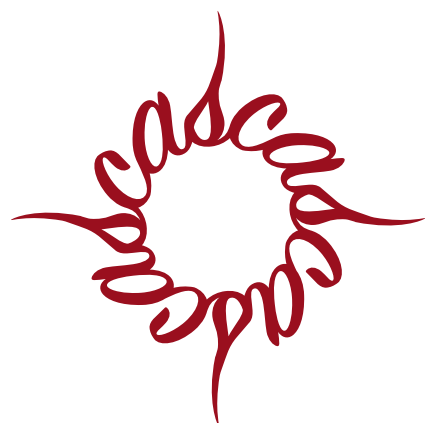


# ASC-TUFS Working Papers



**ASC-TUFS**

Volume 2 (2022)

African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

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African Studies Center - Tokyo University of Foreign Studies  
(ASC-TUFS)

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## **Foreword to the ASC-TUFS Working Papers Volume 2 (2022)**

Since its establishment in 2017, the African Studies Center -Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (ASC-TUFS) has actively disseminated its research results as working papers. Last year, we launched a new peer-reviewed journal, the ASC-TUFS Working Papers. I am pleased to announce the publication of the ASC-TUFS Working Papers Volume 2 (2022).

This volume is based on the international symposium commemorating the ASC's fifth anniversary held on 3 and 6 November 2021. The original versions of the working papers were submitted to the symposium. Each author revised them following the discussions at the symposium and the reviewers' comments.

The symposium comprised the following six sessions.

Session 1: Young Scholars' Networking Session

Session 2: Considering Africa - Japan Relationship for TICAD VIII

Session 3: Cross-border Mobilities in Sub-Saharan Africa

Session 4: Africa in the Market Economy

Session 5: Ecology and Socio-politics in Contemporary Africa

Session 6: Religious Plurality in Contemporary African Societies

In Session 1, 17 young researchers studying African studies at Japanese universities made short presentations on their current research for the purpose of networking. Three papers were presented per session in Sessions 2 to 6, followed by comments and discussions. As can be seen from the session titles, diverse academic fields were covered, from political sciences, economics, and international politics, to rural sociology, social anthropology, and ecological sciences. The wide variety indicates the broad challenges that current African studies have to tackle. I strongly hope that readers enjoy each paper addressing the important part of the challenges.

Shinichi Takeuchi

Director, African Studies Center - Tokyo University of Foreign Studies



# **Japan's Peace Policy in Africa: Discussion towards TICAD VIII**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines Japan's peace policy in Africa. Peace and security are one of the central issues in Japan's diplomacy towards Africa, and the importance is repeatedly emphasised in each Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). As evaluation of Japan's policy has not been studied in depth, this study attempts to fill this gap by examining the characteristics of recent armed conflicts in Africa and Japan's policy papers on peace. The Japanese government has primarily contributed to African peace and security through multinational cooperation, as well as activities of the Self-Defence Forces (JSDF) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for peacekeeping and peacebuilding, respectively. Japan's attempts to dispatch the JSDF to UN peace operations have been facing serious obstacles, as the country has failed to build a relevant legal framework for its activities in complex circumstances, such as current conflict-affected situations in Africa. Peacebuilding will undoubtedly be a central component of Japan's peace policy, but which JICA activities are considered peacebuilding will depend on the country's view on peace. Therefore, Japan is required to clarify what kind of peace it intends to build.

**Keywords:** conflict, Japan, peace, policy, TICAD

## 1. Introduction

Peace and security are central issues in Japan's diplomacy towards Africa and are constantly discussed at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). Since it started in 1993, the conference has been held once every five years (once every three years since 2013) and has provided an opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues related to African development. While the conference has become increasingly business-oriented, peace has always been considered one of the most important issues and a prerequisite for development. In a series of TICADs, concrete policies and practices for peace have been discussed and implemented.

Although peace is a consistent priority in Japan's diplomatic policy in Africa, this needs to be further investigated because 'peace' is a broad and sometimes controversial concept. If Japan wants peace in Africa, what kind of peace does it want? There is a broad consensus that policy interventions for the achievement of peace can be roughly divided into four sequential stages: preventive diplomacy, peace-making, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding (UN 1992). This classification raises the following questions: What are Japan's ideas regarding policy interventions at these sequential stages? What should be done and who should play a major role at each stage? In this paper, policy interventions that aim to achieve peace and security are referred to as peace policies.

This study aims to clarify, evaluate, and revisit Japan's peace policy towards Africa. Such an attempt is particularly necessary and valuable today, as the circumstances surrounding peace and conflict have been rapidly changing across the world, particularly in Africa. On the one hand, Africa has seen marked changes in the characteristics of armed conflicts over recent years. The key characteristics of African conflicts in the 2010s are different from those in the 1990s. As policies for peace should be formulated on the basis of conflict analysis, this is the right time to re-examine Japan's approach to African conflicts.

On the other hand, the international peace policy has recently changed. There was a global shift in peace policy after the end of the Cold War, when international interventions for peace were actively initiated (UN 1992). As a result, in the 1990s, the number of peacekeeping operations increased significantly, and international NGOs and member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development — Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) began eagerly conducting peacebuilding activities in conflict-affected regions. Japan was no exception; since the 1990s, the country has made efforts to participate in UN peacekeeping operations and a variety of peacebuilding activities (Government of Japan 2003). However, the trend of international peace policies has changed since then, culminating in the US's decision to retreat from Afghanistan in August 2021. In this context, it would be valuable to re-examine Japan's peace policies while considering these recent international events.

Currently, there is insufficient existing literature on Japan's peace policy in Africa. Although some scholars have investigated Japan's diplomatic policies towards Africa and the TICAD, policies for peace

have not been the centre of the discussion (Ampiah 2005, Morikawa 2005, Gwatiwa 2012, Lumumba-Kasongo 2013). Similarly, Japan's peace policies, including peacekeeping and peacebuilding, have been actively discussed in academia (Iwami 2016, Honda 2017), but there are few studies that specifically focus on its policy in Africa. By considering Japan's peace policies in Africa through its main policy platform (TICAD) and the realities of armed conflicts in the region, this paper contributes to a better understanding of this topic. Our analysis could also serve as a basis for discussions at TICAD VIII in 2022.

In the next section, this paper investigates the recent characteristics of armed conflicts in Africa, as well as their wider implications on peace policies. The following section examines Japan's policy and practices for peace in Africa by investigating documents on each TICAD and its foreign aid policies. Finally, Japan's peace policy is discussed on the basis of arguments presented in the previous sections.

## 2. Current context of peace and conflict in Africa

To understand peace, we first need to evaluate the conflicts that are occurring in Africa. This section examines the characteristics of recent conflicts in Africa. Although it has been a long time since the transformation of armed conflicts has attracted academic attention (Van Creveld 1991, Kaldor 1999), Africa has recently had characteristic changes, which inevitably affect peace policies and practices.

The datasets provided by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) provide useful information (Gleditsch *et al.* 2002) regarding the characteristics of armed conflicts in Africa. Figure 1 shows the evolution in the number of conflicts over three decades, based on the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Version 21.1. The dataset includes all armed conflicts in which the government participates (at least as one of the warring parties), and distinguishes them into two groups according to the intensity level; 'minor conflicts' include incidents that caused between 25 and 999 battle-related deaths in a given year, whereas 'wars' refer to incidents that caused at least 1,000 battle-related deaths in a given year (Pettersson 2021a). Figure 1 indicates that the number of minor conflicts has increased over time, particularly in the 2010s.

These low-intensity conflicts have different features than high-intensity warfare. They tend to take place anywhere in the territory, including rural areas, and remain active for a long period of time. Violence caused by religious extremism is a typical example of this kind of conflict. Among the 27 low-intensity conflicts recorded in 2020, religious extremism accounted for at least 16 cases<sup>1</sup>. Most of them have emerged since the beginning of the 2010s, when Boko Haram began its attacks in Northern Nigeria and separatist groups took power in Northern Mali with the support of groups affiliated to Al-Qaida.

---

<sup>1</sup> Nigeria (Boko Haram), Nigeria (Islamic State, IS), Cameroon (Boko Haram), Burkina Faso (Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin, JNIM), Burkina Faso (IS), Algeria (Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, AQIM), Mali (JNIM), Mali (IS), Niger (IS), Chad (IS), Kenya (Al-Shabab), Somalia (Al-Shabab), Somalia (IS), DRC (IS), Mozambique (IS), Tanzania (IS).

Despite military interventions from national and international forces, religious extremism is spreading in Africa. Other typical examples of low-intensity conflicts are situations in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereinafter DRC), anglophone regions of Cameroon, and the Central African Republic (hereinafter CAR), indicating that low-intensity conflicts have proliferated in specific parts of the territories, where the governments fall short of establishing authority due to their lack of legitimacy or limited capacity.

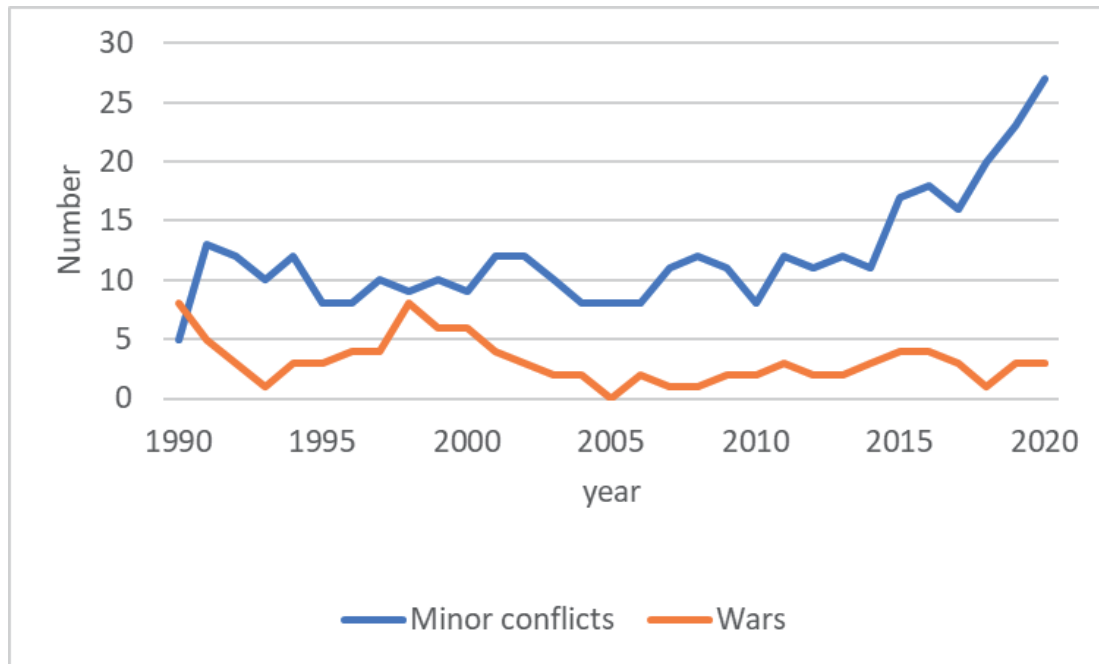


Figure 1. The number of armed conflicts in Africa (1990-2020)

Source: Created by the author from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, Version 21.1.

The rapid increase of low-intensity conflicts caused by religious extremism is underpinned by many states' lack of capacity and legitimacy for governance. In this context, international interventions have failed to deliver tangible results. For example, in the Sahel region, violence has continued to spread despite France's military intervention and other international peacekeeping operations, including the Minusuma (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali). Similarly, the results of long-term international peacekeeping operations by the Monusco (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC) and by Minurca (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic) in CAR are questionable.

Another important feature in Africa is the growing number of conflicts between non-state actors. As shown in Figure 2, the number of non-state conflicts has steadily risen throughout the 2010s; this phenomenon is closely related to an increase in low-intensity conflicts. As shown by conflicts in the DRC and CAR, the number of armed groups has markedly risen in recent conflicts in Africa. Conflicts

in these countries are different from those in which relatively organised rebel groups fight against the government<sup>2</sup>. It is often the case that such rebel groups have proliferated in areas where the state's capacity of effective governance is limited.

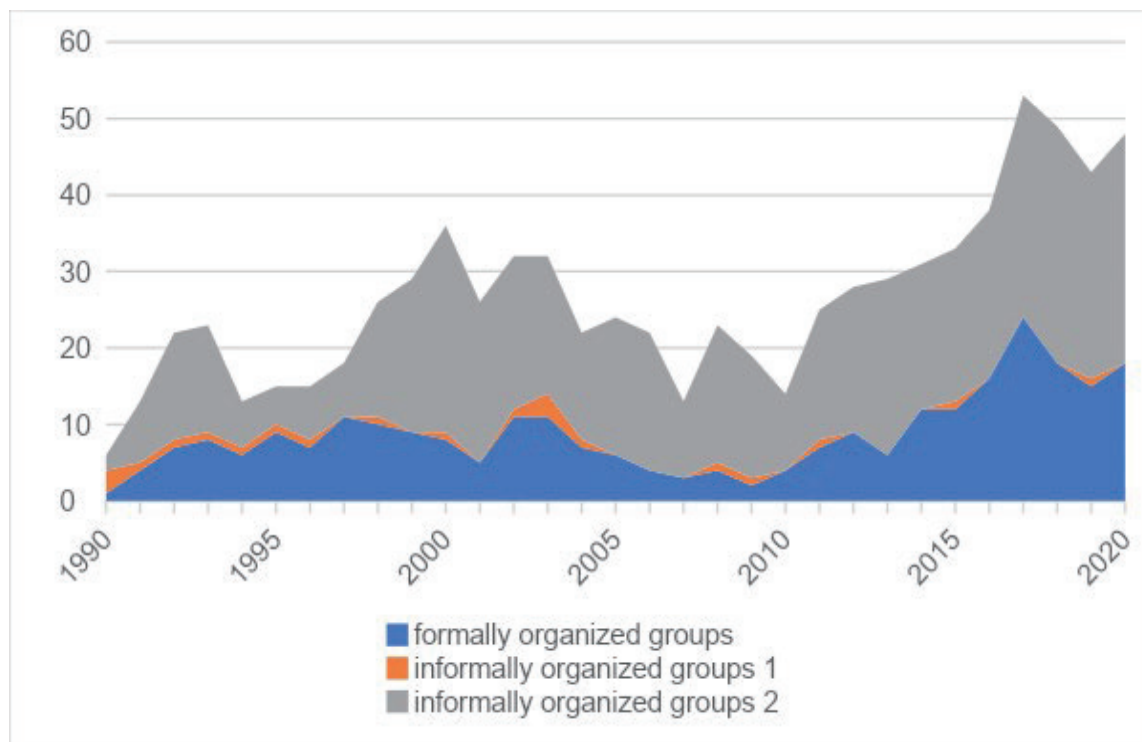


Figure 2. Organisation of non-state conflicts (1990-2020)

Source: Created by the author from UCDP non-state conflict version 21.1.

Note: The 'formally organised groups' refer to rebel groups and other organised groups that have a sufficiently high level of organisation, which makes them part of the state-based armed conflict category. The 'informally organised groups 1' refer to groups composed of supporters and affiliates of political parties and candidates. The 'informally organised groups 2' refer to groups that share a common identity along ethnic, clan, religious, national, or tribal lines. See Pettersson (2021b) for details.

The rise of non-state conflicts is also related to drastic changes in Africa's rural environment. Over the last couple of decades, rural societies in Africa have undergone significant changes for a number of reasons. In particular, the growing population, commodification of land, and climate change have markedly affected local communities (Takeuchi 2021). The average population density of African countries, which had been 37 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in 1970, increased to 72 in 2000 and 107 in 2018<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> This type of conflict between two parties was observable in countries including Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Rwanda in the 1990s.

<sup>3</sup> Calculated by the author on the basis of World Development Indicators (<https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators/> Accessed on 31 August 2021). The number is the average of country data without weighting the population size.

Considering the fact that Africans living in rural areas still accounted for 58.7% of the total population in 2020<sup>4</sup>, it is evident that the population has been rapidly increasing there, thus increasing the demand for land use. In addition, the massive transfer of customary land to private investors has contributed to the reduction of cultivable land. Agricultural lands in Africa have attracted considerable foreign and national investments, particularly since the 2000s. Furthermore, the transfer of customary lands has been accelerated by the land tenure reform that many African countries began in the 1990s with strong support from donors (Martín *et al.* 2019, Takeuchi 2021). In short, recent changes in rural areas have made it increasingly difficult for inhabitants to secure land and maintain minimum standards of living.

The reduction of customary land has resulted in rising tensions in and among local communities. Without significant technical innovation in agriculture, land scarcity makes farmers' and herders' lives more difficult. In general, such environmental changes can exacerbate inter-community conflicts, and in this case it has seriously impacted the relationship between farmers and herders. In many places across Africa, farmers and herders have maintained symbiotic relations through the complementary use of customary lands over long periods of time. However, the reduction of customary lands, which is exacerbated by climate change, has made such a symbiosis more difficult (Moritz 2010, Olaniyan *et al.* 2015, Akerjiir 2018). The UCDP's dataset reflects this; Figure 2, which indicates a breakdown of non-state conflicts, clearly shows that conflicts between the 'informally organised group 2' account for an important proportion of this type of conflict<sup>5</sup>. In other words, groups that share a common identity along ethnic, religious, and tribal lines have played a significant role in recent non-state conflicts. The data include a number of conflicts between farmers and herders, as well as community conflicts that are rooted in land problems<sup>6</sup>.

The analysis of recent armed conflicts in Africa, which found that low-intensity conflicts and those between non-state actors had increased, provides the following insights and implications. First, it is clear that the legitimacy and capacity of the state have been critical factors to fuelling or containing violence. Efforts for institution building and state-building are still valuable and necessary in terms of peace policy in Africa, as the necessity has been repeatedly emphasised by donors (OECD 2008). Yet, recent experiences in Africa have also shown the limits and deficiencies of external state-building, as in the

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<sup>4</sup> Data provided by World Development Indicators (<https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> / Accessed on 3 September 2021).

