawed by a confusion in its concepts of co-determination and engagement between what is an analysis of actual potentials and what is a prescriptive set of imperatives to which reality is required to eventually adapt. This reveals a series of crucial misreadings and underestimations.

In the first place, the book is strikingly silent, or at best quite superficial, on the question of the impact of social power relations on the solutions the authors advocate. In general, the book argues that co-determination does not necessarily lead towards an increasing convergence of orientations between labour and business, or worse to the co-optation of the former by the latter. All the authors agree that how far labour will be able to push forward its agenda in co-determinist structures will depend on the ability to use its strength in an innovative and proactive way, without merely opposing or abstaining from opportunities for worker participation. In this way, the outcome of co-determination is regarded as depending on the level and the kind of power that different social forces exercise on its institutions. From a union's point of view the ability to 'use' power is linked predominantly (especially in the essays by Sakhela Buhlungu and Karl Gostner and Avril Joffe) to 'capacity building' as a concept that includes a whole variety of factors, from finances, to union training, expertise, up to punctuality in the attendance of meetings. In this way, institutions of co-determination are essentially regarded as tools, or levers in a machine: the capacity to move the machine in a certain direction is made dependent on the purely technical skill and aptitude with which its levers are handled. This, so to speak, 'hydraulic' model underestimates various other ways in which power operates in institutions. As, among others, scholars from Foucauldian or 'critical management studies' traditions (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992) have argued, power is not merely something that is 'used' in institutions. Rather, forms of social control and power relations in society at large actually shape institutions, their rationality, aims, possibilities, constraints, in ways that are often invisible to, or rationalised 'ex post' by, the actors involved, leading to consequences that are unintended by programmes, ideologies and agendas. Nonetheless, the power effectively exercised and the resources controlled by different social actors inside an institutional framework are structurally linked to, albeit not univocally determined by, the location and strength of those actors in the broader society, economy, politics and relations of production.

It is precisely on the relationships between forms of co-determination in production and power balances in end-of-century South African capitalism that omissions and silences in the book become particularly evident. While it maintains a view based on the neutrality of techno-administrative apparatuses that can be voluntaristically bent in specific directions provided there is the 'capacity' to do so, the book says very little on the ways in which external social dynamics are *already* influencing forms, practices and ideologies of 'engagement'. This aspect is usually confined to a rhetorical evocation of the power gained by labour during 'the struggle', which in itself has arguably defined unions today as crucial social interlocutors. On the other hand, only in one case (the essay by Hirschsohn, Godfrey and Maree on industrial policy in the clothing and automobile industry, probably the most valuable in the collection), is the actor 'government' explored in some complexity. It is emphasised, in fact, how the state has been interested in those two industries not in promoting engagement as a holistic strategy, but only in supporting its aspects that are more functional to a free-market agenda (although substantial blame for this outcome is placed, again, on the unions' lack of seriousness and commitment in 'using' co-determination in an alternative way).

Buhlungu's chapter argues correctly that the danger of 'co-optation' of labour inside co-determinist structures is misleading if it refers to some presumed inherent 'essence' of such structures in a capitalist society. However, this does not exempt advocates of co-determination and 'win-win' social deals with capital from a careful analysis of the social context in which co-determination takes place. This task, which goes well beyond purely prescriptive assumptions on how unions should 'use' the system, is largely absent in the book, and yet the directions that 'engagement' can actually take depend on these factors to a substantial degree. The book underlines differences between the South African and the northern European (particularly German) experiences in mainly formal terms (for example by comparing the provisions on workplace forums in the 1995 Labour Relations Act and the German practice of works councils), but differences in terms of social contexts hardly figure. In Germany, for example, co-determination followed a Weimarian tradition of constitutional compromise between capitalism and socialism (Mezzadra, 1999) that provided a powerful ideological tool for a weakened capitalist class to recruit labour in the task of post-war reconstruction. German unions, initially suspicious, fully endorsed co-determination only when they could mobilise its workplace structures to counter militant struggles that were questioning the wage-productivity link negotiated in a Keynesian welfare context (Roth, 1974). This is similar to other European cases, as witnessed in Italy by the union federations' 'EUR policy' based on productivity pacts and wage restraints in the context of powerful popular uprisings after mid-1970s.

