

Michael Weldeghiorghis Tedla ~ The Eritrean Liberation Front: Social And Political Factors Shaping Its Emergence, Development And Demise, 1960-1981



*Young female soldier of the Eritrean
Liberation Front Eritrea 1975 -
Photo: eritrea-chat.com*

Introduction

In the second half of the twentieth century, Eritrea was an arena of uninterrupted armed conflict that went on for about three decades. The conflict was basically rooted in history and geography. But it was also aggravated by outside intervention for many years. Ethiopia being supported first by the US, Israel, and latter on by the USSR, and the Eritrean nationalists by socialist oriented Middle Eastern and Asian countries and organizations turned Eritrea into a proxy battle field between opposing forces during the Cold War era.

The protracted Eritrean war of independence started in 1961 under the auspices of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). The ELF (1960-1981) was the first, and largely Muslim-based, armed resistance movement that emerged to contest

Ethiopian rule over Eritrea. Formed in 1960, the ELF carried out political and military activities for the subsequent twenty years in an attempt to gain independence. This armed resistance movement was, however, unable to accomplish its stated goals of achieving independence. Rather, the task of achieving de facto independence was realized by its offspring organization in 1991. This study is, therefore, an attempt to reconstruct the history of a socio-political movement that has been important in the recent history of Eritrea: the Eritrean Liberation Front. In the following sections an attempt is made to outline the fundamental research problem and the motivation for my interest in undertaking the intended study, research questions, scope of the study, theoretical framework, methodology, relevance of the study, and organization of the thesis.

Problem Statement and Rationale

In 1950, the UN passed a resolution that federated Eritrea with Ethiopia, without any form of plebiscite. Within few years, Ethiopia dismantled the pillars of the federation that guaranteed Eritrea's limited autonomy one by one without hesitation. Throughout the federal period, Eritreans protested against Ethiopia's violations of the Eritrean autonomy. As it became quite difficult to organize and agitate inside Eritrea, the task of organizing a movement to promote the Eritrean cause fell on the Diaspora. Frustrated with the system, a new breed of Eritrean nationalists founded the underground Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM)**[i]** in Port Sudan in 1958. The ELM sought to terminate Ethiopian rule through a coup d'état. But before the ELM could attempt a coup, the war for independence was launched in 1961 under the auspices of the ELF.**[ii]** After that the country lapsed into a cycle of political disorder, violent conflict and human suffering in the three decades that followed.

The founders of the ELF were Eritrean political exiles and students in Cairo, Egypt, who drew inspiration from the Algerian revolution.**[iii]** The initial ELF leaders, who were living abroad, came mainly from Muslim backgrounds and this had a profound impact on the membership and mobilization of the ELF. Consequently, during the early years of the first decade of its history, the movement favoured Muslims over Christians.**[iv]**

In the 1960s, the movement nevertheless grew steadily as it started to attract support from diverse segments of the population and from the Diasporas. The fighters (also called Tegadelti in Tigrinya, one of the most widely spoken

languages in Eritrea) were individuals who came from diverse economic, social, educational, gender, and age backgrounds and came to be marked by their devotion to the success of the struggle. Some of the early fighters received training in Syria, China, Cuba, and Iraq; whilst the rest were trained in the liberated areas. Within the next ten years, the ELF became a serious threat to the Ethiopian rule in Eritrea. The impact of its existence was felt beyond the boundaries of Ethiopia, especially when Ethiopian planes were subjected to subversive activities. In 1970, there was a major breakaway from the initial movement. Three splinter groups emerged and latter coalesced to form the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which became a strong rival to the parent Front. The ELF remained a viable organization for the next ten years, but in the 1970s a series of armed clashes between the two dominant movements occurred. These clashes were typically exemplified by a struggle for dominance. Finally, in 1982, the EPLF superseded the ELF and other smaller groups as the most effective armed resistance to the Ethiopian forces, and defeated the ELF in the process. The ELF fighters fled to Sudan, and many went on to Europe and North America, while some members opted to return to Eritrea and join the rival nationalist movement, the EPLF.

In May 1991, the EPLF took control of the whole country from Ethiopia and Eritrea achieved its de jure independence in 1993 after holding a UN observed referendum, in which 99.8 percent of Eritreans voted for sovereignty. The EPLF transformed itself into the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) in 1994 and has been leading the country since its independence.

The ELF, emerging years before its rival the EPLF, and having been in a position of prominence in military terms with regard to the latter, nevertheless was superseded and destroyed in a relatively short period of time. This calls for investigation into the reasons why one movement, from the outside looking stronger, so spectacularly failed not only to achieve its aims but even to maintain itself as an organization, while a seemingly weaker front, the EPLF, not only managed to outflank and supersede its rival but also went on to occupy the whole of Eritrea. The Eritrean example, in this manner, offers a unique comparative example of two movements with different strategies and with very different fortunes. Although it is beyond the scope of the study to address the ELF from a comparative dimension, it is important to at least note that the Eritrean example may hold general lessons on the variables that affect the viability and strength of national-revolutionary movements.