<sup>5</sup> In reality, the three classifications in Figure 2 are not mutually exclusive, and some 'formally organized groups' may have a clear ethnic basis. This is one of the reasons why certain conflicts can be powerful in terms of popular mobilization. In the case of Eastern DRC, the main rebel group, Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Goma (RCD-Goma), was clearly supported by ethnic Rwandans (Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge, particularly Tutsi) and was backed by Rwanda's Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)-led regime, though it should be noted that not all ethnic Rwandans in the DRC supported the RCD-Goma during the war, as shown by the group led by Pacific Masunzu (Reyntjens 2009). This caused strong anti-Rwandan sentiment, thus producing a number of ethnic self-defence movements, called Mayi-Mayi. Therefore, the clashes between these groups have strong ethnic connotations.

<sup>6</sup> For example, farmer-herder conflicts are included in the UCDP dataset of non-state conflicts in 2020. Ichen and Tiv, Fulani and Kadara, Fulani and Irigwe, Chabo and Hausa, Fulani and Tiv (Nigeria), Massalit and Fulani (Sudan), Amhara and Gumuz (Ethiopia).

cases of international interventions in the Sahel region, DRC, and CAR.

Second, recent African conflicts remind us of the inseparable relationship between peace and development. For instance, in West Africa, the situation has often been exacerbated by the instability of rural communities, which is caused by a combination of various factors including the reduction of available customary lands and climate change. The impoverishment of rural areas has formed a background to the recent features of African conflicts. Clearly, development is an indispensable part of peace consolidation activities.

Third, recent changes in the characteristics of conflicts will create further obstacles to international peace operations in Africa. Following the UN's recommendation in 2000, international peacekeeping operations have been equipped with more robustness in terms of their size, capacity<sup>7</sup>, and mandate. Despite these transformations, international peacekeeping operations have not resulted in peace and stability in countries such as the DRC, Mali, and CAR. In these countries, the complexity of conflicts has constantly hampered stability. The new features of armed conflicts have made peacekeeping operations more unpredictable and dangerous than before. Warring parties are interested in fuel conflicts and opportunistic violence for civilians and peacekeepers. It is now evident that peacekeeping operations alone will not be able to achieve peace.

### **3. Japan's policy for peace in Africa**

To examine Japan's peace policy, this study took three directions. First, the final documents in each TICAD are examined. As peace and security have always been considered one of the most important topics in the conference, analysing the final documents is critical for understanding Japan's peace policy in Africa. Second, the TICAD progress report (2013-15) will be investigated. As the TICAD final documents are a kind of joint communique from all participants, they provide only an abstract picture of Japan's policy. The TICAD progress report provides supplementary information by indicating concrete projects and practices of Japan in the field. Lastly, Japan's related policies and practices, particularly the ODA and peacebuilding, are carefully examined.

#### **3.1. Analysis of TICAD's final documents**

As a prerequisite for development, peace and stability have always been identified as priorities in TICAD. Table 1 shows the keywords related to peace and conflict mentioned in the official statements at the TICAD from 1993 to 2019. The keywords paint a rough picture of Japan's peace policy for Africa.

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<sup>7</sup> For instance, the Monusco has been equipped with a robust military capacity that is called the Force Intervention Brigade.

Table 1. Keywords relating to peace and conflict in TICAD statements

	keywords	sources
TICAD 1 (1993)	prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts	Tokyo Declaration
TICAD 2 (1998)	prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts, post-conflict development, peacebuilding, peacekeeping	Tokyo Agenda for Action
TICAD 3 (2003)	peace and good governance, prevention and management of conflicts	TICAD Tenth Anniversary Declaration
TICAD 4 (2008)	consolidation of peace, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, early-warning, conflict resolution	Yokohama Declaration
TICAD 5 (2013)	peace and security, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, post-conflict recovery and development	Yokohama Declaration 2013
TICAD 6 (2016)	Social stability and peacebuilding (Priority areas of TICAD VI, Pillar 3: Promoting social stability for shared prosperity), peacekeeping,	TICAD VI Nairobi Declaration
TICAD 7 (2019)	Strengthening peace and stability (The three pillars), peacebuilding, conflict prevention, the humanitarian-development-peace-security nexus	Yokohama Declaration 2019

Source: Tabulated by author. See the reference for detailed information about the sources.

Peace and conflict were not the centre of discussion in the final document of the first TICAD. The term ‘peace’ did not appear in the 1993 Tokyo Declaration, which only welcomed the initiative of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) to establish a mechanism for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts (para. 20). The paragraph was situated in the subsection ‘Emergency aid and development’, which dealt with natural and human disasters. Armed conflicts were not independently discussed, and Japan’s role was not mentioned. However, it is important to note that this document strongly emphasised the importance of democratisation, respect for human rights, and good governance for economic growth (para. 5). The importance of democratic values for development was repeatedly mentioned in later TICADs.

Issues related to peace and conflict were actively discussed in TICAD II in 1998. This was not surprising, as Africa had witnessed a number of serious armed conflicts in the 1990s, and the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Anan, published a special report on conflicts in Africa in the same year (UN 1998). Tokyo Agenda for Action in 1998 referred to this report and provided an action plan in Section 3.2 (conflict prevention and post-conflict development). Its goals included 1) strengthening African capacities and institutions for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts, and 2) achieving a seamless and rapid transition from humanitarian assistance in the conflict-affected situation to post-conflict development. Peacebuilding was referred to in this section, but as mentioned in the efforts made by African states. Meanwhile, international partners, including Japan, committed to assisting African initiatives to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts, as well as African training centres for conflict prevention and peacekeeping. Japan has so far been actively engaged in assisting the PKO Training Centre in Africa. The basic posture of the TICAD, emphasising the importance of peace and stability as

a prerequisite of development, was fixed at this conference in 1998 and has so far been inherited.

An important development of TICAD III was the introduction of the concept of 'human security'. Originally mentioned in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) human development report in 1994 (UNDP 1994), the concept was adopted in Japan's diplomatic policy under the Obuchi administration (1998-2000). Although human security is a concept that is linked to a wide range of developmental and security problems, the concept was not explicitly linked to issues related to peace and conflict in TICAD III. It is also worth noting that the concept of human security was introduced in the revised charter for the Official Development Assistance in 2003. This new ODA charter was epoch-making, as it identified peacebuilding as one of its four priority issues. Although the term 'peacebuilding' was not mentioned in the TICAD's Tenth Anniversary Declaration, it appears that the concept of peacebuilding was widely shared in TICAD III.

In TICAD IV (2008), human security was conceptually linked to the consolidation of peace. The conference's final document (Yokohama Declaration) identified two aspects of human security, namely the socio-economic and political, and linked the latter with the 'consolidation of peace' and 'good governance' (Section 5.0). Logically, this means that human security was critical for the consolidation of peace, but how these two concepts are linked was not explicated in the document. This section emphasises the importance of the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts, as well as efforts of peacebuilding; it also welcomed AU's initiative for the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). However, the role of international partners was not clearly mentioned in this document.

The relationship between human security and peace was further discussed in the final document of TICAD V (2013). The document stated that the promotion of human security, which was identified as one of the four strategic principles in the TICAD process, included cooperation and capacity building in the field of 'humanitarian challenges, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, post-conflict recovery and development, human trafficking, and the fight against terrorism' (Section 3.0). However, arguments on the link between human security and peace have not deepened. In the final document of TICAD VI (2016), human security was referred to as 'one of the guiding principles of TICAD' (Section 3.4), but no explanation was given on how the idea concretely related to specific policies<sup>8</sup>. In this document, the term 'peacebuilding' was used in the title of Subsection 3.3.1 (Social stability and peacebuilding) under the third pillar (Section 3.3 'Promoting social stability for shared prosperity'), but the argument in the

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<sup>8</sup> This change may correspond to the mainstreaming of human security. In the UN (2010; 2012), human security was actively discussed at the general assembly and was defined as a concept resembling human development and respecting state sovereignty. Due to pressure from developing countries that were cautious about external interventions, the concept of human security was defined as one that is completely different from the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P). The connection between the two concepts was completely denied. Although this mainstreaming was led by countries including Japan, the initiative resulted in a narrower concept by almost removing the 'freedom of fear' aspect. Consequently, linking human security with peace and conflict became conceptually difficult.

subsection did not systematically deal with peacebuilding and just touched on the importance of youth empowerment and capacity development.

‘Strengthening peace and stability’ was one of the three pillars of TICAD VII (2019), which followed the structure of the final document of TICAD VI. No significant changes can be found in the contents of the section. Whereas a new term, ‘humanitarian-development-peace-security nexus’, was used in the section, the term ‘peacebuilding’ disappeared from the document. The promotion of human security was mentioned in the general statement, but not in the specific context of peace and conflict.

By analysing the final documents from six TICADs, some characteristics of Japan’s peace policy towards Africa can be identified. First, issues revolving around peace have been constantly considered one of the important issues in TICAD. Because of a broad consensus that peace is a prerequisite for development, it has always been given an important place in the final document. Second, it has consistently emphasised the importance of African initiatives on the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts, and supported AU’s institutions, including APSA and APRM. This reflects Japan’s stance with regard to respecting Africa’s ownership and supporting its initiatives. Third, although it is evident that Japan appreciates and works for Africa’s peace through TICAD, the kind of peace that should be pursued is relatively unclear. Although Japan is a democratic country that has emphasised the importance of democracy at TICAD, it has rarely requested African countries to follow this path. Moreover, the relationship between peace and democracy is mentioned less often in the most recent TICADs<sup>9</sup>. If Japan promotes peace in Africa, does it appreciate ‘peace’ under a brutal dictator? Fourth, whereas Japan considers the promotion of human security as one of its basic policies (Government of Japan 2015), the linkage between the concept and peace is not clarified. Does the promotion of human security contribute to peace consolidation? If so, how?

### 3.2. Analysis of the TICAD (2013-2015) progress reports

In a sense, it may be natural that the TICAD’s final documents provide only limited information about Japan’s policy towards Africa, as they were issued under the name of all participants, including African heads of state. Therefore, these documents cannot be considered a reflection of Japan’s explicit policy statements, although there is no doubt that they provide important clues for understanding its attitude towards Africa. In particular, the 2013-15 report provides useful information about the actions taken after TICAD V. The following activities were listed as Japan’s contributions to consolidating peace,

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<sup>9</sup> The necessity of democratization and democracy was often mentioned in the documents until TICAD IV. For example, see the Tokyo Declaration (1993, para. 5), Tokyo Agenda for Action (1998, para. 29). The documents at TICAD III and IV mentioned democracy as a necessary condition of peace (TICAD Tenth Anniversary Declaration 2003, III 2., Yokohama Declaration 2008, 5.2). However, the Yokohama Declaration at TICAD V (2013) made no mention of democracy. Although democracy was mentioned in the final documents at TICAD VI and VII, its link to peace was not clear in these documents.

stability, democracy, and good governance (Government of Japan n.d.: 26-28) <sup>10</sup>.

(1) Support capacity building in the area of peacekeeping and peacebuilding: Assistance for 12 PKO training centres and support for the democratisation of the DRC national police.

(2) Support for activities by AU/RECs (regional economic communities) for peace consolidation: Contribution to AU peace fund.

(3) Contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations: Dispatching Japan Self-Defence Forces (JSDF) to South Sudan in 2011, and contributing to the Triangular Partnership Project for African Rapid Deployment of Engineering Capabilities (ARDEC) in 2015.

(4) Contribution to United Nations peacebuilding activities: Commitment to the UN Peace Building Commission by chairing the working group and contributing to the UN Peace Building Fund.

(5) Contribution to maritime security: Conducting counter-piracy operations by deploying the JSDF to the Gulf of Aden, and supporting capacity building in the maritime security field in Africa.

(6) Promotion of dialogues with counter-terrorism and security officers: Capacity building through workshops and seminars.

(7) Support for peace and stability in the Sahel area through development and humanitarian support amounting to JPY 100 billion: Provision of the ODA (JPY 96.5 billion) for countries in the Sahel region.

(8) Support for poverty reduction, measures to counter youth unemployment, empowerment of women, and others in fragile states: Support for conflict-affected and post-conflict countries through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and international organisations.

These eight activities indicate that Japan provides a wide range of assistance for peace. Activities can be classified according to actors. Whereas Japan directly implements the peace policies in cases (3), (5), and (8), it only provides funds and assists the African organisations and the UN agencies in (2) and (4). In (1) and (6) they support capacity building, which is primarily achieved through financial aspects and facilitating or lecturing. As for (7), no information is available on the extent to which Japan directly runs the programme.

In peace and conflict, another classification is possible from a sequential perspective. In accordance with the UN (1992), UN peace operations are classified into four phases: preventive diplomacy, peace-making, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. Following these distinctions, (6) can be understood as a contribution to preventive diplomacy. (1), (3), and (5) focus on peacekeeping operations, in which JSDF plays a major role<sup>11</sup>. Meanwhile, (4), (7), and (8) contribute to peacebuilding. Although detailed information about (2) is not available, the support will be used for all the sequences.

<sup>10</sup> Although the report also describes the activities and initiatives by Africa and its partners (African Union, RECs, UNDP, the World Bank, UN Office of Special Advisor on Africa,), no information is provided about the extent of Japan's contributions (Government of Japan n.d.: 29-31).

<sup>11</sup> A part of (1) (the support for the democratisation of the national police) can be understood as the security sector reform, namely peacebuilding activities.

The above analyses reveal that Japan has contributed to Africa's peace and security through various means, including the provision of funds, capacity building, dispatching the JSDF, and the implementation of development projects. However, although the progress report clarifies its peacekeeping activities, information about peacebuilding is scarce, as the report does not mention concrete projects in (7) and (8). Moreover, information about peacebuilding projects has not been systematically provided by the main implementation body (JICA) despite the fact that the organisation has always emphasised the importance of peacebuilding<sup>12</sup>.

### 3.3. Japan's peace policy through ODA

The development of Japan's peace policy is closely related to that of foreign aid policies. Japan started the provision of ODA after its return to the international community through the San Francisco Treaty in 1951, together with reparations to Southeast Asian countries. During the early post-war period, it was no exaggeration to say that the main objective of Japan's ODA policy was to serve its own economic recovery. This economic-cantered approach has often been criticised by foreign scholars and the OECD-DAC (White 1964). Although Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs drafted a publication explaining the rationale for foreign aid (MOFA 1981), purpose of the ODA was not clearly defined in the government. Moreover, the country was clearly reluctant to discuss the political implications of the ODA in the Cold War era. Under the US's hegemonic influence, Japan chose to keep a low profile in the field of international politics and instead concentrated on economic growth.

However, international circumstances in the 1990s urged Japan to change its position. Because of the end of the Cold War and Japan becoming a top donor<sup>13</sup>, the country was pressed to contribute to international peace and security and formulate its philosophy with regard to foreign aid. In this context, the country decided to dispatch the JSDF abroad (Cambodia) for the first time in 1992 to participate in the UN peacekeeping operation, despite serious internal opposition<sup>14</sup>. In the same year, the first ODA charter was established (Government of Japan 1992), which strictly prohibited the use of ODA for military purposes. The first TICAD was held the following year. In short, at the beginning of the 1990s, Japan was urged to express itself about how to deal with global issues, including peace and security, poverty reduction, and development.

The 1990s saw an important development in Japan's peace policy. In addition to the government's decision to dispatch the JSDF for UN peacekeeping operations, two important concepts, namely

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<sup>12</sup> JICA's website indicates several examples of the peacebuilding project including that implemented in North-Western Uganda, Central and Northern Cote d'Ivoire, and the Darfur region in Sudan. Nevertheless, the projects that are classified as peacebuilding are not clear in the annual reports.

<sup>13</sup> Japan surpassed US in the volume of ODA for the first time in 1989 and was the largest provider until 2000 (except 1990).

<sup>14</sup> After the operation in Cambodia, the JSDF has participated in the UN peacekeeping operations in countries including Mozambique, East Timor, Iraq, and South Sudan.

peacebuilding and human security, were introduced into its diplomatic policy. The concept of peacebuilding was rapidly disseminated among the international community in the 1990s, as donors and international NGOs actively launched related activities<sup>15</sup>. Japan was also eager to engage in peacebuilding. In addition to the establishment of the first JICA's guidelines for peacebuilding in 2001 (JICA 2001), the concept was identified in the revised ODA charter in 2003 as one of the four priority issues along with poverty reduction, sustained growth, and tackling global problems. As mentioned in the previous section, Prime Minister Obuchi actively mentioned the concept of human security and was officially introduced to Japan's diplomatic policy through the revised ODA charter (Government of Japan 2003). Although no explicit explanation was made, a close connection between human security and peacebuilding was arguably a prerequisite for the revised ODA charter.

Japan's official peace policies have not changed since then. The concept of peacebuilding was repeatedly emphasised in the National Security Strategy (Government of Japan 2013) and the Development Cooperation Charter (Government of Japan 2015). In the latter, peacebuilding was specifically mentioned in one of the three priority issues, 'Sharing universal values and realising a peaceful and secure society' (Government of Japan 2015). In this document, Japan committed itself to addressing 'a wide range of factors causing conflict and instability,' and providing 'seamless assistance for peacebuilding' (ibid. 6).

Despite the fact that official peace policies remain unchanged, it appears undeniable that Japan's attitude towards the peace policies shifted as a result of both external and internal factors after the establishment of the ODA charter in 2003. Over a decade, we observed gradual changes in the attitude of OECD-DAC countries towards ODA policy, which has increasingly prioritised national interest, particularly in business fields, thus placing less emphasis on peacebuilding activities. As a consequence of changes in the international environment, such as the decline of the ODA in comparison with other financial flows and the rapid rise of emerging economies, particularly China, donors' ODA policies became more realistic in the 2010s.