However, the social conditions of the South African transition have been starkly different. Here democratisation has not promoted any comparable constitutional compromise between capital and a Fordist working class. The political transition rather prevented such an outcome with a constitutional settlement and policy choices that decisively entrenched the centrality of the enterprise, market relations and private property. This precisely when there was a powerful opinion inside labour, in the aftermath of the 1991 VAT strike, that a normative codification of a social pact with capital was needed to define precise social commitments for the ANC's action as a ruling party. Moreover, the question of the incorporation of the working class in the structures of the democratic state has surfaced here in totally different terms. Market forces and international competitiveness, rather than Keynesian/welfarist approaches based on full employment policies and an expansion of public intervention, were delegated with this task in South Africa. In Europe co-determination was brought on the table by the bargaining power of working class mobilisation in a phase of national productivity deals. In South Africa the concept becomes fashionable (after a brief appearance in 1970s moderate unionism) when labour is requested to defend and justify its very existence in a liberalised economy, faced with insistent claims by capital that a successful global economic strategy can (and often does) rely on fragmentation of bargaining, deregulated flexibility and union avoidance. It finally sounds paradoxical that co-determinist ideologies arise in South Africa precisely when market-based solutions are mobilised in Europe to undermine co-determinist traditions and institutions. This is witnessed by the decline of the concept in a post-unification Germany marked by a competition between Eastern and Western regions, and local and migrant workers, where co-determination is generally unable to oppose downward pressures on employees' wages, conditions and protections (Upchurch, 2000). In the approving words of a recent report (Streeck, 1998), co-determination is shifting away from the maintenance and the protection of rights towards the incorporation of labour in decentralised, less formalised deals where such rights are made more dependent on international market competitiveness.

It is true that Germany is not, as Adler notices, the only model of successful co-determination (although it is definitely the most often cited example in the book). However it is a case that underlines the importance of studying social and historical specificities that made co-determination *particularly* successful as a point of accommodation of interests and relative working class advance. The underestimation of the role played by such specificities produces two negative consequences in Adler's book. First, it makes the concept of co-determination extremely vague: in the final analysis its definition comes to rely on its desired outcomes, rather than on some generalisation out of an empirical reality. In other words, co-determination defines *any* institutionalised practice of compromise that in the authors' views increases unions' influence on decision-making (or 'co-determines' it). Therefore, the definition becomes purely tautological. From this point of view, also diverse patterns of collective bargaining can be subsumed under 'co-determination', as long as they contain and minimise adversarialism and maximise participation. But in this way of defining co-determination becomes a matter of value judgement based on the reduction of social conflict, assumed as the most undesirable outcome. Second, the book's neglect of the social conditions and contradictions that underpin co-determination as a historical fact rather than just an ideological device, end up precisely in what the book claims to avoid: the adherence to an idealised view based on a simplistic reading of the European experience. Here co-determination and corporatism are supposedly 'associated with union success in weathering the storm of globalisation' (p. 27), a conclusion that has been at least questioned by the above mentioned research into north European cases.

Co-determination is indeed facing a profound worldwide crisis because it is now surpassed by new coordinates that class struggle assumes on a global scale. These increasingly involve, on one side, a capital that is de-nationalised, financialised and networked — 'imperial', according to the important formulation by Hardt and Negri (2000). On the other side a diversified working class is emerging which, having – often unsuccessfully – contested mechanisms of social subordination based on national productivity-cum-welfare pacts, articulates now conflictual subjectivities that are problematically identified with trade unions and industrial relations institutions. This affects workers at both ends of the labour market, individualised cognitive-intellectual workforce and precarious, hyper-flexible employees alike. In South Africa, moreover, the democratic transition is facing a balance of class forces between capital and labour that can hardly be defined as a 'stalemate'. Several aspects are important in this regard to explain capital's offensive, and these are generally ignored in Adler's book:

1. The South African transition has developed into a policy context marked by strong continuities with the past, and where the idea of a market- and company-led modernisation, which the racist regime unsuccessfully tried to adopt in its final stages, finds new legitimation under the democratic government (Bond, 2000).
2. A massive transfer of wealth has taken place in the past ten years from wages towards profits and, especially, financial rent, which with a 30 percent share of the GDP forecasted for 2010 (Standard Bank, 1999) is becoming the most important sector of the economy, and it is also the most globalised and separated from national systems of negotiated regulation.
3. Commodification and marketisation of basic social necessities have increased. This, together with high unemployment and the rise of atypical forms of work, is widening the areas of working class poverty and exclusion by eroding the living standards of waged labour (Barchiesi, 2001). At the same time, COSATU's ability to push for expansionary policies inside corporatist institutions is confronted by 'non negotiable' public spending limitations endorsed by its main alliance partner, a point this that is simply mentioned in passing in the book.

4. A technocratic style of decision-making has emerged to sidestep democratic-representative institutional circuits, not to talk about the marginal position of organs such as NEDLAC in important areas of economic policy intervention. This is for example apparent in the rising prominence of the Department of Finance in imposing a cost-containment approach to dynamics of social delivery (Marais, 2001). As a result, the very meaning of 'democratic institutions' and their scope are questioned. Once the problem is read in terms that interrogate the very nature of a political system, it can be doubted whether labour's effective response is mainly a matter of union 'capacity building'.
5. In this situation, the capacity of COSATU as the main union federation to advance an alternative agenda appears increasingly subordinated to the requirements of alliance politics under the leadership of an ANC increasingly prone to macroeconomic conservatism. This point is touched on by many contributors, but rather superficially: much more could be said about the nature of the ANC itself, of its popular and symbolic appeal, of its capacity to combine apparently contradictory developmentalist approaches, which can explain the coexistence of corporatism and neoliberalism in South Africa beyond supposed ideological discrepancies.
6. The composition of the South African working class is changing dramatically with the emergence of precarious, highly vulnerable, unprotected and fragmented workforces in industries that provide important union strongholds. These processes challenge the organisational and representative capacity of the unions, confining many of them to purely defensive battles on maintaining wages, conditions and levels of employment. The total neglect of this aspect is particularly serious in a book that has as one of its main concerns to strengthen the unions' capacity to 'use' institutions of engagement.
7. Massive retrenchments have affected many highly unionised industries and sites where a conscious permanent workforce is employed. Often these job-shedding processes have been facilitated by clauses on 'operational requirements' – which have restricted workers' capacity to respond to unilateral restructuring and increased the employers' discretion – contained in the same LRA that the book indicates as a fundamental achievement of labour's 'engagement', and an avenue for a progressive form of co-determination.