In my previous career as a junior researcher and archivist at the Research and Documentation Centre (RDC), the acting national archive of Eritrea, from 2004 to 2012, I was confronted with a large amount of archival materials concerning the movement in question. Despite the availability of such bulky serviceable source materials, the history of the Eritrean struggle for independence remained by and large incomplete and undeveloped. [v]

This absence of well researched publications and analysis poses a challenge in developing a broader understanding of the dynamics of the Eritrean politics prior to the independence of the country. This experience instilled in me the desire to study the nature and development of the ELF using the idea of writing history from the stand point of those former ELF fighters. In this study, special attention has been given to its origin, development, and demise of the movement, and the how and why questions have also been investigated thoroughly.

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Notes

[i] Ruth Iyob, *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, Resistance, Nationalism, 1941-1993* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 98-101; see also Dan Connel and Tom Killion. *Historical Dictionary of Eritrea* (2nd ed.) (Lanham, Toronto and Plymouth, UK: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2011), Connel and Killion, 218-20.

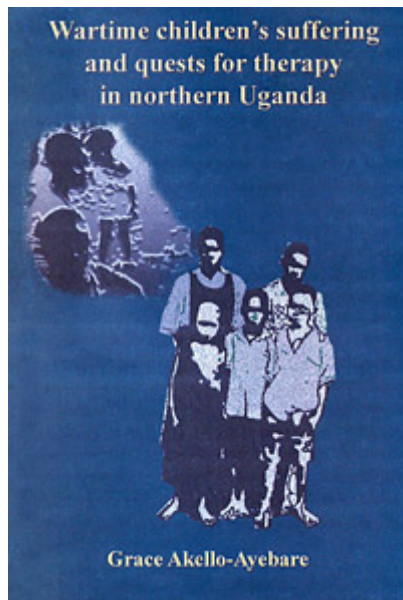
[ii] Ruth, 103; see also Redie Bereketeab, "*Eritrea: The Making of a Nation 1890-1991*" (PhD. diss., Uppsala University, 2000), 183-184.

[iii] John Markakis, *National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 113.

[iv] Redie, 185

[v] Bairu Tafla, "Interdependence through Independence: The Challenges of Eritrean Historiography," in *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies*, ed. Harold G. Marcus. (Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press, 1994), 500.

Grace Akello ~ Wartime Children's Suffering And Quests For Therapy In Northern Uganda



Prologue

Ojok: An exemplary case of suffering and quests for well-being by wartime children in Gulu Municipality I will call this child Ojok (not his real name) to ensure anonymity. In 2004 when I met him, Ojok was a fifteen-year-old boy (1989) who was born in Kitgum four years after the beginning of the then twenty-year-old insurgency in northern Uganda. When telling his life history, he related how, whenever he asked his mother who his father was, he provoked anger, tears and fear. His mother, like a substantial number of women in northern Uganda, had been raped by a group of men in the rebel army. When she went to report the case to the state army, instead of being helped she was detained for weeks and subsequently raped frequently by a group of state soldiers. She managed to escape to one of the camps in the neighbouring Gulu district, but was already three-months pregnant with Ojok – a child-of-rape. Statistics are unavailable but it is well-known that as a consequence of any armed conflict, there are a substantial number of children with a similar life history. Ojok serves as an 'archetypal case'. A substantial number of children such as Ojok were neglected till they died of malnourishment or abandoned in public hospitals and camps in Gulu. Ojok was lucky to survive till his age.

When Ojok was two years old, his mother got married to an ex-combatant with the Lords Resistance Army, who had escaped, and had settled in a camp in Gulu where she lived. In this marital union they had three children, aged 13, 9 and 7 years respectively in 2004. Although they were a relatively stable family, Ojok's stepfather succumbed to HIV/AIDS when his youngest child was five years old. Before his death he had introduced his family to his patrilineal kin, but made it clear that Ojok did not belong to the family. According to Ojok, they had been living together in good peace with his stepfather's kin even after his death.