The UK is the clearest example. While the country was very eager to be engaged in DAC initiatives under Prime Minister Tony Blair and took a lead in peacebuilding activities throughout the 1990s and the 2000s, its ODA policy under the subsequent conservative governments became much more business-oriented. Following the 2001 military intervention in Afghanistan, DAC countries were highly motivated to undergo state-building in fragile places (Fukuyama 2004, OECD 2008). However, such enthusiasm waned in the 2010s, culminating in the US's withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. While the UK and US cannot represent all DAC countries, it is safe to say that donors' attitudes towards

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<sup>15</sup> Although the idea was originally used in Galtung (1976), it expanded rapidly in the 1990s, particularly following the publication of the UN (1992). According to the UN (2000, para. 13), peacebuilding stands for 'activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war'.

peacebuilding became much more nuanced in the 2010s compared to attitudes in the 1990s. It is highly likely that this change in international circumstances affected Japan's policies on international peace.

Moreover, Japan's experience has mattered. The most important one was the participation of the JSDF in the peacekeeping operations in South Sudan. Following the independence of the country in 2011, and the subsequent establishment of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Japan dispatched the JSDF for the peacekeeping mission. Considering the volatile security situation in the country, the JSDF confined themselves to civil engineering activities such as the construction of roads and bridges. Because of the strong opposition to the JSDF's participation in international peacekeeping operations<sup>16</sup>, the law that was adopted in 1992<sup>17</sup> was highly restrictive with regard to JSDF activities, thereby deliberately precluding the possibility of fighting a battle abroad. The contents of the law can be summarised in the so-called five-point principle on PKO participation. Most importantly, it was stipulated that the JSDF would not be able to participate in peacekeeping operations without the 'existence of a cease-fire agreement between parties in a conflict'. In fear of being involved in unintended fighting, the government decided that the JSDF's activities should be limited to civil engineering.

South Sudan fell into a de facto civil war in 2013. However, the Japanese government never recognised that the fighting took place in Juba in order for the JSDF to remain in the position. The requirement of a cease-fire agreement between warring parties might have been relevant for the deployment of the UN PKO in the Cold War era, but this is clearly unrealistic now, as the UN has changed its policy and has pursued robustness in peacekeeping operations (UN 2000; 2017). The government's decision to withdraw the JSDF in 2017 revealed Japan's institutional unpreparedness for its contribution to international peacekeeping.

#### 4. Discussion

The analysis of the TICAD documents shows that Japan has actively taken various approaches to realise peace in Africa. The country has greatly assisted international organisations, including the UN, the African Union (AU), and regional economic communities (RECs) to this end. Examples include their contributions to the UN Peace Building Fund and AU Peace Fund, as well as assistance for PKO training centres in Africa. There is a broad consensus that Africans have the advantage of managing conflicts by themselves, and multilateral approaches are more effective when external interventions are necessary. As mentioned in the Yokohama Declaration at TICAD VII (2019), helping to strengthen the AU's

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<sup>16</sup> Because of the constitutional restriction and the memory of Japan's military aggression against Asian countries during the second World War, many Japanese people strongly opposed deploying the JSDF abroad during the deliberation process of the 1992 law.

<sup>17</sup> Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations (Act No. 79 of June 19, 1992).

institutions, such as the AGA and the APSA, is the right way as these institutions have been rapidly developing (Engel 2017). Japan's active participation in the UN peacebuilding commission is highly appreciated not only in terms of accountability to Japanese taxpayers, but also because of its serious engagement in peacebuilding activities. For the assistance of African organisations such as AU and African RECs, it is imperative for Japan to build up its own capacity to work with them. For this purpose, training and cultivating human resources with deep practical knowledge of these organisations will be prioritised. Nominating an ambassador of Japan for the AU in 2020 is a step in this direction.

It is undeniable that Japan's current laws do not provide suitable conditions for the JSDF to participate in peacekeeping activities in Africa. Security situations in low-intensity conflicts across Africa are not what Japan's 1992 law on PKO presupposes. Although Japan can contribute to international peacekeeping through various means by (for instance, by sending a few officers and civilians to UN missions and assisting PKO training centres), it is unrealistic to send JSDF troops to contribute to UN peacekeeping operations without amending the relevant laws.

Peacebuilding has been the most important field for Japan's peace policy in Africa and should be strongly promoted. Although Japan has already conducted a number of peacebuilding activities, it has been insufficiently mentioned in TICAD progress reports. Among policies and practices for peace, peacebuilding might be less diplomatically conspicuous than peacekeeping, although there is no doubt that they are equally significant. One of the reasons why peacebuilding has not been systematically mentioned in TICADs might be related to the problem of its definition. Due to the above-mentioned operational and judicial constraints, Japan has primarily developed policies and practices on peacebuilding through JICA, which has considered peacebuilding activities to be fundamentally the same as the regular type of ODA projects, but with a consideration for conflict<sup>18</sup>. Although this has been the result of a 'bottom-up approach' conducted by an implementation agency of foreign aid, it has resulted in some confusion about what peacebuilding projects are, because discussions about what kind of activities can contribute to building peace have been scarce. In fact, what kind of activities should be considered as peacebuilding? Should all projects implemented in a conflict-affected country be considered peacebuilding? The answer depends on the definition of peace and peacebuilding.

The Japanese government should be clear about what kind of peace it aims to promote. As a country that emphasises democracy and freedom, the peace that Japan promotes should be compatible with these social norms. Whereas many Japanese people agree that the country shall not explicitly request African counterparts to become more democratic, it may be necessary or even inevitable for them to redefine 'peacebuilding' activities from the perspective of their own values.

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<sup>18</sup> Honda 2017. JICA identifies two considerations with regard to conflict. One is to avoid a project having negative impacts on the conflict, and the other is to promote a project that has positive impacts such as reconciliation (JICA 2009).

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused serious socio-economic damage worldwide, every African country faces the danger of being affected by conflicts and violence, as indicated by the massive violence in South Africa in July 2021<sup>19</sup>. Efforts to build social and economic infrastructure in order to strengthen state functions are crucial for enhancing state legitimacy. Considering the characteristics of recent conflicts in Africa, assistance to ensure the living standards of people in rural areas are maintained is urgently needed to prevent violence. However, whether the provision of aid for these purposes is considered peacebuilding depends on the donor's view of what kind of peace is desirable, and how the assistance contributes to the purpose.

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<sup>19</sup> Although the incident was undoubtedly created and instigated by a particular group for political reasons, it is undeniable that socio-economic depression caused by the pandemic contributed to exacerbating the violence and pillage.

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# **The Matrix of the Human Security Project in the Context of the TICAD Process**

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## **Abstract**

The paper adapts Seymour M. Lipset's thesis, which draws a correlation between economic development and democracy, to argue that the former is the basis for human security. Effectively, it argues that human security (better life chances) is made more possible and sustainable through a productive economy, with the implication that an economy requires a government to function and grow. My position also rests on the idea that social rights as abstract ideals by themselves do not change social class inequalities and the insecurities they breed, but state policies that are designed and supported to obviate the insecurities of citizens might.

**Keywords:** 'freedom to live in dignity', Seymour Lipset, modernization, 'better life chances', economic development, self-reliance

## 1. Introduction

In the following analysis, I will emphasise the United Nations' (2009: 8-9) framework of protection as the basis for human security by exploring economic development as the tool for achieving better life chances, or *Lebenschancen* (Dahrendorf 1979), a Weberian concept, in Africa. While acknowledging that human security is indeed a goal, not a reality, the discussion will use the Japanese government's foreign policy flagship, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) policies, as a platform to assess how a more coherent system of structures for human security might be achieved through development assistance between the Japanese government and the African states. This takes into consideration the pivotal role of the State, with the support of an external power, to engender and ensure better life chances for the people. Given the development content of the TICAD initiative, the role of the private sector, which the TICAD process has recently tried to capture within the initiative as a potential contributor to the economic development of Africa, is also discussed.

The discussion begins with remarks about some salient aspects of the concept of human security, followed by an assessment of the modernisation thesis concerning the correlation between economic development and democracy, as articulated by Seymour Martin Lipset in the 1950s. This is followed by a discussion of the TICAD as a policy instrument for engendering economic development in Africa. The relevance of human security to, and how it is factored into, the TICAD discourse is explored in the analysis. Finally, I discuss a dimension of the third objective of human security, which is the freedom to live in dignity, to interrogate how development assistance, and the discourse surrounding it, could itself undermine the dignity of the recipient. Integral to the overall analysis is a question about how the realisation of the three objectives of human security, freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity, could be fulfilled through the TICAD. In other words, how do we resolve the tension between the development of abstract entitlements and their actual realization by ordinary citizens (Turner 2010: 238)?

## 2. Stating the argument

Taking my cue from Lipset, I argue that in a modern state, human security is not achievable without a productive economy due to the constraints that the hardship of poverty and its consequences bear on the citizens and on the existing system of the state as the country attempts to grow its economy to reduce poverty (Huntington 1968: 39-53). Thus, I contend that while the objectives and ideals of human security are laudable, the view of the Human Development Report (HDR) of 1994 that '[t]he idea of human security...is likely to revolutionize society in the 21st century' is only as good as the extent to which it can engender democratic norms and values in poor countries like Niger or Myanmar. Consequently, I suggest that the goal of human security as articulated by the 2003 Commission on Human Security (CHS) report, which focuses on three areas, freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to live

in dignity, could be pared down to a single goal, which is freedom from want. This point is partly derived from the fact that in reality, if not in principle, human security is largely perceived as the problem of people in deprived and poor economies. I further suggest, in the last section of the discussion, that the third objective of the CHS, freedom to live in dignity, is also invariably rooted in our economic circumstances. In other words, dignity may be derived from a productive economy that creates livelihoods for its citizens and is not dependent on economic aid from donors. What is worth emphasising here is that those who live on charity are conscious of that as a fixture of their identity, which deprives them of their dignity.

### **3. The human security problematic**

The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) HDR of 1994 inaugurated the idea of human security, in part as an indictment of the way security is conceived in international politics, by confirming '[i]t has been related more to nation-states than to people', with a narrow emphasis on national interests, prioritising among others the security of the territory of the state from external aggression (UNDP 1994: 22). Forgotten in this matrix of security 'were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives...', not least because for many of them '...security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression [from the state] and environmental hazard' (UNDP 1994: 22). Certainly, for many ordinary citizens, their sense of insecurity derives from the circumstances of deprivation within which they eke out an existence undermined, day by day, by the overwhelming power of poverty in its various dimensions, including the tensions that accrue from want with consequences for crime and violence. The report notes that in many instances the deprivation that ordinary people endure is made worse, if not terminal, by the very governments they look up to for protection (UNDP 1994: 22). Fanon (1961: 132-133) noted, in relation to the post-colonial states, how their leaders aspired to reclaim independence from colonial rule, but also '... hasten[ed] to make their fortunes and to set up a national system of exploitation', to deny the ordinary people the 'utopia' promised by independence. Basically, Fanon affirmed that independence did not create 'a state that reassures the ordinary citizen', but 'rather ...rouses [their] anxiety [as their] ...country sinks all the more deeply into stagnation' with the potential for violence and war.

To mitigate such risks, human security is designed 'as a policy tool for programming in the fields of security, development, and humanitarian work', and the strength and appeal of the concept for analysis and programming lies in a variety of components, primary among which is the framework of protection and empowerment (United Nations 2009: 8-9). These are two mutually reinforcing pillars that are seemingly endowed with the ability to achieve better life chances for people in vulnerable situations.

Protection, according to the Commission on Human Security (CHS), amounts to 'strategies, set up by states, international agencies, NGOs and the private sector, [to] shield people from menaces' (CHS

2003: 10). This includes the necessary institutions emboldened by the requisite norms and processes ‘to protect people from critical and pervasive threats’ (United Nations 2009: 8). The operationalisation of the norms and processes, indeed the institutions that implement these, imply a cascading process from the top, premised on the understanding ‘that people face threats that are beyond their control’ (United Nations 2009: 8). Inexorably this demands not just the establishment of the rule of law, but one that is enforceable and works through good governance, accountability, and social protective instruments (United Nations 2009: 10). Incidentally, this provides the State, as a form of human association whose primary responsibility includes the establishment and maintenance of order and security, with ‘... the primary responsibility to implement such a protective structure’, although with input from other stakeholders such international and regional organisations, donors, and the private sector (United Nations 2009: 8, CMS 2003: 2). This formulation of human security automatically confirms Michel Foucault’s (1972) notion of the State as a productive force, even if it also has the tendency to objectify its subjects. Suffice to say, ‘[p]rotection involves strategies that enhance the capacities of the institutional/governance structures needed to protect the affected community(ies) against...identified threats’ (CHS 2003: 4, United Nations 2009: 18).

Empowerment, on the other hand, is conceived as including ‘...strategies that build upon the capacities of the affected community(ies) to cope with...identified threats and to strengthen their resilience and choices... to [enable them to] act on their own behalf and those of the others’ (United Nations 2009: 18), an idea that resonates with the values of self-reliance, which we will address more extensively later. The CHS also notes that empowerment involves ‘strategies [that] enable people to develop their resilience to difficult situations’ in a ‘bottom up’ approach (United Nations 2009: 8), in contrast to protection, whose effectiveness is dependent on a top-down operation. More precisely, empowerment aims to develop the capabilities of individuals and communities to make informed choices and to act on their own behalf based on the principle that ‘[e]mpowering people not only enables them to develop their full potential but also allows them to find ways to participate in solutions to ensure human security for themselves and others’ (United Nations 2009: 8, CHS 2003: 10). The interdependence of these two elements is emphasised in the discourse as necessary for the human security agenda.

The TICAD as a development initiative indeed involves measures on the part of the government of Japan in collaboration with the African countries to modernise the African economies, which, if successful, may augment the human security of many poor Africans by addressing the conundrum of poverty with its profusion of complex socio-political demographics. This is based on my understanding that achieving economic development would amount to freedom from want, which in a cascading sequence of events would lead to the realisation of the other two objectives, as is evident in the historical processes and development of the European and North American countries since at least the end of

World War I, and more recently in East Asia since the 1960s. Indeed, I take into consideration the fact that human security, as with democracy, is a process with evolving and infinite aspirations, which material goods alone cannot easily fulfil. As the HDR of 1994 (UNDP 1994: 24) noted, ‘People in rich nations seek security from the threat of crime and drug wars in their streets, the spread of deadly diseases like [covid], soil degradation, rising levels of pollution, the fear of losing their jobs and many other anxieties that emerge as the social fabric disintegrate’. More recently, the Black Lives Matter movement has reaffirmed how problems of racism undermine the dignity and humanity of black people in the wealthy nations of the world, most prominently in the US. Moreover, as Anthony Appiah (2001: 43) intimates, to ask a gay person to hide their identity undermines their dignity. Nevertheless, the indicators comprehensively show that how secure a population is, is shaped by factors correlated to the national economy and how that plays out with regard to people’s income, class, education, healthcare, and commercial and environmental conditions, and in all these areas, the poorer countries fare comparatively worse, resulting in adverse human security for them.

#### **4. Modernization theory and human better life chances**

As Seymour Martin Lipset (1959: 86) argued in his seminal study, ‘In the modern world... economic development involving industrialization, urbanization, high educational standards, and a steady increase in the overall wealth of the society, is a basic condition sustaining democracy’, and ‘it is a mark of the efficiency of the total system’. Thus, Lipset (1959: 71) invokes the economic development matrix and its consequences for democracy as a way of fulfilling people’s better life chances. In essence, Lipset’s analysis indicates causality between democratic governance and economic development, premised on the argument that the latter engenders a functioning democratic system. Following that thesis, based indeed on his libertarian position, he argues that given ‘...the existence of poverty-stricken masses, low levels of education, an elongated pyramid class structure, and the ‘premature’ triumph of the democratic left, the prognosis for the perpetuation of political democracy in Asia and Africa is bleak’ (Lipset 1959: 86, Banerjee 2012). Lipset further suggests that ‘[a] society divided between a largely impoverished mass and a small-favoured elite would result either in oligarchy (dictatorial rule of the small upper stratum) or in tyranny (popularly based dictatorship)’ (Lipset 1959: 75, Banerjee 2012).

Lipset (1959: 73) further points out that ‘[m]ost countries which lack an enduring tradition of political democracy lie in the traditionally underdeveloped sections of the world’, whereas ‘concretely... the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy’ (Lipset 1959: 75). Consequently, he argues that economic wellbeing is a prerequisite for functional democracy (Lipset 1959:71): ‘...a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials...[and] social mechanism for the resolution of the problem of societal decision-making among conflicting interest groups’ in a state of reasonable peace. Central to this thesis are what

Lipset (1959: 71) refers to as ‘two principal complex characteristics of social systems...: economic development and legitimacy’ because ‘...they bear on the problem of stable democracy’, and he notes that ‘the effectiveness of the system... [is] a function of economic development’ (Lipset 1959: 71). In other words, poverty undermines the attainment of what in principle should be basic to every person.

Supporting Daniel Lerner’s earlier (1958) formula, Lipset (1959: 83) argued that a high level of education and literacy causes and sustains belief in democratic norms (Lipset 1959: 83). By extension, a higher level of education, which often amounts to increased income, and greater economic and social mobility, is likely to effect more belief in the norms of human security, the necessary factors that would permit those whose human security is threatened to develop, in Lipset’s words (1959: 83), ‘longer time perspectives and more complex and [critical] views of politics’, to enable them to understand the need for norms of tolerance. Thus, education is identified as a strong factor, one of the primary indicators in fact, in better life chances from the bottom up, and yet, evidently, this is more easily attained in developed economies than in poorer economies.