These factors are rarely mentioned, let alone discussed, in the book. Much more space is given instead to the hopes provided to the co-determinist ideology by what has turned out to be the real 'non-event' of the post-1995 industrial relations system in South Africa: the workplace forums, the reasons for whose failure are not, on the other hand, examined. However, the social processes summarised above have had the consequence of shifting the balance of power of the South African transition and providing capital with a strategic advantage that allows it a plurality of options to enforce working class discipline, compliance and commitment to productivity and competitiveness. Actually, all the empirical studies in the book (the already cited one by Hirschsohn et al, together with the case studies proposed by these latter and by Webster and Macun) recognise this fundamental imbalance in everyday labour-capital relations. Although they do not analyse this reality in terms of broader social dynamics, they nonetheless recognise that even when employers try to adopt co-determination as a method, this is usually done in pseudo-participatory forms to enforce co-operation and consent without worker decision-making.

However, if the social factors here mentioned were deeply analysed and discussed, then proponents of co-determination would have to produce a much more convincing case for this concept as a progressive strategy of social transformation (which of course cannot be excluded *a priori*). In the absence of such a case, which the book fails to deliver, the likelihood is that worker co-operation will become at best the expression of forms of defensive accommodation for a highly flexible and exploited workforce. Addressing similar anxieties, some contributors in the book (Vishwas Satgar, David Jarvis and Ari Sitas) emphasise a need to go beyond a mere production-centred view of co-determination to embrace, respectively, forms of worker self-management and decision-making involving civil society organisations at the grassroots. But, once it is framed inside the book's concept of co-determination and engagement, with the shortcomings here illustrated, this ambitious agenda just reinforces an impression of vagueness.

The shortcomings of the book touch on problems referring to the nature of the South African democracy and capitalism, the relations between the two, the role of an independent working class politics, the erosion of power and influence for an expanding marginalised section of the population, and the substance of the unions' aims to represent these dynamics inside institutional arrangements. These are some of the issues that are decisive to measure the performance of institutions and organisations in terms of advancing democracy and social delivery. But on these Adler's book has very little to say. Its endorsement of co-determination ends up in an unconvincing ideological plea that does not show how much labour has actually to gain from pursuing this strategy rather than, for example, a more radical and conflictual grassroots mobilisation for basic decommodified services, forms of social income de-linked from the wage form, and global networks of solidarity in alliance with other social movements.

In fact, the adverse fate of co-determination and corporatism reflects the eclipse of national welfare states and the 'nexus' between wage and social inclusion in many industrialised economies. But it is also the product of the emergence of subjects that try to be antagonist to capital when this latter is more capable to globalise the terrain of contestation. This is reflected by the struggles of migrant workers, precarious 'feminised' workforces, environmental and peace movements, and others who are defining new agendas of confrontation that directly tackles corporate globalisation (Klein, 2000). The 1999 Seattle demonstrations or the capacity that the Zapatista uprising had to ignite broader processes of mobilisation and democratisation are representative of these dynamics, which question time-honoured borders of working class politics. Labour movements worldwide are faced with the challenge of responding to these forms of mobilisation and conflict (Waterman, 1999), and South African work and labour studies are dealing with these issues with a considerable delay. As I have argued in the past (Barchiesi, 1998), part of this delay is due to a sort of reductionism that considers social dynamics only as far as they can be represented, mediated and moderated institutionally, and it identifies 'labour' with 'trade union organisations' as vehicles of compromise in a way that marginalises (when it does not denigrate) real-life processes of formation of working class subjectivity, needs, demands and conflict.

If the advocacy of co-determination and corporatism is premised on this restriction of the field of analysis – often regardless of the very empirical evidence produced by proponents of these concepts – this gives legitimacy to the doubt that it will be functional to some sort of frozen productivity and flexibility deal between big business and big labour under the aegis of the state. This would confirm the centrality for social rights and citizenship of waged labour, but it cannot address the needs of the majority of the South African working class that has either been *de facto* expelled or has never been part of dignified labour. As a consequence, co-determination would leave to the market the final decision on the modes, the times and the extent of social inclusion and citizenship. The recruitment of the social sciences in this operation, while probably appreciated by a university whose survival is made dependent on its usefulness for corporate performance, faces critical sociologists with a series of new, unsettling questions.