However, two years later, he also lost his mother to HIV/AIDS. Being the eldest in the family of four orphans, automatically Ojok assumed the responsibility of caring for his siblings, including providing for food, healthcare needs and where possible educational costs. He had to drop out of school in order to do leja leja (casual farm labour) and other income generating activities to meet all these expenses. One weekend in April 2004, he was summoned by his stepfather's kin for a meeting. In this meeting he was told that he did not belong to the family and was subsequently ordered to vacate their land together with his siblings. To confirm their determination, the entire kinship group uprooted all the crops Ojok had on his farm and demolished the children's house. Ojok together with his siblings left for Lacor night commuters' home where they lived at the time of interviews in July 2004. He still worked at the hospital premises and other neighbouring places, but had a lot of medical complaints.

When Ojok was asked about his experiences in a one month recall he mentioned malaria, cough and diarrhoea. For malaria he bought chloroquine from a grocery shop for 100 Uganda shillings (approximately 0.043 euros), but for cough he and his siblings used mango and guava leaves. The nurse gave him some yellow tablets for diarrhoea. For his siblings, he bought chloroquine when they had malaria.

According to the night commuters' shelter nurse where Ojok lived together with his family, "he is always taking Panadol for his headache, which never recovers". Sometimes, the nurse gave him a higher Panadol dosage, say three instead of two tablets, but still he complained of headache. At night, Ojok presented another challenge to the people at the night commuters' shelter. If he was not tossing around on his mat he was always having violent nightmares. Therefore, the nurse gave him a dose of Valium each evening. However, in the recent past, the nurse complained, "even if Ojok took five Valium tablets, they did not work! The administration was considering giving him oxazepam and perhaps other very strong tranquilizers". Assessing Ojok holistically, it is clear that underlying his persistent complaints is a web of all sorts of social and psychological issues.

The main objective of this exemplary case is to show the complexity of the effects of armed conflict on children's lives, including their illness experiences and quests for therapy. The content in Ojok's story signifies a child facing uncertainty, having relatives dying of HIV/AIDS and the direct effects of the breakdown of social networks leading to complex healthcare issues in wartime. Ojok as I

mentioned, is a synecdoche or archetypal case of a substantial number of children living in a situation of armed conflict. And for the armed conflict in northern Uganda which had lasted more than twenty years at the time of this study Ojok's experiences could only be a tip of the iceberg of the magnitude of problems in conflict and post conflict northern Uganda which are intertwined with health and healthcare issues.

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Mirjam de Bruijn ~ ‘The Telephone Has Grown Legs’: Mobile Communication And Social Change In The Margins Of African Society



Street child in Ndjamena, Chad, the

*expectation of the phone (photo
taken by Mija Hesseling)*

Inaugural Address – September 2008

My phone at home in the Netherlands never stops ringing nowadays and on the display I often see the Malian, Chadian or Cameroonian country codes. And in the evenings there are always ‘missed calls’ from African numbers too. This was unimaginable when I started doing my PhD research in central Mali in the early 1990s. For the people at home then, I was far away. People’s understanding and experiences of distance are very different today.

At breakfast I often speak Fulfulde to Ahmadou, a herder from central Mali who tells me how he is sitting under the trees next to his cows. The costs of communication have apparently dropped so much that he can afford just to call to greet me, the owner of a part of his herd.

We met in 1990 and became like a brother and sister sharing life in the Fulani cattle camp where his father hosted me and my husband. Ahmadou is his eldest son and married two wives and has today 7 children. After the death of his father in 2006, he became the head of his family and clan.

The telephone has given him the chance to change his life, as was apparent when he asked our family to support his political campaign. We agreed; after all it was the least we could do since he had herded our cows for so many years.

Ahmadou has big plans. He would now like to build a house in the city. In one of our phone conversations, he asked me to bring him a television on my next visit. His last call was to communicate his victory in the political campaign!

For 35 years, the people of Chad have been living in the midst of a civil war and with repressive state machinery. But even in the regions where war and hunger are a daily reality, people now have access to mobile telephony in spite of widespread deep-rooted poverty. Mongo, the country’s fifth largest city, has had access to mobile telephony since 2005. I worked and lived in 2002/2003 in Mongo and met with Ousmanou who became one of my research assistants.

Ousmanou did some investigation on his own, being a literate, and together we developed a plan for a NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) to help impoverished children who live in the streets of Mongo. He is married and has four children. The mobile phone helps to continue our exchanges.

Ousmanou regularly sends text messages to keeps me updated of the recent ups and downs of his family and the city. The telephone has also been a good help to raise some funds for this NGO. However during the last upsurge of fighting in Chad (in 2008, and also before in 2006 and 2007), all telephone connections were cut, which led to a high degree of panic amongst our Chadian acquaintances (and us). With no way of contacting the outside world, their lives were suddenly once again in the hands of the authoritarian regime of President Idriss Deby.