In effect, a developed economy is more likely to reconstitute class relations more positively, if only because (Lipset 1959: 83):

The poorer a country, and the lower the absolute standard of living of the lower classes, the greater the pressure on the upper strata to treat the lower classes as beyond the pale of human society, as vulgar, as innately inferior, as a lower caste. The sharp difference in the style of living between those at the top and those at the bottom makes this psychologically necessary.

This projection suggests ‘the upper strata... tend to regard political rights for the lower strata, particularly the right to share in power, as essentially absurd and immoral’, thus resisting democracy (Lipset 1959: 83-84), and in the process denying the human security of those who are poor. If this is even remotely correct then it serves as a reason for creating the enabling structures to achieve economic growth for the deprived economies, if the objective is to achieve human security in those countries. The TICAD may well provide such an opportunity, despite its conceptual and practical ambiguities.

## **5. The TICAD policy and its architectural framework**

Shirato Keiichi’s 2020 essays on the origins of the TICAD reveal that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), which single-handedly created Japan’s renewed policy towards Africa in the early 1990s, was apparently afflicted by a conflict of bureaucratic interests regarding how to approach Japan’s development assistance to Africa. By the time of the first TICAD summit in 1993, the consensus within the Ministry was that there would be no financial pledges made towards aid for Africa within the

framework of the TICAD, with the objective that the process would be more advisory, based on the idea of self-reliance and ownership by Africa of its development. The TICAD was therefore conceived as a forum for enacting guidelines and methods for development, a fact confirmed in Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa's (1993) keynote address at the first TICAD summit.

Within the context of Japanese development practices, at least in comparison with assistance towards the Southeast Asian economies (Shimomura 2013, Shimomura and Wang Ping 2015, Wade 1996), the above stance towards Africa was a deviation from the norm, which involved massive commitments in the form of loans and technical assistance, most of which were intrinsically linked to the interests of the Japanese private sector and helped to attract investments from the latter in the aid-recipient countries. Nevertheless, the principle on which TICAD was initiated evoked an ambition to assist the African countries to graduate from their structural dependence on aid, with its inherent inadequacies and indignities, and to own, that is to take control of, their development through their own initiative. This is in part based on the conception that the 'backdrop of development success lies in the combination of a strong commitment by the leadership and the people to economic prosperity, appropriate long-term development strategies and functional government administration to pursue these strategies coherently' (MOFA 1993a).

In principle, the African participants of the TICAD agreed with the above premise, as they consistently referenced 'the recognized limitations of ODA' and continued to project trade and investment as the pathway for Africa's development, while also emphasising the strategic importance of infrastructure development through ODA (ADC 2012: 12). The discourse notes that, despite the no-pledge approach adopted by the originators of the TICAD, the process began to transform systematically, if slowly, from 2008, beyond the original plan. Increasingly, the TICAD has progressed towards involving Japanese government pledges and Japanese companies more actively (Hirano 2016, Dōyūkai 2013). The turning point was in fact earlier, which I will explain below.

The indications that a transformation was beginning to take shape in the way the Japanese government approaches TICAD may be attributed to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Koji Omi's (2007) keynote speech at the Africa Day Symposium at UN House on 25 May, about a year before the inauguration of TICAD IV, where he shared what he referred to as his 'fresh ideas' about how to approach development issues in Africa. His address included remarks about 'making effective use of financial resources including aid flows, debt relief and revenues from natural resources', improving 'public finance management' and 'debt management capabilities', as may be expected from a Japanese finance minister speaking to an African audience. He also spoke about the importance of nurturing the private sector, and noted the joint initiative between Japan and Africa, involving private sector development through Enhanced Private Sector Assistance for Africa (EPSA). Following a few comments about innovations in science and technology, Omi further remarked that 'I sincerely hope...

Japan will build win-win relations with African countries not only through financial instruments, but also through utilizing the power of science and technology'. The 'win-win relations' Omi alluded to related to the emerging transformations of Japan's approach to Africa, which have arguably contributed to the changing dynamics of the TICAD process. In fact, the situation had been made possible by the economic prospects of the African economies, which were growing at a healthy pace due to the resource boom triggered by China's imports from Africa.

Thus, with cautious optimism, the Dōyūkai (2013) noted that:

Throughout the 2000s, Africa as a whole achieved steady economic growth: from 2001 to 2010, the average annual growth rate reached 5.8%, and nominal GDP and the amount of trade increased 2.8-fold and 3.6-fold, respectively. Since the population of Africa is expected to increase by 300 million per decade, in 2050 it is estimated to double the level of 2010, to reach over 2 billion.

Consequently, the Association proposed that Japan should 'renew its strategy in Africa'. More recently, the Keidanren (2018) also confirmed:

Africa has...been enjoying rapid economic growth. Total GDP has increased roughly 3.4 times over the past 15 years, from US\$632 billion in 2001 to US\$2.1 trillion in 2016. Its population passed 1.2 billion in 2016 and is expected to exceed 2.5 billion people by 2050, potentially comprising a larger consumer market. With ongoing economic growth and the growing middle-income population expected in the future, Africa has even greater potential for the future.

What is perhaps pertinent about the public intervention of the Minister of Finance in the dialogue regarding Africa's economic development is that Japan's leading economic ministry had, if hesitantly, publicly commented on the potential mutual benefits in economic relations between Japan and the African countries, perhaps indicating that the ministry might be interested in the TICAD after all, but also that economic relations rather than aid was the best way forward to developing the African economies, away from the dependency trend and its attendant indignities.

Indeed, TICAD IV in 2008 revealed a transformation in Japan's strategy towards Africa, as the summit indicated a shift from dialogue between heads of governments to a more diversified engagement involving the private sector and a preference for public-private partnership for the development of Africa. Riding on the momentum of TICAD IV's theme, 'Boosting Economic Growth', the Japanese government pledged to double Japan's ODA to Africa to \$1.8 billion by the 2012 fiscal year, and to

offer yen loans amounting to \$4 billion in the five years until the 2012 fiscal year. The government further began to study and examine more proactively various problems regarding Japan's engagements with Africa through discussions with NGOs, NPOs, and relevant private companies (Dōyūkai 2013).

Thematically, TICAD IV's priority areas also included 'Towards Ensuring Human Security', including achieving the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and consolidation of peace and good governance. However, the concern for human security was largely subsumed under the MDGs in a fashion that projected its rhetorical importance rather than its essence, perhaps an indication of the conceptual ambiguity between the two. The conflation of the two concepts may also be seen as a reflection of the Japanese policymakers' bias in favour of economic development, and the belief that the primary components of human security and the MDGS could be realised through the eradication of poverty. Not surprisingly, according to a recent statement by JICA (2021), '...poverty raises the risk of violent conflicts, [and] freedom from fear and freedom from want ...'.

If the Ministry of Finance had begun to engage with the TICAD process, Ministry of Economy Trade and Industries (METI) also started to emerge more actively in the TICAD in tandem, as demonstrated by the participation of the METI minister Akira Amari in the proceedings, including delivering a keynote speech at the TICAD IV session on 'Boosting Economic Growth' (IIST 2008), with its emphasis on the following sub-themes: 'Accelerated Industrial Development', 'Agricultural and Rural Development', 'Trade and Investment', 'Promotion of Tourism', and 'Role of the Private Sector'. Amari reflected on the pledge to double Japanese investments in Africa, and Japan's plan to deliver the hard and soft aspects of infrastructure through flexible yen loans towards Africa's development. His presence at the side of Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda at the opening ceremony of the African Fair 2008, hosted by METI and its agency, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), to promote African export items, also indicated some attempts on the part of METI to encourage more imports of African products to Japan.

At TICAD VI in 2016, METI minister Yoshimitsu Matsumura (METI 2016) repeated the format followed by his predecessor, promising Japan's support for the Japanese private sector's role in the African economies, and the industrial development of the African countries through the Japan-Africa Public and Private Economic Forum.

The discussion about the engagement of the Japanese ministries in the TICAD alerts us to a section of the bureaucracy that also deserves highlighting, which is the kantei, the prime minister's office. In particular, under Prime Minister Shintaro Abe, TICAD was given much of a boost through his attempts, in my assessment, to make the policy beneficial to Japan's national interest in the manner that Japanese ODA served as a catalyst for economic growth in Southeast Asia, which subsequently 'developed into an important market and investment destination for Japanese private companies, and therefore, an extremely important region for the Japanese economy' (MOFA 2015: 8, 12). As suggested above, the kantei's proactive interest in the TICAD has to be seen in the context of Abenomics, which are policies

to invigorate Japan's long-term depressed economy. TICAD VI of 2016, which also highlighted the kantei's interest in Africa's development with an emphasis on public private partnership further provides evidence of the prime minister's office's involvement in the promotion of TICAD.

As a policy initiative, the TICAD shares one thing in common with human security, which is that they are both single-handedly run by MOFA, to the extent that the foreign ministry has a monopoly on both, although it might be argued that perhaps MOFA's unwitting grip on the TICAD, as indicated above, is beginning to loosen up. The point I wish to make here is that MOFA's monopoly on the TICAD, an initiative that demands a multi-sector, cross-cutting approach, barely helped to attract interest in the initiative from strategic sectors such as the METI, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and their relevant agencies, such as the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), an indication that the Japanese economic system was not particularly keen to support the TICAD with the cross-cutting tools of engagement that Africa's development desperately needs. Certainly, the apathy of the Japanese private sector towards the economic prospects of Africa compounded the situation.

## **6. The human security discourse in the context of the TICAD**

As noted by Kurusu (2016: 3-4), Japan has been at the forefront of the human security discourse, which by coincidence was inaugurated just six months after the commencement of the TICAD process in 1993. It is perhaps no coincidence that the Japanese government, as the originator and benefactor of the TICAD process, and indeed given its predilection for economic development, based on Japan's own historical experience, as a means for poverty reduction, chose to emphasise, out of the three objectives of the Human Security Commission (HSC), freedom from want as a pillar of its foreign policy and ODA (Takeuchi 2021, Kurusu 2016: 6, 9, Mine 2007: 70).

Indeed, the government of Japan embraced human security as a foreign policy initiative, and by extension incorporated it in its ODA Charter of 2003, and seemingly in tandem with the CHS recommendations of 2003, Japan became more oriented towards the ideals of conflict prevention and consolidation of peace, in reference to the Commission's objective, freedom from fear (Kurusu, 2016: 6). This was translated into the *modus operandi* of TICAD III, which was also held in 2003, as follows (MOFA 2003):

It is...imperative to protect the peoples of Africa from any threats to their survival, dignity, and livelihood, and moreover to empower all, including women, children and other vulnerable groups, to shape and fully own the process of building communities and nations. Such protection and empowerment are pivotal concepts underlying human security.

The ideal of self-reliance, from the bottom-up, as it were, is projected in the statement through the word ‘empowerment’, although its twin, ‘protection’, which refers to State’s role in the provision of human security, is also noted. It is interesting that this development at TICAD III coincided with the year Sadako Ogata assumed the Presidency of JICA in 2003 after retiring from her post as head of the UNHCR. Incidentally, in the same year, and in the context of the TICAD III, the MOFA (2003) declared that:

The Millennium Declaration of the United Nations in 2000 and the report of the Commission on Human Security in 2003 underscored the fact that the peoples of Africa still face serious problems such as poverty, hunger, infectious diseases including the HIV/AIDS epidemic especially, and a lack of education, thus indicating that Africa is the continent where human security is least assured.

I suggest that these seemingly coincidental factors made it necessary for ‘[t]he TICAD process... [to place] great emphasis on the concept of human security with a view’, according to MOFA, ‘to relieving the African people of their present afflictions, providing them with peace and hope for the future, and engaging them in the development process’ (MOFA 2003).

Correspondingly, in 2004 JICA (2006, Kamidohzono *et al.* 2016), the implementing agency of Japan’s ODA, also cannibalized this aspect of the human security ideal by injecting into its project objectives what are designated broadly as the Seven Aspects of Human Security, the fourth aspect of which affirmed it would ‘comprehensively [address] both ‘freedom from want’ and ‘freedom from fear’’. Nevertheless, JICA’s operations in Africa and within the TICAD framework have largely been in the realms of achieving economic development to eradicate poverty, which I attribute to the agency’s understanding that achieving freedom from want would enable freedom from fear, and by extension achieve freedom to live in dignity.

The human security dispensation was again highlighted at TICAD V in 2013, during which a symposium on human security was held on 2 June. That forum on human security (MOFA 2013a) included Prime Minister Shintaro Abe, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, and Dr. Sadako Ogata, who had by then retired as President of JICA, having led the organisation for more than eight years, but who was then serving as an advisor to the Foreign Minister. The event also included Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, a country that had recently suffered one of the most egregiously violent wars in the history of West Africa, and Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, Chairperson of the African Union (AU). In his speech at the event, Prime Minister Abe called for promotion of human security in Africa and for the development of the region, indicating that human development was ‘...the

basis for the development of countries’, (MOFA 2013a) a point that reaffirmed the emphasis on development in the TICAD process.

At the summit’s Fifth Thematic Session, devoted to the enhancement of peacebuilding, Abe however evoked peace in the context of Japan’s historical experience, referring to it as ‘a fundamental source of growth’, affirming that ‘Japan achieved its prosperity by learning the value of peace’. Consequently he appealed to the African countries to work towards achieving peace ‘for the well-being of each individual’ in the region, a point that nevertheless reflected the Japanese government’s concerns about the security of Japanese nationals living and working in Africa, as staff of the JGC Holders Company had been taken hostage and murdered in Algeria in January 2013 (MOFA 2013b, Yoshida 2013). Crucially, in his keynote speech at the opening session of TICAD V on 1 June, Prime Minister Abe (MOFA 2013c) articulated Japan’s faith in economic development and affirmed that ‘...[t]he idea that poverty can be overcome through growth is something that has been axiomatic for Japanese right from the start’, further confirming that ‘[t]he TICAD concept also places an unwavering emphasis on growth’. He proceeded to elaborate on aspects of the processes for achieving growth in Africa through public private partnership (PPP), an initiative he described as holding the key ‘...to revolutioniz[ing] the way of providing assistance to Africa’.

Following the example of previous Prime Ministers, Abe pledged (MOFA 2013c) to support Africa’s growth over the next five years through the PPP initiative with ‘public and private means [amounting to] approximately \$32 billion, including ODA of around 1.4 trillion yen and other public and private resources of around \$16 billion dollars’. In addition, he promised that Japan would allocate \$6.5 billion towards infrastructure development over the next five years in Africa, and ‘...underwrite a maximum of \$2 billion of trade insurance’ towards Japanese investments in the region. The list of pledges included the construction of ‘hubs for human resource development’ at ten locations, with Japanese experts in vocational training. This suggests a clear attempt to entice the Japanese private sector to participate more actively the TICAD process. Thus, with an emphasis on PPP, and in conjunction with the business community, the Abe administration created the Council on Public Private Partnership to Promote TICAD V (MOFA 2013d), which included the Keidanren. Seemingly with an eye on Africa’s markets and natural resources, and with a swipe at other competitors, conceivably China, Abe announced ‘...we will not simply extract resources and take them back to Japan. Japan will assist Africa to ensure that the blessings of Africa’s natural resources are conducive to Africa’s economic growth’ (MOFA 2013d).

Abe’s point about revolutionizing assistance to Africa is worth reflecting on, as it carries interesting implications. Firstly, the plan as laid out by Abe confirmed packages of economic development programmes, which itself is not a novelty, either in Japan’s experience with development assistance or even in the discourses about development in general. However, the plan was revolutionary because Japan had never approached Africa’s development that way, nor had any of the donor countries. Most

of the development assistance to Africa had been on the level of bilateral relations, which had been largely humanitarian orientated. Again, from the Japanese perspective, Abe's promise was revolutionary in the sense that it aimed to rope the Japanese private sector into the business of developing the African economies, following the format Japan had used in East Asian development. As Japan's Development Charter of 2015 attests, the formula for Japanese development assistance was equally designed to serve Japan's own national interests, and certainly those of the Japanese private sector. The policy to fashion Japan's ODA in a manner that would serve the interests of Japan was nothing new of course, but a novelty in the history of Japanese ODA to Africa, which had largely been oriented towards humanitarian assistance, a type of assistance that had no concrete benefits for the Japanese private sector and therefore did not commit Japan to the realisation of Africa's economic development. Suffice to say, even as the Development Cooperation Charter of 2015, consistent with the National Security Strategy of 2013, referred to the human security dispensation, promising to 'focus its development cooperation on individuals – especially those liable to be vulnerable such as children, women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, refugees and internally-displaced persons, ethnic minorities, and indigenous peoples – and provide cooperation for their protection and empowerment so as to realize human security', the essence of Abe's approach to Africa largely emphasised economic development.

## **7. The freedom to live in dignity: Contending with self-reliance in the TICAD**

As noted above, the TICAD policy was premised on not making pledges towards ODA, but exhorting the African countries to apply self-reliance to develop their economies. Thus, from the inception of the TICAD process we find constant references to self-help (which I will use interchangeably with self-reliance for our purposes). Consequently, in the keynote speech of Prime Minister Hosokawa at TICAD I in 1993, he expressed the 'hope that during the two-day discussions the African countries [would] express their determination to pursue self-help efforts, and that their development partners [would] show an equally determined commitment to support these efforts' (MOFA 1993b). Following that trajectory, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's opening remarks at TICAD IV in 2008 used self-reliance to mean taking ownership of one's own economic development, conflating the two ideas (Ampiah 2012).