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In the past decade, the concept of 'transnationalism' has entered the lexicon of migration scholars, embraced by those who are attracted to its attempts to capture the distinctive and characteristic features of the new immigrant communities that have developed in those receiving societies with large immigrant flows (Kivisto, 2001). *Transnationalism and New African Immigration to South Africa* takes on the formidable task of charting the interplay between the notion of transnationalism and contemporary migration. This is a good collection of essays, one of the finest of its kind that I have encountered regarding research on international migration in the Southern African region. The eight individual

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Three major themes are addressed in this collection of essays: first, the changing character of cross-border migration to South Africa; second, the value of the conceptual apparatus of transnationalism as an analytical tool to understanding contemporary migration; and third, the spatial reconfiguration and emergence of new migrant spaces in South Africa. The concise and very informative Introduction by the editors (Jonathan Crush and David McDonald) deals with transnationalism: as a conceptual tool in the analytic arsenal of migration scholars, to get to grips with new forms of African migration that are emerging, and with the idea of the construction of border-crossing social spaces. Utilising extensive empirical evidence, they argue that it is necessary to situate studies of international migration in the area of transnationalism. They offer a rationale for the utilisation of a conceptual framework of transnationalism to explain new forms of African migration to South Africa. I contend that this argument is correct because 'transnationalism', as a conceptual framework, provides an adequate basis for comprehending the dialectical interplay between homeland concerns and receiving society concerns, and the input this interplay has on immigrants (Kivisto, 2001). However, a crucial question that can be asked is: are all contemporary immigrants and migrants in South Africa transnational?

Sally Peberdy and Christian Rogerson examine the rise of African migrant and immigrant entrepreneurship in South Africa. They provide a detailed analysis of how these entrepreneurs are connected to strong informal and formal transnational networks of trade, entrepreneurship, and migration. Transnational networks rank among the most important explanatory factors of international migration. However, the debates around the issues of transnationalism, trade, and migration should also address the following issues and questions: How do these networks grow or stagnate? (Arango, 200); What are the dynamics of cooperation and conflict within these transnational networks? (Portes, 1999); Why do other immigrants and migrants elect not to participate in these networks?

Stephen Lubkemann's essay explores the emergence of a transnational migrant community that links the Machaze area of Mozambique with the Vaal townships of South Africa. He argues that through transnationalisation, polygyny has emerged as a strategy for dealing with broader political instability and economic insecurity. The notion of 'transnational migrant spaces' – an idea that treats the migratory process as a boundary-breaking process in which two or more states are penetrated and become part of a singular new transnational space – has a heuristic value. The question that could be raised is: whether or not this transnational social space, that has been created, will prove to be little more than a phenomenon describing the immigrant generation. A corollary of the above question relates to the durability of these transnational ties with the passage of time (Kivisto, 2001). The deployment of 'transnational polygyny' as a coping strategy by migrant men is an important theme that merits further research attention. What would be the consequences of this on women and children? Does marriage matter (Waite, 1995) to these men? Who exactly benefits from this type of polygynous marriage? These are some of the questions that should also be addressed.

Cohen (in Dodson, 1998:12) writes: 'Many studies of migration have dealt with women as a residual category, as those left behind ... women have been generally treated as dependents or family members. They were effectively the baggage of male workers'. Zlotnik (1995:229) adds: '...the extent of women's involvement in international migration has generally been overlooked, mainly because women have been viewed as "dependents", moving as wives, mothers or daughters of male migrants'. The above comments reflect the classical view of a women migrant that is embedded in the early models of migration. It has been an enduring view of women's migration that, until recently, was taken as an absolute fact. However, such a view is not only misleading, but it also provides a false account of women's migration that has been exclusively distilled from the experiences of male migrants. Theresa Ulicki and Jonathan Crush's article, entitled 'Gender, Farmwork, and Women's Migration from Lesotho to the New South Africa', is an important contribution to the burgeoning scholarship on gender, work, and international migration. It adds on to the collective effort aimed at correcting masculine bias in migration theorising. However, Pessar (1999) counsels that there is a need to develop theories and design research that capture the simultaneity of gender, class, race and ethnic exploitation. I believe that Ulicki and Crush's work is a positive step in that direction.

Bourdieu (in Stolcke, 1995: 1) states : 'Everywhere ... the immigrant calls for a complete rethinking of the legitimate basis of citizenship and the relationship between the state and the nation or nationality'. Maxine Reitzes and Sivuyile Bam's work contributes to the debates on this theme. They argue that the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion have been redrawn in 1994. They then examine the implications of this process for relationships between South Africans and immigrants in the Winterveld area. While this article focuses on citizenship, immigration, and identity construction, associated processes are also examined, namely the role of civil society in immigrant adaptation, the dynamics of citizen and immigrant conflict, and the socioeconomic adaptation of immigrants. This essay is a significant contribution to the literature that deals with the connection between anti-immigrant sentiments, nationalism and related constructs, such as ethnicity, and citizenship. There is a substantial amount of empirical and theoretical work that has been done in this area focusing on Western and Eastern European societies (See Schnapper, 1994; Kurthen, 1995; Knudsen, 1997; Pettigrew, 1998, Hjerm, 1998). This theme, regarding the relationship between national sentiments and reactions towards new immigrants is of growing importance. I argue that to better comprehend the contemporary anti-immigrant sentiment in South Africa, and the rhetoric of exclusion that underpin this, it would be necessary to look at how it manifests itself in other international contexts.