It will be clear that the way information from these 'remote' parts of Africa is being transferred to those in the West has changed with these new methods of communication. The growth of mobile telephony in Africa became possible after the liberalization of the telecommunications market and its escalation has been astonishing. The unexpectedly high access to mobile telephones has risen from 1 in 50 persons at the beginning of the 21st century to 1 in 3 just a few years later in 2008. Even the inhabitants of remote rural areas in Africa are being introduced to the world of wireless telephony.

Ahmadou and Ousmanou live in marginal regions of the world where modern technology is sparse and where it is not easy to survive due to the difficult natural and economic circumstances of these harsh regions and their political instability. Government interest and investment in marginal regions are usually minimal as they are considered to be areas of little economic or social interest. But Ahmadou and Ousmanou do not see themselves as being marginalized at all. For them, these regions are part of their identity and their use of the mobile phone makes it clear that these marginal areas are not isolated at all, in spite of the absence of good infrastructure. On the contrary, these regions' relations stretch as far as Europe. The margins cannot be demarcated geographically; they are social margins.

I am interested in the question if and how mobile telephony, a new communication technology, will change the social, political and economic dynamics in the social margins of our world in the coming years? Does it reflect a revolution in communication and development, or will nothing ultimately change at the end of the day?

Ahmadou and Ousmanou and their families in Mali and Chad have become part of these changes. I have been following them and their families since 1990 and 2002 respectively and will continue doing so. And I have recently started a project in

the Grassfields area in Cameroon. In the coming years I will be following families in Mali, Chad and Cameroon and try to understand the new dynamics in their societies also through their eyes.

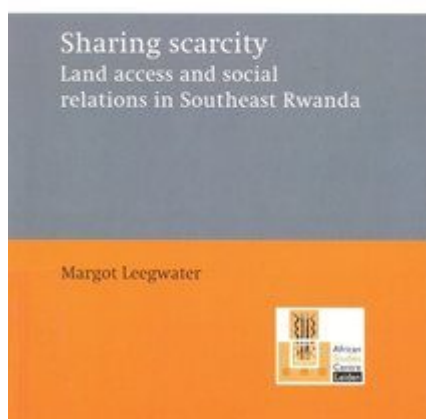
Here, therefore, I am not presenting a completed story but an initial exploration of possible changes in the social margins of Africa. To be able to look into change I will introduce my understanding of the social margins, elaborate on the concept of communication ecology and social relations in the margins. And then I will explore possible social changes that are the result of the new communications technology. I will thus introduce a current and important field of study within African Studies, where interdisciplinary collaboration can make a contribution to the study of mobility and migration, of poverty and of social conflict.

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Margot Leegwater ~ Sharing Scarcity: Land Access And Social Relations In Southeast Rwanda



Introduction

'If there is ever violence again in Rwanda, it will be because of land'. This is what a Rwandan friend told me in February 2011, just a few weeks after I returned home from my last period of fieldwork in Rwanda. I nodded more or less intuitively in response because this was in line with what other Rwandans had told me, and some had even said 'when' instead of 'if'; it was only later that I would fully grasp the seriousness of his remark. It should be read in the context of Rwanda's post-independent history in

which ethnic violence dominated, leading to a civil war (1990-1994) and culminating in the 1994 genocide that targeted the Tutsi population.

With still about 90% of the population engaged in subsistence farming, access to land is of crucial importance in present-day Rwanda (Ansoms 2009b: 299). Land remains a scarce resource in a country that has the highest population density in Africa and where many people were displaced as a result of massive violence in the past. It is estimated that the average Rwandan cultivates 0.75 ha (Huggins 2013: 1) but most peasants have only about 0.5 ha and this is spread across several small plots (Huggins 2014a: 2).**[i]** Because of its importance and its increasing scarcity, land has become a growing cause of conflict in recent years (Musahara & Huggins 2005; Ansoms & Claessens 2011: 4). During my first fieldwork period in 2008, respondents tended to deny or downplay conflicts over land. Although they more or less confirmed that such conflicts did exist, they rarely admitted that they had been party to any conflict themselves and always stressed that the local authorities had been able to solve these conflicts. However, during my last fieldwork period in November and December 2010, it seemed that land disputes were omnipresent. It was at this time that land registration, which was introduced in the 2005 (and later 2013) Land Law, was being carried out in the research area and my research assistant and I were often confronted with land disputes. We witnessed them when watching the demarcation procedure during land registration. They were mentioned, often without any probing on our part, by many of the people we encountered: villagers who were queuing to meet the village authority, the authorities themselves and numerous other respondents. Sometimes people even called on us for advice about solving their problems. Most conflicts that came before local mediators also concerned land and, indirectly, these conflicts often had to do with land sharing between the Hutu population and returned Tutsi refugees that took place in 1996 and 1997.