As a matter of fact, self-reliance has become increasingly integral to the Japanese government's approaches to development assistance (Shimomura 2020: 180-181), which reference Japan's identity as a country that developed its economy through self-reliance. While the narrative may well be designed as a motivational message for developing countries, and could indeed be understood as a way of empowering recipient countries in the manner that empowerment has been used in the human security discourse by the CMS, it raises the following important question: when is self-reliance self-reliance; is it when it is successful? The point of the question is that, of course, all countries apply self-reliance in their efforts towards economic development (Morawetz 1977). For example, Tanzania's political and

development history reveals how under President Julius Nyerere's leadership the country implemented self-reliance in the Ujamaa policy in the 1970s (Ibhawoh and Dibua 2003), which incidentally failed to foster economic growth in Tanzania. Whatever the outcome of that particular historical experience, however, we cannot fail to observe that Ujamaa was a resounding exercise in self-reliance, as was Kwame Nkrumah's Rural Industrialization Policy in Ghana in the early 1960s. Cuba was conceivably one of the most self-reliant countries on earth in the twentieth century, necessitated of course by geopolitics, yet there is no appreciation in the development discourse for any of these countries because none succeeded in delivering the citizens of these countries from the human security ideal of freedom from want. So, to reiterate the question, when is self-reliance self-reliance?

The problem is of course compounded by the lack of a reliable definition of self-reliance. According to the UNHCR (2005), '[s]elf-reliance, as a programme approach... [is about] developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian/external assistance'. Dependency theorist Amin (1977) thought a self-reliant economy 'should not become dominated or dependent on another economy'. Both these ideas aspire to end dependence on external assistance, which embodies the ignominy of indignity.

This brings me to the matter of the third objective of the CHS's aspirations for human security, which is freedom to live in dignity, an ideal that is also burdened with conceptual complications, not least because it is wrapped up in a complex and amorphous body of norms and morality. Relevant to the discussion is indeed the concept of self-reliance, which is heavily referenced in the Japanese government's discourses about ODA, particularly to Africa, and has implications for how dignity is conceived in the relationship between the donor and the recipient.

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that '[a]ll human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. Yet Appiah (2001: 43) has argued, even from his libertarian perspective, that 'a life of hand-outs is not dignified', implying that a person's dignity may indeed be destroyed either temporarily or permanently due to being dependent on charity, signifying that there is a social contract even in the conception of human dignity. When referring to Emmanuel Kant's notion of dignity as a quality attributable to all human beings and inviolable, an ideal that ascribes autonomy and agency to individuals, Mosel and Holloway (2019: 258) invoke Aurel Kolnai's nuanced conception of dignity to suggest that because dignity is 'inherent in being a person', it can be destroyed temporarily or without redemption, in contrast with human rights, which, in the worst-case scenario, can only be 'disregarded, negated, insulted, violated or suppressed'.

Based on that, Mosel and Holloway (2019: 1) argue that, without knowing what dignity means to the people it aims to support, those implementing humanitarian assistance would find it difficult to ensure that its responses to them are dignified. Effectively, they suggest that the didactic use of self-reliance is not dignifying to the poor, as it 'tends to reinforce recipients' feelings that they are not self-reliant'

(2019: 18). A contrast is drawn between ‘what things ought to be ... and what things are’ (Holloway and Grandi 2018: 4), a sense of self-worth that could easily be denied by others is the basis of the problem of human dignity.

Indeed, despite the universality of human insecurity, the human security problematic is largely viewed and understood as the preserve of the poor countries in the global south, where poverty and its consequences, including famine, infant mortality, illiteracy, social violence, political instability, dysfunctional politics, and so on, are well woven and hardened into people’s lives and existence. Thus Kurusu (2016: 24) chronicles how the Japanese government, for example, tends to view the human security initiative as a component of its foreign policy, reducing what is a universal problem to one that divides countries into ‘us and them’, rich and poor, donors and recipients, and north and south. It seems that the Japanese government has had to be sensitised by other Japanese stakeholders, including NGOs, about the concept’s relevance to the life chances of Japanese people as well (Kurusu 2016: 10-11), in view of recent calamities in Japan such as the Fukushima crisis of 2011.

## 8. Conclusion

Adopting Lipset’s thesis, which draws a correlation between economic development and democracy, I have argued that the former is the basis for human security. The argument I have pursued takes into consideration the historical experiences of the European countries, the North American states, and more recently the East Asian countries to make the point that as the economic fortunes of neighbouring countries mutually improve, the more protected is their citizens’ human security. Thus, while noting the reciprocal relationship between and the interconnectedness of the variables and factors that account for human insecurities, I have argued that human security (better life chances) is made more possible and sustainable through a productive economy, with the implication that an economy requires a government to function and grow. My position also rests on the idea that social rights as abstract ideals by themselves do not change social class inequalities and the insecurities they breed. However, state policies that are designed and supported to obviate the insecurities of citizens might.

The analysis has explored aspects of the TICAD process in the context of Japanese development assistance to show the Japanese government’s bias in favour of economic development as the basis for contending with human insecurities. We have also noted, with reference to Kurusu (2016: 6) and Kamidohzono *et al.* (2016), that following the CHS recommendations of 2003, Japan became oriented towards the ideals of conflict prevention and consolidation of peace, in reference to the Commission’s objective of freedom from fear. Nevertheless, due to its historical predilection for development, the Japanese government has tended to focus on the latter in relation to Africa. As revealed in the discussion above, however, the TICAD process itself was originally conceived and devised as a brain-storming initiative about Africa’s developmental malaise, premised on the principle of self-reliance and

ownership by the African countries of their economic development. As suggested above, the TICAD failed to attract the Japanese private sector to invest in the African economies in part because of the MOFA's initial decision against making financial pledges towards Africa's development. Following TICAD IV in 2008, the momentum for a more proactive involvement of Japanese companies in the policy seemed to slowly pick up pace, despite many structural difficulties with the policy itself and indeed in the African political economy, as the Dōyūkai and Keidanren reports reveal.

The indications from the above discussion are that the government of Japan has used both the development package and the human security discourse to address Africa's socio-economic problems, although it is clear from the TICAD policy that the momentum is more in the direction of development. This is partly because Japanese policymakers have a historical affinity towards economic growth as a remedy for poverty. Secondly, despite enthusiasm for human security as a foreign policy concept, it remains a learning curve even within MOFA, in part because the concept is loaded with normative ambiguities. Thus, the Japanese government's pronouncements about human security are obfuscating. This may be partly attributable to the following bureaucratic point. Personality in Japanese politics and foreign policy is often neutralised except in exceptional cases, as in the case of the advocacy of the principle of human security, which was essentially led by no other than Sadako Ogata. It seems that Ogata led the principle of human security by hand through the corridors of power in Japan and made sure it was internalised as a foreign policy norm. Her role as President of JICA from 2003 to 2012, and subsequently as advisor to the Japanese foreign minister in 2013 ensured that her experiences and views as the former head of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were taken seriously by the Japanese government. However, this begs the following questions. To what extent would human security have become integral to Japanese foreign policy if not for Sadako Ogata's personal and tenacious interest in the ideal? To what extent have Japanese policymakers, even within MOFA, embraced human security as a workable concept? How far is the Japanese government likely to go with the finer details of the concept without Ogata's leadership?

On the question of self-reliance as a function of empowerment and economic development, the analysis has questioned the conception of self-reliance itself. I have argued in relation to the third pillar of the CHS objectives, the freedom to live a life of dignity, that the didactic references to self-reliance in the development discourse undermine the dignity of the aid recipient, which underlines Kwame Appiah's point that indeed 'a life of hand-outs is not dignified'. The point to stress here is that, despite its good intentions, the discourse undergirding aid giving is not dignifying to the recipient, because a life of handouts is not dignifying, a fact that cannot be resolved through platitudinous references to human security or 'dignitarian' norms (Riley 2020). The only potential chance of countervailing this is through economic development to obviate reliance on aid. It is in that sense that economic development (rather than abstract notions of social rights, or humanitarian aid) is an attribute of human dignity, in so

far as it modulates and mediates the relationship between the donor and the recipient to restore a sense of balance and mutual self-worth and self-respect. That of course means that the onus is on the African partners of the TICAD, and all aid recipients, to aim to redeem their dignity, which is only possible in the context of the global political economy through economic development.

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# **Why Do Informal Cross Border Traders (ICBTs) Operate Informally?**

## **The Paradox of the Formalization of ICBTs in Africa**

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### **Abstract**

Informal Cross Border Traders (ICBTs) are commonly observed throughout the African continent. Without any official trading approval, ICBTs travel frequently to import or export various goods. As ICBTs benefit local communities as well as their households, they could be considered as an embedded social system of the borderlands in African countries.

Although they have not been very attractive either to African governments or international societies, efforts for the formalization of ICBTs have been made in the previous decades. The COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR) is an evolutionary example designed to benefit ICBTs by reducing their burden at border posts. However, the STR has not been actively used by ICBTs. This study will analyse why ICBTs choose to cross borders informally as well as the paradox between their formalization claims and actual practices. Based on a detailed literature review of relevant surveys, this study focuses on the fact that the majority of ICBTs are divorced mothers, which might make them stay away from formalization.

**Keywords:** Informal Cross Border Trade, COMESA, the Simplified Trade Regime, women's empowerment, formalization, informal economy

## 1. Introduction

Africa has a long tradition of regional trade throughout the continent since before the colonial era (Golub 2015: 188). Informal Cross Border Trade became a prominent phenomenon between the late 1970s and the early 1980s when the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Njikam and Gérard 2011: 4835-4836). The SAP resulted in an economic decline with the shrinking of formal sectors, specifically severely damaging women-headed households (Jackson 1996: 492). Thus, instead of men who lost their job in formal sectors, women began to engage in Informal Cross Border Trade for supporting their families (Nchito and Tranberg 2010: 169-170). Although the African continent has been experiencing economic growth since the 1990s, such trade remains a vital income-generating activity for African women.

According to Afrika and Ajumbo (2012: 1), 43% of the African population supposedly earns income from ICBT. Moreover, in terms of intra-regional trade, the ratio of Informal Cross Border Trade for regional trade as a whole is 30–40% in SADC (Afrika and Ajumbo 2012: 4). Various essential goods for local communities, such as foods, groceries, clothes, small electric devices, and so on, are exported and imported. The value of these goods is generally low, approximately US\$50–US\$1,000 (Afrika and Ajumbo 2012: 3). Thus, Informal Cross Border Trade creates job opportunities and ensures resilience among border communities. These facts indicate that it is essential both for people residing in Africa and macro economies in the continent. However, because of its informality, traders engaging in Informal Cross Border Trade are not given legal protection and remain vulnerable. In this respect, political actors inside and outside the African continent have attempted to formalize ICBTs. Nevertheless, the effects are insufficient.

This study intends to examine the paradox of the formalization advocacy that occurred between the political actors and the traders themselves. Why do ICBTs remain informal despite efforts of formalization? So far, various researchers have deeply investigated how ICBTs contribute to micro/macro economies and the kind of obstacles they face. But only a few of them have discussed the reason why ICBTs remained informal despite offers of formalization. The first step of this analysis is to examine the definition of ICBTs and the form of their trading activities. After that, I will take up the formalization efforts of political actors, then discussing the detailed profile of ICBTs to consider factors of informality.

## 2. Who are Informal Cross Border Traders (ICBTs)?

### 2.1. Vague definition of ICBTs

Although the term ‘Informal Cross Border Trade’<sup>1</sup> has been broadly used both in various policy and

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<sup>1</sup> In some papers, International Cross Border Trade is referred to as Small-scale Cross Border Trade.

academic papers, a clear definition is still lacking. According to Lesser and Moisé-Leeman (2009: 10), Informal Cross Border Trade can be categorized into three types (Table 1), with Category B and Category C emphasizing the illegal aspects related to trade regulations of formal actors, namely, smuggling. In contrast, Category A is based on the informality of the traders' status.

Many policy studies follow Lesser and Moisé-Leeman (2009: 9), a report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which describes Informal Cross Border Trade as 'trade in legitimately produced goods and services, which escapes the regulatory framework set by the government, as such avoiding certain tax and regulatory burden'. In this reference, regardless of the Category, irregularity of trading activities is emphasized rather than the status of traders. In contrast, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) defines Informal Cross Border Trade as 'trade between neighbouring countries conducted by vulnerable, small, unregistered traders. Typically, it is proximity trade involving the move of produce between markets close to the border.' In addition, UNCTAD (n.d.) explained that 'the informality refers to the status of the trader (unregistered), not necessarily to the trade itself (captured or unrecorded by the official customs system)'. Even among RECs in Africa, the definition of Informal Cross Border Trade varies. For example, according to Blumberg *et al.* (2016: 16), SADC defines Informal Cross Border Trade as 'any business operating in goods and services that trades across the border, and that has no official export/import license or permit within a defined threshold and frequency'. In contrast, COMESA refers to Informal Cross Border Trade as 'a form of trade that is unrecorded in official statistics and is carried out by small businesses or traders' and which 'involves bypassing border posts, concealment of goods, under-reporting, false classification, under-invoicing, and other similar tricks.' The difference is that while SADC problematizes the status of traders, COMESA emphasises the criminal perspective of trading activities.

According to UNCTAD's view, this study will focus on Informal Cross Border Trade operated by traders without a formal licence, who are vulnerable residents of border communities without access to employment in formal sectors. In this sense, Informal Cross Border Traders (ICBTs) can be considered as a part of the informal economy.

Table 1. Categories of Informal Cross Border Trade

Category A	Category B	Category C
Informal (Unregistered) traders or firms operating entirely outside the formal economy.	Formal (registered) firms totally disregarding trade regulations and evading duties (e.g. avoiding official border-crossing posts).	Formal (registered) firms partly disregarding trade regulations and evading duties by resorting to illegal practices (e.g. under-invoicing, wrong classification, wrong declaration of country of origin, and/or bribing border officials)

Source: Lesser and Moisé-Leeman (2009: 11).

## 2.2. Form of trading of ICBTs

Products transported by ICBTs are quite varied. For example, East African Community Customs Union (2006: 35) mentions that in East Africa, agricultural products, such as grains, fruits, vegetables, food crops, and cash crops, are traded frequently because women ICBTs manage their households from agriculture. However, industrial products, such as textiles, hides and skins, clothes and garments, and statuettes, are traded as well.

ICBTs travel frequently and their duration of stay in destination countries is quite short. For example, Zimbabwean ICBTs stay in South Africa for 1.8 days on average (Chikanda and Tawodzera 2017: 2). They transport goods in various ways, such as beasts of burden, porters, canoes, buses, and motorcycles (Afrika and Ajumbo 2012: 2). According to the most recent survey by COMESA in 2018 conducted at borders between Zambia and Malawi, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and Zambia and Tanzania, 66% of the traders used bicycles and 20% carried goods on their heads (Chibomba 2021). While some ICBTs pass through official border posts, others prefer to avoid them and use informal routes concentrated around established townships and customs posts along the borders (UBOS 2006: 4). Due to porosity of the borders in Africa, ICBTs have developed many informal crossing points, making it extremely difficult for governments to control their border crossing. According to Golub (2015: 185), some ICBTs pass through the bush or cross borders by water even if they would prefer to use official checkpoints because border posts are few in number and are located too far away. Besides, Lesser and Moisé-Leeman (2009: 19) mentioned that ‘Africa has the longest customs delays in the world’, and such delays also make ICBTs avoid official checkpoints.

In terms of trading forms, ‘re-exports’ are well observed among ICBTs. Re-exports refer to ‘goods imported legally through formal channels into countries with low trade barriers and then shipped unofficially in large volumes to neighbouring countries with higher barriers, with minimal or no processing aside from transport services’ (Benjamin *et al.* 2015: 381). This contributes to the delivery of goods to countries with highly protected markets (African Export Import Bank 2020: 12). In addition, according to Ndlela (2006: 22), ICBTs sometimes offer more money than formal employment.

## 3. Formalization of ICBTs

### 3.1. International organizations’ acknowledgement of ICBTs

In spite of a long history, ICBTs had been less attractive to international societies. However, since the last two decades, international organizations started advocating the formalization of ICBTs. For example, International Labour Organization (ILO) started focusing on Informal Economy as a part of the advocacy for decent work in the 2000s. Besides, ICBTs attract international organizations and their donor countries in terms of food security. The pioneering research on ICBTs was conducted by USAID (United States Agency for International Development) in 1994–1995 at borders between Kenya and

Uganda, Tanzania and its neighbours, and Malawi and its neighbours, and the research in 1995–1996 covered borders between Mozambique and its neighbours, revealing that staple foods, such as maize and other food products, were transacted a lot among other goods (Ackello-Ogututu 1996, Ackello-Ogututu and Echessah 1997; 1998, Macamo 1999). Moreover, after the serious draught in early 2000, the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET) and the World Food Programme (WFP) started empirical research on ICBTs at the Mozambique-Malawi border (Bata *et al.* 2005). According to Makochehanwa and Matchaya (2019: 155), based on data from FEWSNET, a share of the informal maize exports by Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa to SADC/COMESA for formal trade navigates between 4–15%. The ICBTs' contributions to food security are now well known, and discourse on the desire to formalize ICBTs is being shared among international organizations and their donor countries. As an example, the African regional office of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) issued an advocacy report in 2017 (Koroma *et al.* 2017).

### 3.2. Regional organizations and ICBTs

In practice, the formalization of ICBTs progress with concrete policies at regional levels. In Africa, since around the 2000s, economic integration has been accelerated among various Regional Economic Communities (RECs). One of the proactive RECs, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is a leading agency for formalizing ICBTs. COMESA was established in 1994 and consists of 19 member-states from eastern and southern Africa<sup>2</sup>. As its member-states have actively promoted trade liberalization, the COMESA Free Trade Agreement started with 9 member-states in 2000 and is now accepted by 16 member-states, benefitting formal traders in various ways.

In terms of ICBTs, the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR) is an evolutionary scheme to facilitate small-scale informal traders. In 2007, at the COMESA Business Summit and Exhibition, ministers of member-states agreed to introduce the STR (Southern Africa Trust 2014: 12). After an experimental implementation in 10 selected countries (Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), COMESA officially launched the STR in 2010. The STR is designed to facilitate ICBTs importing and/or exporting goods worth USD 2,000 or less (COMESA 2018: 14) through simplified documentation, lower fees, and rapid customs custody. Trade Information Desk Officers (TIDOs) were designated at some border posts to assist ICBTs by providing trade information and filling the STR form. Moreover, products not exceeding USD 500 were exempt from tax (Lesser and Moisé-Leeman 2009: 6). By the end of 2019, the STR was implemented in 8 member-states (Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) (COMESA 2020: 23).