The effects of intergroup contact and how it may affect change has always intrigued scholars. These scholars have primarily been concerned with efforts to promote contact with the idea that this may break down barriers to racial integration and adaptation of immigrants. David McDonald examines the process of interaction between citizens and non-citizens. He also addresses the issue of both the type and kind of contact between these two groups. He raises the following questions: What kind of contact is taking place between citizens and non-citizens in South Africa? Would more direct contact help to alleviate anti-immigrant attitudes and behavior? Should the government of South Africa be thinking about ways to promote more direct contact in its professed concerns about xenophobia in the country? Although McDonald's research was not designed to test the 'contact hypothesis', it is, at least, fair to add these few questions to the ones he addresses: namely: To what extent is integroup contact shaped by propinquity and personal characteristics? (Sigelman, at.al., 1996.) Would the promotion of childhood contact, rather than adult contact, not help in efforts to foster positive attitudes towards immigrants? Finally, there is the issue of causal direction. In other words, does 'contact' influence attitudes, or is it the other way round? Sigelman and Welch (1993) contend that the latter question cannot be definitely resolved without longitudinal data.

Belinda Dodson and Catherine Oelofse look at the vexed question concerning the relationship between material circumstances and xenophobic sentiments. They argue that in a context of material poverty and high unemployment, competition for jobs can fuel xenophobia and related violence. The 'competition argument' – the thesis that xenophobia stems from an intensive rivalry between migrant and indigenous groups – has both been validated and rebutted. However, Wimmer (1997) has argued that the intensity of hate and conflict need not depend on real competition on the job market, but on the 'perception' of threat. It seems more probable that ethnic conflicts as well as xenophobic movements are waged not over individual goods but over collective goods. In other words, the critical issue here is not the competition over individual goods (e.g. houses, jobs, etc.), but the competition over collective goods. The above idea does not, however, invalidate the 'competition argument'. The idea expressed by xenophobes that 'foreigners take away our jobs' must still be taken into serious consideration.

The final article, by Brij Maharaj and Vadi Moodley, examines the geography, character and impacts of New African Immigration to the Durban region. In this short article, the authors address the biographical profile of these 'new' African immigrants (many of whom are unauthorised migrants), their economic motivations, and the emergence and strengthening of transnational ties within this community of immigrants. The question of why Durban has suddenly attracted the new African migrants needs further investigation. Any explanation that accentuates economic motives alone cannot be sufficient in addressing the perennial question: why do people migrate? In addition, if there has been an emergence and consolidation of transnational ties within this immigrant community, then, what are the possibilities for this to trigger 'chain migration'? What would be the demographic impacts of this situation regarding the population composition of Durban?

In conclusion, this book has something for everyone interested in immigration, and the stories it tells reach well beyond South Africa's national boundaries. Scholars, across disciplines, will learn a tremendous amount about contemporary immigration in South Africa, and why the patterns of earlier migrant groups do not always hold true for the present day. On a different note, I have no idea why pages 93, 96, 97, 100, 101, 104, 105, and 108 are missing.

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Completed in mid 2001, this book has proven remarkably prescient in its predictions as to the unsustainability of the current growth regime in the United States. Drawing on historical theories of long waves, this book explores the dominant trajectory of the US economy, the extent to which earlier systemic crisis were partially resolved, and the current crisis of adjustment. In the introduction, Brenner provides an overview of the implications of the Asian financial crisis and associated knock-ons for the US economy, and the place of the US within the global financial system. In response – as it has done repetitively since then – the US Federal Reserve lowered interest rates, to resolve a growing credit crunch and a long-term crisis of consumer demand. The aim was, quite simply, prop up share prices and – interrelatedly – to increase the paper wealth of US households, in order that the latter could borrow and spend more. This led to a renewed spurt of stockmarket speculation, revived consumer spending, and a temporary stay of execution. In effect, the bubble of over-inflated share prices and unsustainable borrowing was further reinflated enabling the US economy to avoid a full blown recession – in effect, to defy gravity just that much longer. Since then, the Fed has continued to inflate the bubble to dangerous proportions. Major falls in share prices since mid-2000 have 'sent the wealth effect into reverse', resulting in ongoing cutbacks in output and investment. Nonetheless, in each case, share prices have partially rebounded through interest rate cuts, and renewed bouts of speculation.