The tensions and conflicts we came across were an indication of the state of social relations among Rwanda's rural population, which were already strained following the 1994 genocide and the ethnically-related violence that occurred around the time of Rwanda's independence.**[ii]** In addition, recent, but also older, land-tenure policies like the above-mentioned land registration and land sharing seem to have had a negative impact on social relations between Rwanda's various ethnic and social groups. The central question in this thesis is: How do

government policies concerning access to land and land tenure in rural post-conflict Rwanda influence local community relations (including ethnicity) and land conflicts?

The reason why I wanted to research land issues was because I am ultimately interested in Rwanda's current social relations and the role of ethnicity in these relationships. Land access is thus used as a lens through which to look at present-day Rwandan society and its current social tensions.

This introduction is divided into four parts. The first discusses Rwanda's recent history and examines the 1994 genocide that targeted the Tutsi population, the issue of land scarcity and conflict and genocide-related violence. The second section takes us to present-day Rwanda and considers the nature of the Rwandan government, its strong social-engineering policies and the role ethnicity plays in social relations and politics. The third part of the chapter presents a brief introduction to the research area, the research questions and some general remarks about the research itself. It does not, however, delve into the research methods used as these are described in Chapter 2. The last section discusses the way land access is related to social relations and authority in general and applies this to the Rwandan context, before finishing with an outline of the chapters.

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Notes

[i] According to Huggins, statistics on the average size of land holdings vary slightly and the average size decreased by 25% between 1990 and 2000. In a 2012 report used by Huggins (2013: 1), the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources estimated that the average size was 0.76 ha, which was higher than previous estimates.

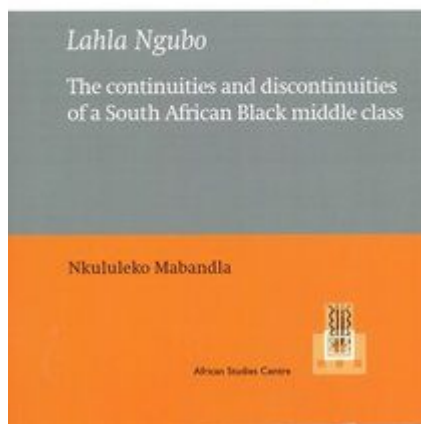
[ii] This ethnic violence is described in more detail in Chapter 3.

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Nkululeko Mabandla ~ Lahla Ngubo - The Continuities And Discontinuities Of A South African Black Middle Class



Introduction and contextual background. [This book is the winner of the Africa Thesis Award 2012]



This work explores the role of land in Mthatha's Black [*Black is used in this thesis to refer to 'Black African'*] middle class during the apartheid and democratic eras. Mthatha's Black middle class, which developed at the turn of the twentieth century, is a particular type of middle class that is defined not only by occupation but also by ownership of land. The path to land came about when the Mthatha municipality auctioned land to both Black and white buyers in 1908. This allowed the accumulation of land in the hands of a hitherto occupation based, mission educated Black middle class. The study traces the development of this class from the mid nineteenth century to the democratic era, and focuses on how this middle class reproduced and transformed itself during this time.

The study builds on Redding's (1987) historical study of Mthatha (1870-1950). In addition to the first generation discussed by Redding, this study identified two more generations: A second generation which developed from the 1950s onwards, and their descendants, the third generation, which continues to combine occupation and landownership to date.

The role of land in the definition of the Black middle class is sorely missing from studies of this class in the democratic period. Recent studies have drawn attention to the growth of this class in post-apartheid South Africa. This growth was supported by employment policies such as affirmative action (AA) and Black economic empowerment (BEE). Studies have generally focussed on income/occupation as the main determinants of middle class location (e.g., Udjo 2008; Unilever Institute 2007; Rivero et al. 2003). Thus, Rivero et al. (2003) analyse the advances made by Black South Africans in the managerial and professional categories between 1994 and 2000. Their sole criterion for identifying membership in the Black middle class is occupation. Meanwhile, Unilever's much publicised 'Black Diamond Study' (Unilever Institute 2007) deals almost exclusively with consumption patterns of Black professionals, that is, their affluence based on income. And indeed, much interest has been generated in the popular press, where the Black middle class is often portrayed as 'young and driving a BMW' (Carrol 2004).

While the new Black middle class might have considerable disposable income, it seems to lack investment in more durable assets such as property. Studies of residential mobility suggest that home ownership, for example, remains relatively low within the 'new' Black middle class (Beavon 2000; Prinsloo & Cloete 2002; Crankshaw 2008). The general absence of property within this class has led Southall (2005: 1) to compare it with the proletariat:

The 'new middle class', which is typically in government and corporate employment, shares many of the characteristics of the classic proletarian, notably in the sense that it has no direct ownership of the means of production and is in a subordinate relationship to capital owning employers.