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<sup>2</sup> Burundi, Comoros, D.R. Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

Apart from COMESA, political actors outside the African continent have also supported the implementation of the STR within the COMESA region. For example, USAID, along with the Department for International Development (DFID), a government agency that once existed in the U.K., assisted COMESA to establish the first Trade Information Desk (TID) at the border post of DR Congo and Zambia (COMESA n.d.). More recently, the European Union has been financially supporting COMESA's projects to promote STR and improve the trading environment of ICBTs (European Union n.d.).

The Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Programme (GLTFP) approved by the World Bank in 2015 also aims to facilitate ICBTs (World Bank 2015), targeting the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Uganda, and COMESA. It aims to reduce poverty among vulnerable borderland residents by facilitating ICBTs in such areas, also consisting of a part of the wider projects for peace and stability in the region. The GLTFP focuses on improving core trade infrastructure, such as border markets and border posts.

Besides COMESA, other RECs have also shown their interest in formalizing ICBTs. For example, the SADC Secretariat studied ICBTs in the region using secondary literature in 2008 and hosted the High Level Policy Regional Workshop on Informal Cross Border Trade in 2010 (Malaba and Chipika 2012: 28–29). In addition, the SADC has introduced 'A Regional Advocacy Strategy on Informal Cross Border Trade' under the Secretariat's Gender Unit in 2011. However, it remains unused. And the member-states have not agreed on the STR either.

As mentioned above, COMESA's efforts of formalization of ICBTs deserve special attention. However, it is inferred that COMESA focuses on formalizing forms of ICBTs' activities and not on the root causes behind their informality.

### **3.3. The role of governments**

Generally, governments in the African Continent prefer restrictive trading policies to protect the vulnerable domestic industries. Thus, many governments considered ICBTs to negatively impact the domestic economy or industries because they triggered an influx of lower-costing products than those domestically produced. Thus, usually, African governments were neither willing to admit the contributions of ICBTs nor encourage their trading activities.

However, since the mid-2000s, governments' attitudes toward ICBTs seemed to be changing. So far, some governments have made great efforts for collecting data on ICBTs, essential for their formalization. As a pioneer, the government of Uganda has been collecting data on ICBTs continuously since 2005, and the first report issued concluded that 'the size of the informal trade figures reported in this survey suggests that the countries in the region depend on each other more than has been known' (UBOS 2006: 26). The government of Rwanda is another enthusiastic actor collecting information on ICBTs since

2009 (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda 2018). Surveys conducted by both the governments of Uganda and Rwanda are supported by key government agencies, such as the Central Bank and the Statistical Office. Good practices of these two countries started to spread in other African countries (IBRD and World Bank 2020: 6-7). In 2013, ministers of the EAC member-states agreed on the harmonization of the measurement of ICBTs' survey instruments (IMF n.d.). These data collected by the governments themselves would be considered in regional trade negotiations and would be useful in determining market access and product enhancement (IBRD and World Bank 2020: 12).

Reducing the cost of border-crossing is another support offered by governments. In the formal process, traders require business permits from governments to engage in trading activities. However, informal traders usually travel without such permits. To get a visitor's permit, they are required to submit paper-work and/or to pay relatively costly visa fees. For example, a single-entry visa to Eastern African countries costs USD 50 and a single-entry visa to South Africa costs USD 167. Moreover, sometimes they must provide documents such as bank statements or invitation letters. In this context, implementation of the COMESA Free Movement Protocol might greatly benefit the ICBTs in the region, although only 4 out of the 19 member-states have ratified so far (IOM 2017: 3). Moreover, applying for valid passports is costly for ICBTs. In addition to the applicant fee, they must pay for the travel expenses to capital cities in which the passport should be issued. Under such circumstances, some governments issue temporary certificates called 'day passes' to borderland residents, including ICBTs, with which they can cross borders legally, even for trading. This effort is supposed to contribute to the formalization of ICBTs. However, people with 'day passes' are only permitted to move within fixed areas, which are not enough for their trading activities (Sommer and Nshimbi 2018: 9-10).

#### **4. Examination of the informal status of ICBTs and the gender perspective**

##### **4.1. Women and ICBTs**

Although it is not particularly reflected in the STR or surveys conducted by governments, ICBTs are important from the gender perspective. A report of the ILO in 2004 turned the spotlight on ICBTs and other organizations. For example, UN Women (former UNIFEM) started collecting data and supporting women ICBTs. So far, many research revealed that women ICBTs have been observed more often than men. Africa and Ajumbo (2012: 2) estimated almost 70% of ICBTs in the SADC to be female. Several detailed observations listed in Table 2 show that many interviews or surveys conducted in various African borders also revealed that women account for 60–70% of ICBTs.

Table 2. Gender Gap among ICBTs

Reference	Sample	Male (%)	Female (%)
Ama <i>et al.</i> (2013)	520	39	61
Tawodzera and Chikanda (2017)	534	32	68
Mutsagondo <i>et al.</i> (2016)	196	34	66
Titeca and Kimanuka (2012)	43781	26	74

Source: Author's construction using references appeared in the table.

#### 4.2. Women ICBTs and education/literacy levels

For the apparent difference in gender ratio among ICBTs, the generally lower educational levels and poorer literacy levels of females compared to males in Africa have been considered as a major cause. Additionally, the causal relationship between lack of access to education and poverty has been commonly shared because lower education or literacy levels mean fewer opportunities of employment in the formal sector. Thus, discourse that women in African border communities with low educational levels and poor literacy levels are supposed to act as ICBTs is widely shared. Indeed, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (2001: 28-29) insisted that education levels of women ICBTs in Zimbabwe were extremely low in the 1990s.

However, the most recent report of UNICEF issued in 2020 in collaboration with UN Women analysed that both educational and literacy levels have improved within the last two decades. In detail, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the literacy rate among youth aged 15–24 years has increased from 61% in 1995 to 74% in 2015, diminishing the gender gap in literacy (UNICEF, UN Women and Plan International 2020: 13), probably caused by the 72% enrolment ratio of girls in primary schools in 2019 compared with 54% in 1999 (*ibid.* 12). Furthermore, the enrolment ratio of girls in secondary schools increased to 34% in 2019 from 18% in 1999 (*ibid.* 12). Though in terms of completion rate, more females failed to complete lower and upper secondary schools than male students (*ibid.* 13).

Reflecting the improvement in education/literacy levels of women in Africa, a recent survey revealed that literacy or education levels of women ICBTs are not necessarily as low as was expected. Njikam and Gérard (2011: 4837–4838) found that both women without formal education as well as women who have finished secondary school engaged in Informal Cross Border Trade. Tawodzera and Chikanda (2017: 915) stressed that most of the Zimbabwean women ICBTs interviewed in 2014 had finished their secondary level and 11% even had college certificates. Ama *et al.* (2013: 4224) found that among the women ICBTs interviewed at the entry point of Botswana, 33% had secondary school certificates/diplomas, 21% had university degrees, and 14% had professional certificates.

In the context of education/literacy levels of women ICBTs, low education levels is considered as a

reason behind the STR not working effectively despite of various ingenuities and benefits. This hypothesis is supported by some empirical studies, such as an experiment conducted at the border between Zimbabwe and its neighbours, where ICBTs paid more tax than necessary because of little knowledge about the STR itself (Muqayi 2015: 13-16). In addition, it is explained that filling forms for the STR is too complicated for low educated ICBTs. Of course, the influence of low educational/literacy levels cannot be completely denied, however, findings of recent surveys that educational/literacy levels of women ICBTs have improved imply that negative attitudes toward the STR is not caused simply by education or literacy levels.

#### 4.3. Women and accessibility of ICBTs

Then what are the other factors that cause women to act as ICBTs? This section will focus on accessibility. Ratio of female ICBTs is obviously greater than that of agricultural labour. For example, according to the World Bank, data from Ethiopia, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda show that approximately 40% agricultural labour are women. In detail, 24% in Niger and 56% in Uganda are females (World Bank n.d.). This is why most women in Africa rarely have land rights. Instead of having their own land rights, women usually access agricultural lands through their male relatives: husbands, fathers, or brothers (Meinzen-Dick 2019). Thus, women's land accessibility is still insecure because they might lose it because of deaths of husbands, divorce, or changes of men's minds. Therefore, the lack of land rights is supposedly a reason for women, especially for divorced or widowed women with children, to engage as ICBTs that do not require land access.

In addition, low entry barriers compared with employment at formal sectors is considered to encourage women to be ICBTs. They usually start their activities with relatively small capitals. For example, the survey conducted by Ama *et al.* (2013: 4225) revealed that 15% of women ICBTs started their business with less than USD 125, while 81% spent between USD 125–1,374.88. These findings are consistent with those of Tawodzera and Chikanda (2017: 921-922) where almost three-quarters of the interviewees started their business with ZAR 5,000<sup>3</sup> or less, while 8% started their business with over ZAR 10,000. In the latter survey, some respondents answered that they could basically afford as little as ZAR 2,000 to start their business.

Although ICBTs can start their trading activities with small amounts, many women still struggle to raise funds. Because they have little access to official funding systems such as bank loans, nearly 80% of ICBTs raise funds from informal sources and about 50% use their savings (Ndala and Jnr 2019: 400). Moreover, support from family or friends, or social network in other words, is considered a vital source for women ICBTs. However, they sometimes face negative attitudes of their husbands or family

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<sup>3</sup> Approximately, ZAR 10 would convert to USD 1 at the exchange rate of 2014.

members towards trading activities (Mupedziswa and Gumbo 2001: 20-21). As the social network becomes concentrated on their family after marriage, married women face more challenges in raising funds than single women who are able to act like men (Kyalo and Kiganane 2014: 3-4).

The recent survey listed in Table 3 shows that Married/Divorced/Widowed women engage as ICBTs more often than women who have never been married. Moreover, some studies argue that single-mother ICBTs, especially divorced, have been observed the most (Munyoro *et al.* 2016: 34). In various interviews, women ICBTs have explained that they cross borders as ICBTs to buy food for the households, reinvest in business, pay school fees for children and relatives, access health care services, pay for rent, and so on.

Therefore, the source of funding remained vulnerable for women ICBTs compared with men, especially for married or single mothers. Owing to fund shortages, it is necessary for women ICBTs with limited stocks to cross borders continuously (East African Community Customs Union 2006: 35). Moreover, women ICBTs who must care for their children and other family members by themselves have limited time for trading activities. As a result, they must go through the troublesome procedure during each travel, which would raise a new problem.

Table 3. Marital Status of women ICBTs

Reference	Married/Divorced/Widowed (%)	Never married (%)
Mutsagondo <i>et al.</i> (2016)	57	43
Ama <i>et al.</i> (2013)	44	56
Jawando <i>et al.</i> (2012)	96	4

Source: Author's construction using references appeared in the table.

#### 4.4. Women ICBTs and challenges at border posts

Although national IDs or 'day passes' are supposed to replace valid passports or business permits in some countries, women ICBTs still face problems because of corruption and insecurity at border posts (UNCTAD 2019: 3). Legal protection for ICBTs is lacking in general and women ICBTs are at a higher risk than men.

One risk is harassment by customs officials or border-post officers which includes beatings, verbal insults, stripping, sexual harassment, and even rape (World Bank 2012: 4). Women ICBTs often complain about the corruption of border officials and are often forced to pay bribes (Malaba and Chipika 2012: 23). Moreover, they spend longer times at the border due to suspended inspections (UNCTAD 2019: 3), raising risks of physical harassment. According to Kurebwa (2015: 66), long durations at border posts force women ICBTs to sleep in the open or negotiate for accommodation with security

forces, touts, immigration officials, money changers, local residents, and truck drivers, increasing the risks of sexual abuse and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Therefore, some women ICBTs prefer to avoid border posts, although informal routes are also risky for them (Malunga 2018: 59).

#### 4.5. Women ICBTs' participation in Cross Border Traders' Associations (CBTA)

As a breakthrough in the stagnation of formalizing ICBTs, Cross Border Traders' Associations (CBTAs) are expected to play intermediary roles connecting ICBTs and formal political actors. Before formal actors such as COMESA started paying attention to ICBTs, some ICBTs started organizing CBTAs to facilitate their trading activities since the late 1990s. For example, the CBTA in Zambia is proactive and was established in 1999 as a non-profit organization. So far, claims have been made regarding the establishment of political systems benefiting ICBTs, with lobbying targets including the COMESA, the SADC, and the Zambian government. Although CBTAs have limited influence on formal political processes, they play an intermediary role between ICBTs and formal political actors. They also aid ICBTs by providing places for merchandise and trade information and assisting them with bank loans. Following the establishment of the CBTA in Zambia, they were set up in Zimbabwe, DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda (Table 4).

Table 4. CBTAs in the COMESA Region

Country	Establishment Year
Burundi	2009
Congo DR	2004
Kenya	2010
Malawi	established in 2005 (registered in 2009)
Rwanda	2010
Uganda	n.d.
Zambia	founded in 1999 (registered in 2000)
Zimbabwe	2002

Source: UNECA (2012: 20).

However, CBTAs are often confronted for a lack of management capacity. Despite that, they are commonly operated with membership fees as the income, and the number of members ICBTs is limited. It results in a fund shortage, forcing some CBTAs to stop their activities. Therefore, formal political actors established several programmes to improve the capacity of CBTAs. For example, the COMESA has supported CBTAs through the Cross Border Trade (CBT) Desk under the Secretariat, assisting them

in various projects. From the gender perspective, although more women tend to join them, relatively fewer women take up important positions in CBTAs. In contrast, as male ICBTs likely to participate in CBTAs are more active, the number of women ICBTs started to decline (Malaba and Chipika 2012: 23). In addition, there is a lack of information on CBTAs; they are not yet well-known among ICBTs to get enough participants (Malaba and Chipika 2012: 23).

## 5. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, ICBTs play a prominent role in the African continent, constituting essential parts of the African regional economy. With support from international organizations and/or donor countries, the COMESA has been simplifying trading procedures while supporting ICBTs to follow them. Supplementally, certification of border crossings by all governments might also encourage the formalization of ICBTs. These efforts should have benefited both the formal economy and the ICBTs themselves. However, there is no real indication of the progress of such formalization.

Through the literature analysis in this study, I conclude that this paradox is possibly caused by the underestimation of the gender perspective of ICBTs in the process of creating a system. Deep investigation of various surveys have revealed that the profile of ICBTs is more characteristic than various definitions used in policy debates. According to recent surveys, the majority of ICBTs consists of women with children, especially divorced women. Although their education levels are not necessarily as low as was expected, poor social networks caused by their marital status make women ICBTs stay away from formalization efforts by political actors. However, the STR pay little attention to such gender perspectives of issues related to ICBTs. Moreover, CBTAs that are expected to be intermediaries between ICBTs and formal political actors have also been dominated by male traders. Thus, women ICBTs' voices are difficult to be reflected in policy debates, making the emergence of a gap between them and the formalization discourse inevitable. In this sense, the formalization discourse might have an opposite effect.

The COVID-19 pandemic delivered an extreme blow to Africa and to the ICBTs themselves. Especially, restrictive border control and market closure directly affected their trading activities. Without access to markets, they lose their source of income. Moreover, many ICBTs do not have sufficient capital/savings, making the management of their daily lives difficult during the pandemic (Quartz Africa 2020). Even after lockdowns are over, the environment surrounding ICBTs is not the same. Some countries have stopped giving day passes to border-community residents (Mvunga and Kunaka 2021: 5), raising the cost of border crossing. In addition, ICBTs might have to pay for COVID-19 tests.

An increase in the costs of border crossing would deal long-term damage to women ICBTs, their families, and the community as a whole. It is necessary to pay attention to African borders and strengthen

political approach that directly reflects ICBTs' voices.

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# **Refugee Mobility and Uncertain Lives: Challenges and Agency of South Sudanese Refugees in Uganda**

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## **Abstract**

Mobility is essential for improving the standard of living and enhancing food security, particularly for displaced people. For those living in the conflict-ridden areas of Africa, border crossings and onwards movement are commonplace, which complicates simplistic ideas about displacement and return. This paper examines the mobility of the South Sudanese people who crossed the South Sudan-Uganda border. It highlights historical cross-border mobility and the current situation for refugees in Uganda. Since the mid-1950s, when the first South Sudanese took refuge in Uganda, both the Ugandans and South Sudanese repeatedly crossed the shared border to escape civil wars. Currently, most of the South Sudanese, who fled the recent conflict in South Sudan, remain in Uganda despite the peace agreement of 2018. They seek an opportunity to return. South Sudanese in exile have continually been exposed to uncertain futures. Uganda, which has the largest number of refugees in Africa, prioritises the repatriation of refugees. Here, we present a case study of mid-western Uganda. I present the experiences of multiple refugee displacements. I discuss the agency of refugees, discuss how they employ mobility for a secure life, and whether they decide to settle among the local population in Uganda or return home.

**Keywords:** refugee mobility, border crossing, civil war, South Sudanese, Uganda

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Aim: Human mobility in conflict-ridden areas

At the end of 2020, the data of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) showed that 82.4 million people were forcefully displaced worldwide, including 26.4 million refugees and 48.0 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) (UNHCR 2021a). The number of forced migrants has almost doubled since 2010, though the mobility of displacement has been restricted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For refugee issues seen as a global crisis, the UNHCR is mandated to seek long-lasting solutions, *viz.*, 1) local integration in neighbouring countries, 2) resettlement and permanent asylum in a third country, and 3) voluntary repatriation to the country of origin. Of these, voluntary repatriation is considered the most appropriate solution only if the home country is peaceful and secure (Yonekawa 2020: viii).