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Completed in mid 2001, this book has proven remarkably prescient in its predictions as to the unsustainability of the current growth regime in the United States. Drawing on historical theories of long waves, this book explores the dominant trajectory of the US economy, the extent to which earlier systemic crisis were partially resolved, and the current crisis of adjustment. In the introduction, Brenner provides an overview of the implications of the Asian financial crisis and associated knock-ons for the US economy, and the place of the US within the global financial system. In response – as it has done repetitively since then – the US Federal Reserve lowered interest rates, to resolve a growing credit crunch and a long-term crisis of consumer demand. The aim was, quite simply, prop up share prices and – interrelatedly – to increase the paper wealth of US households, in order that the latter could borrow and spend more. This led to a renewed spurt of stockmarket speculation, revived consumer spending, and a temporary stay of execution. In effect, the bubble of over-inflated share prices and unsustainable borrowing was further reinflated enabling the US economy to avoid a full blown recession – in effect, to defy gravity just that much longer. Since then, the Fed has continued to inflate the bubble to dangerous proportions. Major falls in share prices since mid-2000 have 'sent the wealth effect into reverse', resulting in ongoing cutbacks in output and investment. Nonetheless, in each case, share prices have partially rebounded through interest rate cuts, and renewed bouts of speculation.

In chapter 1, Brenner argues that there has been a situation of 'persistent stagnation' from 1973-1993. During the great recession, production costs had been greatly trimmed, enabling the US to strongly benefit from increased demand during the Second World War. This advantage continued into the immediate post war years, but was soon eroded by later-developing economies such as Japan and Germany, who were able to exploit the advantages of having little capital sunk in obsolete technology, and 'institutional forms and government policies' that enhanced growth. Bent on 'containing communism' and the expansion of markets abroad, the US had little option but to support its emerging rivals' economic rise. By the late 1960s, this led to gross global industrial over-capacity and falling rates of profit, leading on to the recession of the 1970s. The failure of classic Keynsian solutions directly led on to Thatcherist and Reaganist alternatives. Yet the monetarist solutions – and more specifically high interest rates introduced by the Reagan administration in the early 1980s – threatened a global financial crisis.

In chapter 2, Brenner explores the reasons underlying the US's recovery. Given the failure of its early monetarist experiments, the Reagan administration was forced to adopt a distorted form of war Keynsianism, associated with monumental defence spending, and tax cuts for the rich, leading to enormous trade and current account deficits, yet temporarily pulling the global economy out of full-blown recession. Meanwhile, persistent over-capacity in manufacturing forced the US economy to increasingly rely on service sector activity. In 1987, the US stock market collapsed; government money released to stave off collapse led to a final speculative fling.

However, the Clinton government's espousal of fiscal austerity in the early 1990s – ending the profligate deficit spending of preceding Republican administrations – led to 'private investment and debt (being) left to drive the system forward on its own'. It also led to an initially 'jobless recovery' and continuing manufacturing overcapacity. This was, however, partially resolved by a dollar devaluation and interest rate cuts to prop up demand, leading to a revival in manufacturing by 1993, assisted by cost saving through large scale employment cutbacks and the cumulative benefits accorded by the freezing of real wages for more than a decade. However, capital continued to lurch from manufacturing to financial speculation.

Chapter 3 explores the experiences of Japan and Germany from 1980 to the mid-1990s. In the case of Germany, a high currency and high labour costs placed a major profits squeeze on the key manufacturing sector, a crisis only temporarily resolved by the 'unification boom'. Faced with similar problems, Japanese firms shifted capacity to East Asia leading to a revival of profitability levels, but ultimately negatively impacting on domestic production and employment, leading to a severe downturn. In order to prop up the global economy once again, to attract renewed foreign investment to plug a rising current account deficit, and to reduce domestic prices (and contain inflation), the US chose to allow a new rise to the dollar, the costs to domestic manufacturing notwithstanding. Whilst the knock-on effects (in terms of Yen devaluations, and hence currency volatility in emerging Asian economies) directly led to the Asian financial crisis, it also led to a temporary revival in German and Japanese manufacturing and an equity boom in the US. The latter represented 'the onset of the bubble', the subject of chapter 5.

The costs imposed on domestic manufacturing by an overvalued dollar led to a continued squeeze on profits, only partially alleviated by repressing wages. However, the high dollar also magnified the rise of US share prices in international terms, leading to further bouts of speculation. The hype surrounding technology stocks soon led to share prices assuming an independence from profitability levels. Easy credit led to non-financial corporations engaging in the most blatant financial manipulation, such as borrowing to buy back their own shares to buoy up their values. Yet, as chapter 6 underscores, a high currency made US manufacturing exports increasingly uncompetitive, problems exacerbated by the Asian financial crisis. As the author highlights in Chapter 7, these problems did not preclude further share price rises; by March 2000, the price-earnings ratio for US corporations on the S&P 500 index reached an unprecedented high of 32, more than twice the historical average.