The conceptualisation of the Black middle class by income/occupation only is not a recent development. For example, Crankshaw (1997; see also Seekings & Nattrass 2006) looks at the Black middle class in pre-1994 South Africa through the occupation lens (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion).

The dominant narrative of South African social history in the twentieth century is that of a massive reconfiguration of social relations as a result of the discovery of minerals in the late nineteenth century. African land dispossession became necessary to serve the labour demands of the developing mining industry and the white commercial farming sector (Feinstein 2005: 33). According to Domar (1970, cited in Feinstein 2005: 33), land can become a problem for capitalist production

when it is plentiful because peasants prefer to work their own land as independent producers rather than as hired labour. To attract them, employers would have to pay wages that would be comparable to what they could earn as independent farmers. In the history of South Africa, legislative measures such as the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and the Natives Land Act of 1913 facilitated Black land dispossession (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion).

Large-scale dispossessions notwithstanding, Jordan (1984; also Peires 1989: 329) informs us of a long-standing and well-established landed Black middle class in South Africa. Evidence of an early Black landowning class that was buying up land in the late nineteenth century can be found in Murray's (1992) work on Thaba Nchu. A class of entrepreneurs who were both transport riders and/or land controllers (if not owners) was also identified by Bundy in his study of the nineteenth century peasantry (Bundy 1988). Murray and Bundy demonstrate that land was important in creating affluence and allowing for education. This, in turn, facilitated salaried white-collar employment.

Thus, in addition to land, education played an important role in structuring class differences, and mission education introduced new forms of skill-based stratification as Black land dispossession intensified. The division of Black society along lines of western Christianity and mission-education on the one side, and African traditional belief systems on the other, became ever more marked as the colonial modernizing project gained momentum. In the Eastern Cape region of South Africa (where this study is located; see section on methodology), for example, social differentiation among the *amaXhosa* took the form of an emerging dichotomy between 'school' people and 'red' people. The former were also called *amagqobhoka* (literally 'the penetrable ones'), meaning those who had adopted western norms of behaviour; the latter were referred to as 'red', or *amaqaba* (literally 'the smeared ones') because of the red ochre which they used as traditional (form of) make-up. The 'school' people, distinguished in the popular imagination by exposure to western education as well as European tastes, formed the nucleus of the emerging middle class (see e.g. Mayer 1961; Gerhart 1978).

However, the combination of wars in late nineteenth century as well as legislative measures such as the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and the Natives Land Act of 1913 are largely believed to have separated many Africans from land and driven large numbers into proletarianisation. Consequently, the growth of the urban industrial sector from the first half of the twentieth and the economic boom of the 1960s is

understood have provided occupational opportunities, especially for the educated and skilled. These developments gave rise to an urban based middle class – the focus of most existing sociological studies – that was solely defined by occupation and the advent of democracy opened even more occupational advancement channels for this class. Thus land, in the view of many studies, became insignificant in the definition of this class.

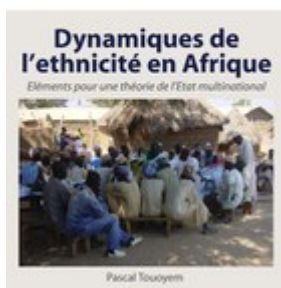
This book challenges such approaches and argues that a full understanding of the middle class needs to pay due attention to property ownership (or lack thereof). Moreover, it is vital to adopt a historical perspective and move beyond the present conceptualisations of this class. While those who joined the Black middle class post-1994 as a result of new government-driven opportunities might indeed be property-less, many of those who come from longstanding middle class families – with origins reaching back to the nineteenth century – have more than marketable professional qualifications, they typically also have access to land.

This study contributes to our understanding of the trajectories South Africa's historical Black middle class – a class which is defined by access to (mission school) education, and resulting occupational opportunities, as well as access to land. The ways in which this particular landed middle class has reproduced and transformed itself from 1900 to the present is the focus of the analysis. In many cases it was returns from land which made education possible in the first place, and the relatively high salaries obtained from white-collar and professional work allowed re-investments in land. Education and landownership thus co-existed in a cyclical and mutually reinforcing relationship.

Thus, this book argues that the question of Black landownership needs to be looked at inter-generationally. Newman (1993), for example, shows that class is a question of historical continuities and is transmitted through kinship ties, in other words, it shows a 'family trajectory'. The middle class under study is a particular Black middle-class that established itself in Mthatha in the former Transkei Bantustan. In contrast to other Bantustan towns, Mthatha was a welldeveloped town, a thriving commercial centre which offered opportunities for employment and property ownership. Mthatha also had significant white commercial interests and was thus prescribed as a 'European town' at least until the 1960s (Horrell 1971). Thus, the development of an 'urban' landed Black middle class in a major 'white spot' such as the town of Mthatha, presents an interesting case study for the understanding of the role of land in the definition of the Black middle class.