This view is grounded on the assumption that most refugees who fled conflicts will take refuge in refugee camps. There, the UNHCR will provide relief, food items, and basic services with NGOs. Refugees will eventually want to return home. Repatriation to the home country is regarded as a voluntary return, ending ‘the refugee cycle’ — both breaking the cycle of violence, persecution and flight, and the completion of the cycle for those able to return to their homes (Koser and Black 1999). In that sense, repatriation is seen as an unproblematic and sustainable solution to displacement by the UNHCR and the international community. Despite multiple cases of ‘official’ repatriation in the last three decades<sup>1</sup>, little is known about refugees who experienced multiple displacements, the later movements of those who returned home, or the onwards movements of those who rejected repatriation. Furthermore, given the repeated conflicts in some parts of Africa, the regional cross-border movements of local people are more multifarious and diverse than the linear trajectory of the ‘refugee cycle’. They disrupt simplistic ideas of return and repatriation.

As Long and Crisp (2010) indicated, there is growing recognition in the UNHCR that refugee mobility is a positive asset that can contribute to their lasting protection. This is reflected by many academic reports indicating that the home country of forced migrants is often not a desirable place to return to, given its chronic insecurity, food insecurity, and a lack of basic services and livelihood means. Meanwhile, it is recognised that mobility and transnational networks often constitute effective strategies among the protracted refugee population. Even though secondary movements (also called the onwards movement — which refers to refugees moving independently from the first host country to a third country<sup>2</sup>), are seen strictly of concern to the international refugee regime (Scalettaris 2009: 58). However, the changing attitude of the UNHCR to refugee mobility has not been embraced by the

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<sup>1</sup> In the 1990s, known as the ‘decades of voluntary repatriation’, on average, 1.5 million refugees were able to return home each year.

<sup>2</sup> Onward movement includes movements of the migrants who do not have official travel permits such as visas. They are often called undocumented migrants.

international community. Displacement solutions have focused on containing or reversing the movement of migrants, rather than on restoring the lost rights which prompted flight (Long and Crisp 2010: 56).

This paper scrutinises the mobility of the South Sudanese, focusing on historical cross-border mobility in wartime and the current protracted situation for refugees in Uganda. Here, I discuss refugee experiences in multiple displacements and movements, revealing what it means to be a ‘refugee’ in Uganda, when and why a ‘refugee’ refugee decides to remain or return in uncertain social conditions, and how they employ mobility to seek better lives or respond to various demands from their families. In line with recent issues, such as the protracted refugee situation and Covid-19, I discuss the complex realities of the displacement and return of the South Sudanese, and interrogate simplistic ideas about repatriation based on binary views about home and away.

## 1.2. Background, methods, and location

Uganda has a long history of hosting refugees in Africa. This can be traced back to the 1940s, when under British colonial rule the Polish refugees were hosted in two settlements (Lingelbach 2020). In 1955, tens of thousands of refugees who fled southern Sudan under the Anglo-Egyptian condominium arrived in northern Uganda. In addition, after the ‘Social Revolution’ of 1959, more refugees came from Rwanda into southwestern Uganda. Since its independence in 1962, Uganda has been an epicentre for refugees, being a favourable destination for those who escaped from conflict-prone African countries, including Sudan/South Sudan<sup>3</sup>, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia, and Burundi (Figure 1).

Today, Uganda is the top refugee-hosting state in Africa. At the end of 2020, Uganda hosted approximately 1.4 million refugees (UNHCR 2021a). Moreover, Uganda generated refugees in the late 1970s and witnessed almost two million IDPs in the 1990s when the government of Uganda fought against the rebels of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in the northern region. Prolonged insecurity in the region means that Uganda has hosted a considerable number of refugees for several decades, many of whom have stayed for protracted periods.

This paper focusses on the refugee-hosting areas in mid-western Uganda. Each refugee-hosting area has its distinct history and characteristics<sup>4</sup> (Figure 2). For this study, I collected the data through a survey and participant observation during fieldwork. Three districts which consist of the former Masindi District, *viz.*, Kiryandongo, Buliisa, and Masindi in the Bunyoro sub-region, have hosted refugees for

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<sup>3</sup> South Sudan seceded from Sudan to become a sovereign state in July 2011, after a twenty-two-year civil war. In this paper, the name of southern Sudan is used for the time period before independence, while South Sudan refers to the state after its secession from the north, namely present-day Sudan. South Sudan almost corresponds with southern Sudan in terms of geographical location.

<sup>4</sup> Apart from mid-western Uganda, West Nile Sub-region – north-western Uganda and the south-western region are also major refugee hosting areas.

decades. The Masindi settlement (1942–1948) in Buliisa District was the first refugee settlement in Uganda. It hosted the Polish refugees. In the 1960s, Kigumba in Kiryandongo District saw an increase in population, due to the influx of labour migrants from Kenya and self-settled Sudanese who escaped the escalating intensity of the civil war<sup>5</sup> (Charsley 1974). I interviewed a South Sudanese man whose family members had been in exile in Uganda; he came to Japan as an international student. In 2021, I paid a short visit to a family member who remained in a village in the Buliisa District.

I most often visited the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement (KRS) in the Kiryandongo District for research. The KRS was established to host Sudanese refugees who escaped from the East Bank of Sudan in 1989. Since 1991, most of the refugees hosted in the KRS have been South Sudanese, except in 2007 and 2013. As of 2021, the total population of the KRS is estimated to be over 72,000 (UNHCR 2021b), while Bweyale has approximately 31,000 (UBOS 2014)<sup>6</sup>. My initial fieldwork for South Sudanese refugees began in August 2014 in the KRS, about half a year after the South Sudanese conflict broke out in Juba and the north-eastern parts of South Sudan. Since then, I have collected data whenever I visited KRS intermittently between 2015 and 2021. In most cases in the KRS and its adjacent Ugandan town, Bweyale, using semi-structured interviews – sitting, chatting, eating and drinking together with interlocutors in KRS.

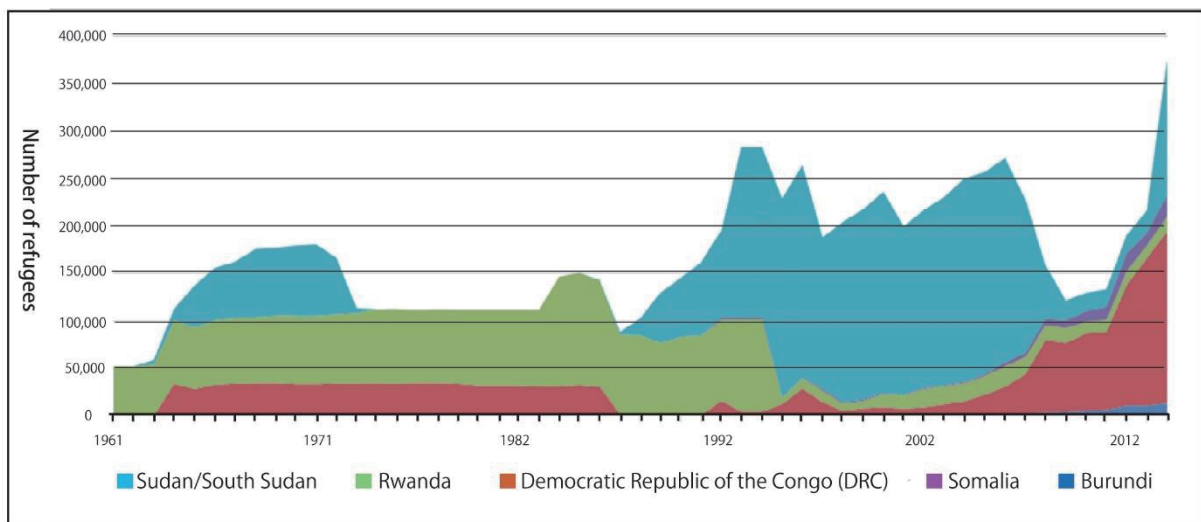


Figure 1. Refugee flows of 1961–2014 in Uganda

Source: Crawford *et al.* (2015).

Note: This figure is based on the number supplied by the UNHCR consultant.

<sup>5</sup> Self-settled refugees refer to the forced migrants who are not encamped, intentionally or accidentally, in the official refugee camps or settlements established and recognised by the refugee-hosting states and the UNHCR.

<sup>6</sup> The refugee number that the UNHCR publishes represents those who register with the organisation in the KRS. The actual population of the settlement may be less, considering that many South Sudanese refugees are practically living in Bweyale.

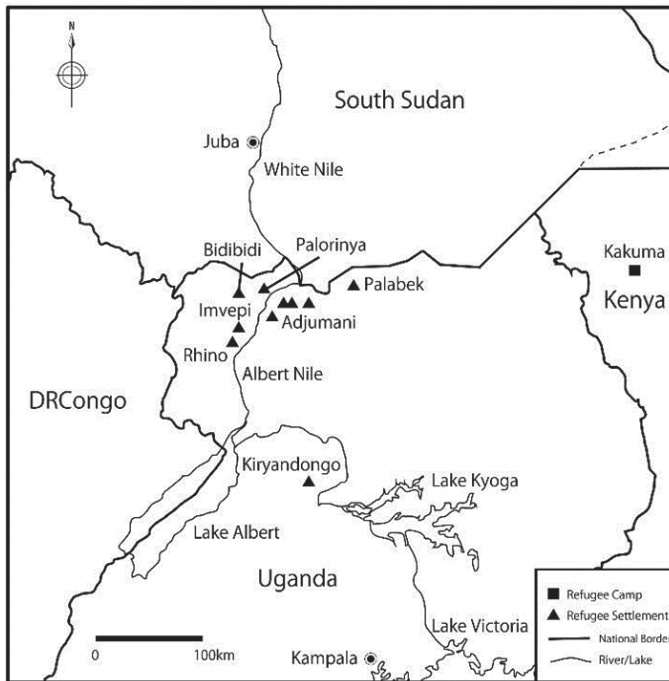


Figure 2. Map of the research area and refugee settlements in Uganda

Source: UNHCR (2021b).

## 2. History of wartime migration

### 2.1. Initial wave of Sudanese ‘refugees’

In the 1960s, the number of Sudanese refugees increased when the fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the southern rebels, known as *Anya-nya*, raged. This was the first wave of refugees from southern Sudan to Uganda. By the end of the First Sudanese Civil War in 1972, the Sudanese government estimated that 500,000 people had hidden in the bush, and another 180,000 had crossed into neighbouring countries, with 74,000 settling in several official camps including Onigo, Agago, Acholipii, and Nakapiripirit, among others (Moro 2019). Refugees mostly came from areas contiguous with the Ugandan border. They included various ethnic groups such as the Bari-speaking people<sup>7</sup>, Lotuho-speaking people<sup>8</sup>, Madi and Acholi. In some cases, they had co-ethnic Ugandan hosts, such as Kakwa, Acholi, and Madi.

In the 1960s and the 1970s, more than half of the displaced Sudanese were self-settled in a group in other parts of Uganda. Some stayed together with their Ugandan relatives and friends, using already established transnational networks. Others took refuge in official camps, seeking educational opportunities.

<sup>7</sup> Bari speakers include Bari, Kuku, Nyepu, Kakwa, Pojulu and others, living in both banks of the Nile.

<sup>8</sup> Lotuho speakers include the multiple ethnic groups, such as Lotuho, Lokoya, Lango and Lopit, living on the east bank of the Nile.

## 2.2. Informal self-settlement: Experience of uncertain journeys

Here, I describe the experience of the family of sons of displaced Sudanese, taking their journey and settlement in Uganda as an example. All individual names shown in this paper are pseudonyms so that no individuals can be identified.

Jacob was born in Nyabyeya village, close to the former Masindi settlement which hosted Polish refugees. His grandfather, who joined the rebels as a fighter, fled home with his wife in the late 1960s, when he was targeted for killing by the Sudanese army. They first settled in Kigumba, where Kenyan migrants had already settled. At that time, they did not receive official support from the government or NGOs. Therefore, they had to look for jobs as wage labourers.

Jacob narrates the experience of his family as below<sup>9</sup>:

When they arrived at the time, they were not helped as ‘refugees’. They did not receive any assistance. Life was very hard, but the industrialisation of Uganda facilitated displaced people to have started looking for jobs. Some of my grandfather’s colleagues went to Kakira, where there was a sugar factory<sup>10</sup>. My grandfather and colleagues were factory labourers. They travelled to and between Kakira and Kigumba. My father was born in 1970 in Kigumba as a son of [a] Sudanese ‘refugee’. Kigumba was like an informal settlement, and Arabic was commonly spoken.

In the late 1980s, after the Kakira sugar factory stopped operating, my grandfather left for the Budongo Forest<sup>11</sup> in Masindi, where the timber industry was operated in a sawmill factory. In Masindi, the Kinyara sugar factory<sup>12</sup> was also operated. They decided to look for jobs in sugar or sawmill factories. They moved with their families to Nyabyeya, located 40 km west of Kigumba. The Sudanese Nyepu<sup>13</sup> people self-settled in the village, where the Polish refugees left.

Over several generations, they have not been recognised as Ugandans. My family members were all born and have lived, including me, but not seen as refugees or Ugandans. My grandfather, and later on, my father told us that we have been temporarily staying in Uganda, and must go back [to] Sudan as peace comes to there.

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<sup>9</sup> This narrative is based on my interview with Jacob held in the winter of 2020.

<sup>10</sup> The Kakira Sugar factory was constructed in the 1940s by the Kakira Sugar Works Limited, which was set up by Muljibhai Madhvani, who was of Indian origin, and continued to operate till the 1970s, when the Madhvani family was expelled from Uganda by the erstwhile Ugandan president, Idi Amin.

<sup>11</sup> The Budongo Forest is located close to Lake Albert. It has abundant tropical rain forests and wild chimpanzees.

<sup>12</sup> The Kinyara sugar factory dates to a jaggery factory constructed in the 1950’s by Kinyara Sugar Works Limited. Since then, Kinyara Sugar Works Limited has been the second largest sugar producer in Uganda.

<sup>13</sup> The Nyepu is the ethnic community in the southern Sudan. They are sometimes recognised as a splinter population of the Kuku, but the Nyepu claim their own ethnic identity.

At the time of the signing of CPA<sup>14</sup>, the Sudanese in Nyabyeya gathered together, and we are performing traditional dances for celebration. I then started returning to Sudan.

His narrative about their family's experience of displacement and dispersal, shows how the Sudanese in Uganda try to seek employment without official support from the UNHCR. They are considered foreigners, not refugees or Ugandan nationals, by Ugandan host communities. As Moro (2019), who was once displaced with his family in Uganda<sup>15</sup>, points out, the Sudanese who were not encamped in the official refugee settlements in the 1960s and 70s acquired land with their earnings and became poll taxpayers in Uganda, thereby shifting their place of residence. Some settled in Gulu, the largest town in northern Uganda, while others went southwards to settle in Kigumba and Bweyale in the mid-west. In these towns, Ugandans of Indian origin operated cotton ginning mills or other businesses and employed them as casual labourers. In Kigumba, a group of Sudanese people began to settle as migrant labourers under a government-led settlement scheme launched in 1957<sup>16</sup>. While their numbers increased greatly in the mid and late 1960s due to the upheavals in southern Sudan, it was without any official sponsorship or organisation (Charsley 1974: 342). They have settled, widely recognised as a distinct group under an ethnic label of 'Sudani,' among the heterogeneous peoples, including native Nyoro, Kenyan and Ugandan migrant workers (ibid. 347). Although many displaced Sudanese were free to move in Uganda, they were vulnerable to exploitation and harassment, and their lives were hard due to a lack of citizenship (Moro 2019).

In 1972, with the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement, the First Sudanese Civil War, which cost an estimated one million lives, came to end. The Repatriation and Resettlement Commission was established to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees, supported by the governments of Sudan and Uganda. The UNHCR also coordinated the official repatriation program with the provision of food, shelter and transportation to returnees. According to the Commission's report in 1974, half the Sudanese 'refugees'<sup>17</sup> had settled 'spontaneously' among the local population in the country of asylum. The largest group of self-settled refugees was in Uganda (63 per cent), followed by Zaire and Ethiopia (Akol 1994: 81).

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<sup>14</sup> The CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) was signed between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in January 2005 in Naivasha in Kenya, ending the twenty-two-year Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005).

<sup>15</sup> Leben's family were settled near Gulu, the largest town in northern Uganda, among a host community of Ugandan Acholi. The ethnic group of the Nyepu, that Jacob hails from, is now considered part of the Kuku, that Leben Moro came from.

<sup>16</sup> The Kigumba Settlement Scheme was launched during from 1957–1962 to encourage agriculture. It was not obvious where suitable settlers could be acquired from, and about twenty plots were allocated to Sudanese, selected from those already at Kigumba. Three months later a Mulugoli, a member of one of the Luyia tribes (the Maragoli) from western Kenya, who was working at Masindi as a railways clerk, heard of the scheme (Charsley 1968: 17).

<sup>17</sup> In the Commission's report, all persons directly and indirectly affected by the conflict were included and defined as 'refugees', broadening the OAU definition of refugees to meet the specific needs of the refugees and IDPs.

At an early stage, this official repatriation operation faced many challenges that were contrary to the Commission's optimistic expectations, partly because many refugees were reluctant to return home. Like Jacob's family, several Sudanese remained in Uganda and settled informally among the local population, after the official repatriation operation ended in 1974<sup>18</sup>. The 'voluntary' repatriation of refugees was influenced by several factors: 1) the way refugees had been settled during their exile, 2) the first impression of the early returnees of the general situation in southern Sudan, and 3) the level of socio-economic development that 'refugees' had achieved while in exile (ibid. 84). In the 1970s, relatively self-sufficient and affluent Sudanese, who chose to self-settle, tended to remain in Uganda until the fall of Idi Amin of 1979, while those living in poverty were more ready to return home.