In Chapter 8, the author assesses the limits of the wealth effect. In the late 1990s, booming share prices greatly enhanced the net worth of US households, matched by increased borrowing and declining savings rates. Meanwhile, large scale corporate borrowing 'goaded equity prices upwards', resulting in unprecedented corporate debt-equity ratios. Meanwhile, consumption of households greatly increased. But the wealthiest Americans were largely responsible for resultant boom; economic growth became, quite simply, driven by yuppie spending. Meanwhile, to plug the chronic current account deficit, the US became increasingly reliant on foreign investment, fuelled by the mediocre performance of many East Asian economies, and the desire of East Asian governments to depress their own currencies in the interests of export competitiveness. Yet this boom failed to resolve the falling profit rate suffered by US manufacturing firms.

In the following chapter, the author notes that the 'New Economy' boom of the late 1990s was in fact mediocre when compared to the performance of the US economy earlier that century; in short, contrary to the hyperbole, unprecedented new wealth had not been unlocked. Moreover, as we have seen, the boom was driven by speculation, rather than the real performance of firms. In the penultimate chapter, the author notes that in the second half of 2000 and the first half of 2001, GDP growth fell by levels unprecedented in the post-war epoch; the period of correction had begun. Finally, in Chapter 11, Brenner argues that the deflation of the stockmarket bubble has begun to propel the world backwards into full blown recession. Should equity prices fall below a certain level, the US will no longer be a safe haven to foreign investors, placing downward pressure on the dollar. Investment necessary to fund the deficit could only be reattracted through interest rate increases, which would result in a domestic credit crunch, causing further declines in equity prices and consumer demand; the 'meltdown scenario'. At the time of writing this review, the inevitable has been temporarily staved off by renewed bouts of hype and speculation; interest rate cuts have, so far, been able to reflate the bubble, and, hence, keep the US stock market attractive to foreigners. But the rickety props supporting a veritable Potemkin village are increasingly visible.

It is hardly surprising that, given the tyranny of the rational choice paradigm within mainstream economics, such a powerful critique of contemporary capitalism is provided by an historical sociologist. Yet this does not mean a softness regarding empirical detail; Brenner provides a wealth of quantitative evidence to buttress up his arguments. There is little doubt that Brenner is *right* about the fundamental crisis facing the US and global economy; the challenge is now to provide more detailed theoretical constructs founded on this masterful overview.

Johann Graaff. *What is Sociology?* Cape Town. Oxford University Press. 2002.

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This book is first in a series of what the publisher Oxford University Press describe as 'small books'. The series aims to present foundational sociological topics in modular form, i.e. each topic in a separate book. Students need buy only the modules relevant to their course. The idea is to cut down on the cost students would incur buying a 600-page conventional textbook in which a large number of chapters are never used. The first five topics will offer introductions to sociology in general (the book under review); social institutions (education and the family), crime and deviance, population studies and industrial sociology.

The editors promise that each book in the series will be written in such a way that it tells a coherent story with a 'developing and cumulative theme'. The style will be 'lucid, logical and organized' and the exercises in the book 'geared towards higher cognitive skills'. In addition the books will deal with issues of some substance in sociology, with clear and accessible discussions written in language that 'flows and entertains as it educates'. While rejecting the notion of a southern African sociology, the series does claim to utilise southern African reference points and examples. The final promise of the series introduction is that in putting question marks behind some of our most dearly held beliefs it downward pressure on the dollar. Investment necessary to fund the deficit could only be reattracted through interest rate increases, which would result in a domestic credit crunch, causing further declines in equity prices and consumer demand; the 'meltdown scenario'. At the time of writing this review, the inevitable has been temporarily staved off by renewed bouts of hype and speculation; interest rate cuts have, so far, been able to reflate the bubble, and, hence, keep the US stock market attractive to foreigners. But the rickety props supporting a veritable Potemkin village are increasingly visible.

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The potential reader will be forgiven, on reading this introduction, for thinking that they have picked up a Stephen King novel rather than a sober academic textbook. Or perhaps not. Maybe now that we have in many South African universities done away with discipline-based departments and introduced 'programmes' in their place, we have left behind the stuffy halls of classical academia and entered the realm of social science as popular culture, a roller-coaster ride of thrills and spills that entertains as it educates.

And in this new environment who better to kick off with than Johann Graaff? I had the pleasure of working with him in the erstwhile University of Bophuthatswana, where as head of the Development Studies department, he spent many hours honing our skills in the art of lecturing. For him a logical structure, clarity of presentation and keeping your audience interested constituted the essence of good communication practice. The latter, apart from humorous asides, meant using examples to illustrate concepts that have a real resonance in the student's own lives. These are virtues that I have cherished in my own teaching and writing to this day. One may not always agree with Johann Graaff, but at least you are always clear on what it is that he is saying.

His book *What is Sociology?* remains true to these ideals. The sixty eight-page book, which I managed to read in a few hours, is essentially an attempt to sell sociology as a discipline, explain basic sociological concepts, and outline the difference between common (non) sense and scientific 'hard and soft' theories. The last is illustrated through an exposition of the three major sociological paradigms: Marxism, Functionalism and Symbolic Interactionism. The language is clear and each section is logically structured. The examples used have a resonance in students own lives. These range from cooldrink cans as a relativised object, the use of students within the university to illustrate the meaning of system, Aunt Muriel as the purveyor of common (non) sense, to the development of the path through a grassy plain adjacent to a rural village as the entrenchment of social structure. The symbolic interactionist paradigm is illustrated through the study of migrant labour in South Africa.