Pascal Touoyem ~ Dynamiques de l'ethnicité en Afrique. Éléments pour une théorie de l'État multinational

Introduction ~L'anthropologie politique et philosophique comme réflecteur herméneutique principal des structures et dynamismes fondamentaux de l'Afrique noire moderne.



Le projet épistémologique qui nous habite, est déterminé par deux considérations théoriquement distinctes mais pratiquement imbriquées : à savoir d'une part la nature problématique du domaine d'étude et d'action qu'est l'ethnicité et d'autre part, l'historique exceptionnelle ou marginale de l'objet Afrique. En s'interrogeant en sens inverse sur l'affirmation de Spinoza d'après laquelle l'ordre et la connexion des idées est le même que l'ordre et la connexion des choses, nous voudrions d'entrée de jeu, attirer l'attention sur le présupposé théorique d'après lequel l'ethnicité, comme objet de recherche ne participe pas du domaine des données consacrées et légitimées de la recherche en Afrique. Cette disposition de l'attention scientifique dominante est dans une large mesure en rapport de complicité avec la doxa. Le silence et partant l'interrogation ou l'absence de réflexion sur l'ethnie et/ou la tribu tels que cristallisés au fil du temps sont loin

d'être neutres. Ce silence correspond à l'émergence des savoirs dits indigènes, autochtones ou encore hétérodoxes. Ce contexte est marqué d'une part, par le reflux des doctrines de l'émancipation, héritage des luttes nationales de libération et d'autre part, par l'affirmation des théories postcoloniales depuis la fin des années 1960. D'inspiration postmoderne, les théories postcoloniales ont emprunté leurs outils heuristiques et méthodologiques aux Subalterns et aux Cultural Studies. C'est l'éclatement des cadres analytiques de la modernité, qu'il s'agisse de l'ethnicité, de l'identité, de l'Etat, de la nation, de la citoyenneté, de la production des savoirs interculturels ou encore de l'universalisme alias mondialisation qui a suscité un vif intérêt pour le « monde d'en-bas ».

Notre démarche est guidée par la conviction qu'il ne faut point négliger le « monde d'en bas » qui est le lieu pertinent où l'on peut observer l'Afrique en mouvement aujourd'hui. Une Afrique qui, en marge des grands discours prophétiques sur son effondrement, ses crises, toutes les catégories pathologiques par excellence,...construisent des formes de transactions informelles et neuves, malmenant les civilités conventionnelles et officielles, mais qui justifient la perdurance sociale. Derrière les métamorphoses de la désintégration sociale et de l'anarchie, une vie sociale et créative se poursuit en Afrique. Un tableau complexe de la vie culturelle est entrain d'émerger. Des formes reconnaissables de développement coexistent avec des trajectoires originales de création ; des conceptions identitaires naissent ou se sont reformulées. Arc-boutée à une immense réserve d'endurance et d'imagination et portée par une extraordinaire puissance de résistance, contre la brutalité du destin, l'Afrique est au travail. Ni la prodigieuse singularité de l'expérience humaine en Afrique, ni les nouvelles formes d'engagement du marché avec les politiques internationales ne peuvent être restituées à partir des catégories et discours traditionnels. Plus que jamais, il faut une nouvelle stratégie de description et d'interprétation de nouvelles façons de percevoir ces réalités, de nouvelles catégories d'expression des potentialités et surtout un nouveau discours pour décrire l'Afrique et dépeindre les expériences et les souvenirs de ceux ou de celles qui sont au centre de ces transformations.

C'est donc à une objectivation plus approfondie de la dynamique anthropo-sociale et politique de la modernité négro-africaine que voudrait s'essayer la présente étude. Le titre éponyme de cette étude : « Eléments pour une théorie de l'Etat multinational », nous permet de scruter les diverses modalités de la cohabitation

inter-ethnique en Afrique noire. Il est question de ressortir les lieux, les niveaux, les questions et les diverses médiations institutionnelles de la crise de l'ethnicité dans l'institution étatique elle-même en crise en Afrique. L'enjeu c'est de dégager désormais une sorte d'exploration, au sens de Balandier, des territoires de la socialité en Afrique, de les rendre descriptibles et intelligibles, afin de s'initier à la découverte de l'inédit. Le « fait ethnique », caractéristique des sociétés africaines, fait l'objet d'un silence épistémique néfaste. Ce silence, au niveau de la production des savoirs interculturels constitue pour nous, un obstacle quasi-infranchissable en même temps qu'il se présente comme la source de notre détermination. On ne peut tenter une telle étude sur les enjeux anthropologiques et épistémo-politiques des structures et dynamismes fondamentaux de l'Afrique noire, sans esquisser un inventaire de l'état des lieux. C'est une vieille démarche aristotelicienne qui recommande, pour chaque question, d'explorer sa topique, autrement dit l'ensemble de ses lieux communs.

Tout notre effort consistera donc à « sauver de l'oubli et de la négligence » un objet anthropologiquement pertinent. Ainsi constitué en réflecteur herméneutique principal, l'anthropologie politique poursuit un projet fort ancien orientant déjà la réflexion d'Aristote dans sa Politique : la définition de l'homme en tant qu'être « naturellement » politique. Elle apparaît, sous sa forme moderne, comme une discipline de constitution tardive ; elle délimite alors un domaine d'étude au sein de l'anthropologie sociale ou de l'ethnologie. Elle s'attache à la description et à l'analyse des systèmes politiques (organisations, pratiques et processus, représentations). Ce qui revient à dire que l'anthropologie politique est un instrument de découverte et d'étude des diverses institutions et procédures assurant le gouvernement des hommes, ainsi que des systèmes de pensée et des symboles qui les fondent et les légitiment ; mieux, c'est un dispositif théorico-paradigmatique de dissection et d'explicitation de la réalité anthropo-sociale. Définir l'anthropologie politique, c'est suggérer les buts principaux qui déterminent sa visée : une interprétation élargie du politique qui ne lie ce dernier ni aux seules sociétés dites historiques, ni à l'existence d'un appareil étatique ; une élucidation des processus de formation et de transformation des systèmes politiques, à la faveur d'une recherche parallèle à celle de l'historien ; une étude comparative appréhendant les différentes expressions de la réalité politique, non plus dans les limites d'une histoire particulière – celle de l'Europe – mais dans toute leur extension historique et géographique. Longtemps considérée comme une spécialisation marginale de l'anthropologie, cette discipline neuve a été le

sujet de nombreux malentendus et débats, dont les principaux résidaient dans la définition et la détermination de l'instance politique. Ce nouveau mode d'appréhension de la réalité politique induit une nouvelle représentation scientifique des sociétés, y compris des sociétés qualifiées de primitives. Le politique est alors situé non plus sur le terrain des institutions formelles mais, dans une perspective dynamiste, sur celui des actions visant à maintenir ou modifier l'ordre établi. Si l'être humain est animal politique, les conditions de dépassement de cet être sont politiques et la philosophie, qui n'est rien d'autre que l'affirmation transcendantale de la nécessaire humanisation de ces conditions pour l'Homme valeur en-soi, est nécessairement politique. C'est dire que la philosophie est en dernier ressort anthropo-politique. Existentielle et contextuelle, certes, articulant théorie et pratique bien évidemment, la philosophie est tout cela. Cette perspective dynamiste s'inscrit dans le courant du renouveau analytique qui permet une reformulation africaine de ses structures et dynamismes fondamentaux et nécessite alors de déterminer son cadre conceptuel et épistémique de même que les éléments de la problématique.

Cadre conceptuel et opératoire

Le travail scientifique est avant tout une entreprise de nettoyage conceptuel. Celui-ci permet une maximisation du sens des mots qui, à son tour, garantit l'intelligibilité du discours scientifique. Il s'agit en fait d'un préalable méthodologique qui évite au chercheur, l'écueil d'un emploi doxique et erroné des concepts. Dans la pratique scientifique en effet, la reconduction du sens commun des mots est susceptible de renvoyer à ce qu'on pourrait appeler, dans l'univers des mots durkheimiens, un « suicide épistémologique » : les mots de la langue usuelle comme les concepts qui les expriment sont toujours ambigus et le savant qui les exploiterait tel qu'il les reçoit de l'usage sans les faire subir d'autres élaborations s'exposerait aux graves confusions (Durkheim 1930 :1). La précision sémantique des concepts ne constitue pas seulement le gage de l'intelligibilité de l'écriture scientifique ; elle garantit aussi l'opérationnalité des concepts définis. En fait, dans la perspective bourdieusienne de la définition contextualisée, les concepts n'ont d'autre définition que systémique et sont conçus pour être mis en œuvre empiriquement de façon systématique (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992 : 71). C'est donc dire que bien qu'en prenant en compte son lieu ou son territoire scientifique d'élaboration, l'ethnicité sera empiriquement définie. La définition empirique et opératoire de l'ethnicité, de l'interculturalité, de l'Etat, appellera

également celle de la configuration géospatiale à laquelle elle tente de s'appliquer, c'est-à-dire la modernité négro-africaine.

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