The answer to the question what is sociology is answered in the first chapter entitled 'The Nature of Sociology'. After a clear summary of what the chapter entails in the introductory section, the author gets into the heart of the subject matter without further ado. The sociological imagination is explained through the related concepts of relativising, system-relating and debunking. The nature of sociology is further pursued through an exposition of the relationship between the individual and society (agent and structure). The one shortcoming here for me is the lack of any discussion of the idealist/materialist division that underlies this relationship. Graaff also fails to explain the difference between the common meaning of materialism and the philosophical one. The chapter ends with a discussion of the difference between science, social science and common sense and an explanation of theory as a systemised body of thinking. This latter section serves as a good introduction to the three chapters on Marxism, Functionalism and Symbolic Interactionism. The problem in this section is Graaff's attempt to distinguish between hard and soft theory. This leads him to grouping functionalism and Marxism together in the hard category, that for him is synonymous with positivism and macro theory. While I have no problem with the latter, the characterisation of Marxism as a positivist theory is problematic, given the central methodological rejection of Marxist realism of empiricism (a central claim of positivist science) and Marxism's insistence on uncovering underlying unobservable structure.

The central theme of the chapter on Marxism is an understanding of materialism. It contains four sections: dialectical materialism, materialism and production as the foundation of society, historical materialism as theory of social change, and a critique of Marxist materialism. The example of ancient Rome to illustrate the base/superstructure model, that is the way in which production processes have a profound influence on the other sectors of society, works well. Boxes on the side of the main text offer both biographical information on Marx as well as questions for students to consider. This format is carried through for each of the subsequent chapters. Missing from the chapter are two issues that I would consider central to understanding Marx's contribution to sociology in particular: his theory of alienation and his theory of exploitation of the worker under capitalism through the extraction of surplus value.

The chapter on functionalism considers the writings of two of the paradigm's best-known theorists, namely Durkheim and Parsons. The section on Durkheim, following through on a central element of the two previous chapters on the nature of sociology and Marxism, kicks off with the Durkheimian view of the relationship between the individual and society. Graaff uses both a contemporary example in the form of the popular movie *The Matrix* as well as Durkheim's classic study of suicide to illustrate the effect of social structures on even our most intimate behaviour. After a brief critique of functionalism, he goes on to discuss Parsons's contribution. This section concentrates very briefly on his famous AGIL schema, the exposition of the positive functions societies need in order to survive, and ends with another criticism of functionalism a la Parsons. One wonders whether a single critique of functionalism as a whole would not have served the chapter better.

The first two paradigms were examples of macro and what Graaff terms hard theories. As an example of micro/soft theory, he discusses symbolic interactionism. The chapter starts off with an outline of the main writers within the micro subjectivist paradigm, and then, rather confusingly, slips in Weber. This is no doubt due to Weber's straddling of both macro and micro approaches, and to the fact that although he provided many of the basic tenets of microsociology, he defies classification within any particular branch. This should be explained at the outset, given that the book is aimed at students with no background knowledge of the topic.

The box comparing Weber and Durkheim's approaches is interesting and provides for students a good illustration of the interrelation between structure and meaning. A short section on Giddens's structuation theory, on which Graaff has written about elsewhere, as an attempt to overcome this opposition would be useful. The rest of the chapter deals with Mead, and is well done. It covers meaning, pragmatism, the self and ends with a critique.

The final section of the chapter is entitled 'symbolic interactionism in practice', but it is actually an excellent consideration of migrant labour in South Africa through the lens of many different microsociologies, including Goffman, Schutz and Mead.

The last chapter in the book attempts a comparative conclusion and goes back to a consideration of the practical example of the village, the grassy plain and the path through it, used at the beginning of the book. Each of the paradigms outlined in the previous three chapters gets a turn to analyse the village and the structures and meanings it embodies. This is brought together nicely in both a comparative table and circular diagram. The book ends with useful exercises pitched at three levels of complexity and difficulty: simple understanding, transposition of ideas from one situation to another, and lastly, analytical questions that require independent thought. A glossary that defines the most important concepts used in the book and an annotated bibliography are also included.

In conclusion, the book may not give Stephen King much competition at the box office in its attempt to be 'exciting, surprising, angering, outrageous and scary', but it certainly does live up to its other claims. It tells a story with a developing and cumulative theme, is structured as a logical and sequential argument, and is written in a language that flows and entertains as it educates. Its minor shortcomings highlighted above could easily be corrected in subsequent editions. All in all it is a useful addition to the pedagogical tools available to the South African university lecturer/ tutor at both first and second year level. If sociology ever becomes a subject taught in schools, it will find a ready market at the senior levels.

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