In terms of mobility, the main characteristic of the Sudanese in Uganda during the First Sudanese Civil War (1955–1972) was that they were able to exploit a transnational network, based on the links of kinship and friendship, which had been established during the colonial era through trade and seasonal labour. They preferred self-settling to being accommodated in camps. Even though they enjoyed the freedom of movement to seek informal employment, and were incorporated informally into the heterogeneous community of multiple ethnicities without overt segregation in mid-western Uganda, their lives were hard and precarious, due to the lack of citizenship and their refugee status.

### **3. Encampment policy and its effect on refugee mobility**

#### **3.1. Second wave of Sudanese refugees: Establishment of the KRS**

The relatively peaceful time did not last long in southern Sudan. In 1983, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) was organised to wage an armed struggle against the government of Sudan (the Second Sudanese Civil War). The civil war was so brutal and prolonged that it had a disastrous impact on the civilians, who suffered disease, displacement, famine and impoverishment. At least 1.5 million people were killed, over four million were displaced internally, and hundreds of thousands more were displaced to neighbouring countries by the time the CPA was signed in 2005. Most Sudanese refugees experienced protracted refugee conditions, until mass repatriation began in the mid-2000s.

They arrived in Uganda in large numbers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially in the aftermath of internal divisions in the SPLM/A. The new wave of refugees received generous assistance from the UNHCR and the government of Uganda, whose policy was to confine refugees in camps and dedicated areas called 'refugee settlements'. Effectively, the policy redefined a refugee as 'someone receiving assistance and living in a camp' (Kaiser 2006a: 605, Moro 2019). Since they were presumed to be supporters of the SPLM/A, a close ally of Uganda's governing National Resistance Movement (NRM),

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<sup>18</sup> In Uganda and Zaire, 6 per cent of total 'refugees' refused to return home, while about 70 per cent were officially repatriated and the rest are believed to have returned home independently, without support by the UNHCR, or to have remained in the country of asylum without registering for a repatriation programme.

no obstacles were put in the way of refugees seeking entry to Uganda and they were granted refugee status on a *prima facie* basis, obviating the need for individual status determination procedures (Kaiser 2008: 255). During this period, large refugee settlements were established to host approximately 200,000 Sudanese refugees in the West Nile (Arua and Moyo District)<sup>19</sup> and mid-western Uganda (Masindi District).

The KRS is one of these refugee settlements. It dates back to the Ugandan government and the UNHCR's establishment of a transit centre to host about 14,000 Sudanese refugees, who fled Eastern Equatoria in southern Sudan after an attack by the SPLA on Torit and the border towns in 1989. While this group arrived in Uganda from various areas of Sudan, the majority were Sudanese Acholi. Those who crossed the border were hosted in a transit camp in the Kitgum District of northern Uganda. Shortly after they arrived, they were harassed by the LRA rebels. In 1990, the Ugandan government granted the land in the Masindi District for use by refugees and set up a transit centre to fulfil the UNHCR's request that the Sudanese refugees be transferred to a safer location. In 1991, the government of Uganda and the UNHCR formalised the establishment of the KRS and allocated land to refugees the next year. Each refugee family, due to the lack of citizenship and their refugee status, was allocated a plot of land in proportion to the number of family members (Mulumba 2010: 192)<sup>20</sup>.

In the 1960s, many Sudanese Acholi who fled to Uganda, opted to self-settle among Ugandan communities where they had links of family and friendship. However, in the late 1980s, many Sudanese refugees had little choice but to be accommodated in the official camps or settlements, owing to insecurity and distrust among the people in northern Uganda. Since the 1980s, the official settlement policy has been more thoroughly enforced by the Ugandan government in the context of regional insurgencies. According to Kaiser (2000a), this was partly because the Ugandan government was prompted to monitor the Sudanese refugee situation via its network of Local Councils (LCs)<sup>21</sup>, due to their suspicion that the Sudanese government supported the Ugandan rebel activities of the LRA. Furthermore, Ugandan Acholi also feared repercussions from the Ugandan government or the LRA if they absorb their Sudanese relatives into their communities (Kaiser 2000a: 39).

### 3.2. Refugee mobility in the protracted situations: The case of KRS

Kaiser (2006a: 598) pointed out that states prefer the encampment of refugees for the following reasons: they offer visibility (which helps with claims for burden-sharing), they offer mechanisms for containment and control (which help mitigate any perceived security threats in the short term), and they

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<sup>19</sup> Adjumani District was created in 1997 when the eastern part of Moyo District split off in 1997. Yumbe District was established in 2006, when Aringa County was split off Arua District. At present, these two districts host the largest number of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda.

<sup>20</sup> 1.2 hectares to 1.4 hectares of land was provided to Sudanese refugees in KRS.

<sup>21</sup> The local government system of LCs was introduced by the government of Uganda in the 1990s for decentralisation of power.

reduce the risk that the refugee populations will coalesce into the host population, thereby failing to repatriate when conditions change in their home country. In Uganda, the state's preference for the encampment policy was supported, if not actively encouraged, by the UNHCR.

For the government of Uganda and the UNHCR, there were several reasons the encampment policy was seen as a feasible solution. First, it was necessary to protect Sudanese refugees physically from unstable security situations in northern Uganda, where there was a risk that refugees would be targeted by rebels like the LRA. For the Ugandan government, the location of refugee settlement in remote, politically marginalised border areas meant that it could keep security risks at a distance. Second, the UNHCR and its NGOs can provide relief operations, such as food assistance and service delivery, more promptly and effectively to the 'settlement refugees' – the recognised beneficiaries. Third, the government of Uganda and the UNHCR seemingly prioritised the 'voluntary' repatriation of refugees to Sudan over local integration in Uganda, among the permanent solutions. Refugee encampments reflect the desire to maintain separate refugee populations, thereby preventing them from merging into local Ugandan communities and instead facilitating 'voluntary' repatriation.

In the Ugandan settlement system, refugees were required to stay on plots allocated by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). They were also encouraged to practice agriculture to produce substantial crops for self-consumption and a surplus of cash crops for selling. They were expected to earn a living over the years through agricultural production and other income-generating activities, under the Ugandan refugee policy, which was aimed at achieving refugee self-sufficiency and integration of services for refugee settlements and refugee-hosting areas. This policy led to the introduction of the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) for refugees, launched in the West Nile in 1999. The SRS was enthusiastically welcomed by the UNHCR and NGOs. For the UNHCR and international donors, the objective of the SRS was to create a situation where refugees no longer needed direct assistance to meet their immediate and wider needs, in their country of asylum.

In the KRS in the mid-1990s, the UNHCR and its implementing partners withdrew their relief from the settlements and sought to 'hand over' responsibility for them to the Ugandan government (Kaiser 2000b). A partial explanation is the UNHCR saw that many refugees in the KRS produced enough maize to achieve self-sufficiency, and the KRS was the only settlement for Sudanese refugees in Uganda that had never experienced any insecurity. However, the UNHCR's withdrawal faced strong opposition from Sudanese refugees as well as the local hosts. The former were worried about the degradation of basic services in the settlement, while the latter feared it would lead to competition with refugees for resources. The UNHCR's withdrawal from the KRS triggered discussion over the responsibility between the UNHCR and the government of Uganda; it generated tension between the two parties, as well as between

the refugees and their hosts<sup>22</sup>.

In fact, during the late 1990s and the early 2000s, there was no significant improvement in food security and livelihoods among Sudanese refugees, although the situation varied between refugee settlements. In some settlements, land quality was poor and the allocated plots for farming were far from local markets. Even during the 2000s, Sudanese refugees in the KRS were unable to generate enough produce to meet their basic needs and fund necessities such as health care, education, and non-food items (Kaiser 2007). Years after the plots were allocated, the increase in population led to added pressure on the land, which was already exhausted from repeated use (*ibid.* 222). Some inhabitants continued to receive a proportion of the full food ration, but food rations were phased out for many of them. Furthermore, some families had unregistered relatives who received no food aid, either because they failed to negotiate the bureaucratic system properly, or because they had transferred illegally from another settlement (*ibid.* 223).

Sudanese refugees' livelihood strategies were negatively affected by legal restrictions on their movements. They were required to obtain travel permits issued by the OPM<sup>23</sup> when they left the settlement in which they were registered. Not only were refugees unable to choose where they wished to live, but they were also not allowed to take up opportunities to access available fertile land outside the settlements. Nor could they move freely to access other employment opportunities and engage in business activities (*ibid.* 223).

Despite such constraints on mobility, refugees sought ways to generate income to make a living for themselves and their families. The most common was to sell agricultural products to local traders and middlemen. In the KRS and its neighbouring local communities, maize was the main crop for daily food and cash. In the KRS, traders entered the settlement with trucks at harvest time and bought at relatively low prices (Murahashi 2021: 266). Some refugees were able to establish themselves as vegetable farmers as well as petty traders within settlements or in the local Ugandan market. They sometimes travelled outside settlements to sell their agricultural produce without travel permits. Local Ugandans gathered around the settlement to get access to health and educational services, both inside and outside the settlements. Bweyale Town, the Ugandan host community adjacent to the KRS developed and attracted various informal business activities in the 2000s (Murahashi 2021). It has more than doubled in size since the arrival of Sudanese refugees and significant numbers of Ugandan IDPs, who fled the LRA's attack on civilians in northern Uganda.

The same situation was also seen in remote refugee settlements close to the border areas, where economic activities and the population around the settlements increased notably. Refugees with business

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<sup>22</sup> This discussion between the UNHCR and the government of Uganda led to the SRS in 1999.

<sup>23</sup> The OPM is the refugee affairs authority of the government of Uganda. It has centralised control and management over all refugees and asylum seekers in the refugee settlements and Kampala.

interests, professionals such as schoolteachers, and other people with non-agricultural professions desired to remain in urban settings to pursue their livelihoods. The cross-border movement between Uganda and Sudan was facilitated by self-settling in urban settings outside the settlements. Some refugees left the settlements for a few weeks or a month to get casual work, called *lejaleja* in Kiswahili, or to receive schooling in distant towns.

Kaiser (2007: 223) describes those refugees who left the settlement, temporarily or for a relatively long time, as ‘moving up and down looking for money’ in various ways, and they drew on a range of resources to do so. Consequently, Sudanese refugees preferred to move out of settlements, to improve their livelihoods through casual labour and trade, if they could afford to do so. However, Ugandan refugees moved to settle in areas close to a settlement, so that they could get involved in work and have access to the various services provided by the settlement, such as schools and health centres. Some refugees married local Ugandans and were integrated into their communities. Others divided their family members into settlements and outside locations.

In 2005, when the CPA was signed to end twenty years of civil war, residents of the KRS welcomed it, though they had been relatively slow to register for voluntary repatriation (Kaiser 2006b: 72). Many refugees wondered if their homes would see infrastructural and developmental progress before returning to the areas devastated by the prolonged war. Most of the KRS Sudanese returned to South Sudan by 2010, while approximately 10 per cent of residents remained in the KRS for reasons such as overseeing the continuing education of students and looking after aged parents and vulnerable groups. These families opted to divide family members between the settlement and their home country. For example, one of my interlocutors, Sarah, fled a village called Pajok<sup>24</sup> near the border in 1990 at age ten. She was raised and educated in the KRS and married an Acholi refugee. Her husband returned to Juba to seek work, rather than the rural village, after the CPA was signed in 2005. She chose to remain in the settlement, for the sake of her children’s education and to care for her elderly father. Her relationship with her husband worsened after he married another woman in Juba. Her father, elder brother and elder sister lived in the settlement. She managed to make ends meet without her husband’s support.

#### 4. Recent waves of South Sudanese refugees

##### 4.1. Recent waves of South Sudanese refugees and the ‘new’ refugee policy

After the end of the Second Sudanese Civil War in 2005, movement across the South Sudan-Uganda border became commonplace and much easier, until fresh conflicts began to affect the border regions. In 2011, South Sudan’s secession from Sudan was largely supported and welcomed by the South Sudanese. Only two years later, however, the world’s newest country lapsed into a civil war. This war

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<sup>24</sup> Pajok is a village on the Ugandan border where most of the KRS’s Acholi residents hail from. They escaped the arrival of the SPLA, after it attacked the military barracks of the Sudanese army near the village in 1989.

was so brutal, devastating, and fragmented that by mid-2016, South Sudan was Africa's greatest refugee crisis. Both soldiers and civilians were targeted for killing and looting by government forces and opposition on an ethnic basis. Uganda hosted 970,000 South Sudanese refugees (62 per cent of all Ugandan refugees) (UNHCR 2021b).

In 2006, the Ugandan government renewed its legal policy for refugees with the enactment of the Refugees Act, followed by the 2010 Refugee Regulations, by which refugees and asylum seekers were entitled to have relative freedom of movement with permission to leave and return to their designated settlements, and to work and access Ugandan social services, including education and health systems. The new Ugandan refugee laws were praised by the international community and UN agencies as a progressive and open-door policy.

After the new influx of South Sudanese refugees, Uganda launched a response scheme called the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) Strategic Framework, aiming at bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to more effectively promote the resilience and self-reliance of the entire population of refugee-hosting areas. As with the local settlement policy, the Ugandan government allocated refugees land for farming and residence within a settlement, to supplement food rations.

#### **4.2. Uncertain lives in exile and fragile peace at home**

Despite such a new and progressive approach to refugee response, it has been argued that there is a gap between the goals and practices. Several disadvantages have recently been noted, owing to the vast number of refugees as well as a major corruption scandal. First, land issues in the settlement became more serious. Due to the increasing number of refugees, the land given to refugees in the settlements was so small that it was almost impossible to maintain a self-sustaining life. By 2017, a plot of land only 30 × 30 m was allocated to each refugee family in any settlement in northern and mid-western Uganda, including the KRS.

The lack of land forced refugees to demand monthly food rations. However, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been forced to cut the amount of grain (sorghum or maize) in food rations due to severe funding shortages. It also frequently fails to distribute food regularly because of the poor delivery system.

In addition, refugees were often harassed by the corruption that some Ugandan officials and UNHCR staff are suspected of. Refugees are asked to pay bribes for registration and they fail to obtain refugee status or receive food rations if they cannot pay. Meanwhile, some refugees inflated family attestation cards or increased the number of family members to receive more food, in exchange for bribes. This corruption was exposed in the spring of 2018 (Sserunjogi 2018). In response to this 'Refugee Scandal', which revealed the systematic inflation of refugee numbers, the UNHCR instituted a large-scale biometric registration and verification programme for six months. It lasted until September 2018 (WFP

2018). The UNHCR sought to quantify the true number of Uganda-based refugees, reducing the possibility of corruption and refugees cheating the food ration system. After the verification program was completed, registration in multiple settlements or double registration of family members was banned to prevent the taking of double food rations. Instead, a cash transfer system was offered to refugees as an alternative option. Refugee families could choose to receive cash or food rations.

This change and stiffening of the food ration system did not resolve the food shortage in refugee settlements. Some refugees could no longer double register themselves and their families or collect food for the absentees, such as friends and kinsmen who had left the settlement and settled in local towns, as they had been able to do under the previous system. Although more transparent, the new food ration system harmed food security. Food rations are indispensable supplements, as insufficient food can be obtained by casual work alone. Refugees stranded in the refugee settlements depend on the minimal support and services offered only in rural settlements, not in towns.

Security concerns remain significant, even after the 2018 signing of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS)<sup>25</sup>. Although the R-ARCSS was viewed positively by South Sudanese refugees, most recognised that the peace process is so fragile there is no guarantee that it will end the conflicts. Fighting between government forces and a rebel group that rejected the signing of the R-ARCSS has continued in the Uganda-South Sudan border areas. Even after the peace agreement that was established, based on political arrangements between the politico-military elites in South Sudan, incidents such as road ambushes on the highway, indiscriminate murders in Juba or other towns, inter-and intra-communal conflicts in rural areas such as cattle-raiding have been rampant and there are no clear signs that such violence will end. Therefore, most refugees are unwilling to return home.

In 2019, the Ugandan government changed its attitude towards South Sudanese refugees. The Ugandan Minister for Refugees called on them to return home after the signing of the R-ARCSS, arguing that their country is ‘now peaceful’ (Ahimbisibwe and Belloni 2021: 20). This statement clearly shows that the Ugandan government prioritised the voluntary repatriation option of the three permanent solutions under the CRRF self-reliance and resilience policy. In Uganda, it is not expected that refugees, irrespective of how long they have been in the country, will be naturalised into Ugandan nationals.

In March 2020, when the first case of Covid-19 was reported in Uganda, refugee mobility and livelihoods were affected by new restrictions on cross-border movement (Okiror 2020). This has made it more difficult for some refugees in Uganda to visit South Sudan to check on their relatives and assets, through what had been relatively porous borders (Sebba 2020). In addition, national travel restrictions have had a significant impact on livelihoods, since refugees are no longer able to move to the next village

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<sup>25</sup> R-ARCSS is the peace agreement between the rival political-military parties in South Sudan.

or town to find work, sell their produce or purchase supplies (ibid.).

#### 4.3. Refugee response and mobility in KRS: Individual practices and journeys

In the KRS, new waves of refugees include people with experience of exile. Many refugees who fled the South Sudan-Uganda border areas had been refugees before, some as many as three times (in the 1960s, 1990–2000s and the present). Almost all Sudanese Acholi and Madi were refugees in the KRS, other Ugandan settlements and Kenyan camps in the 1990s–2000s. Moreover, many continued to move across borders even after they were registered in Uganda. (Murahashi 2018). For young males who have relatives and some family members in Ugandan towns, leaving and returning to settlements has been constant for various reasons, such as attending college or university in Gulu, visiting relatives in Kampala and attending funerals at home in South Sudan.

Here, I present the narratives of two refugees and their life stories as materials for discussing how individual refugees employ mobility to sustain their lives. The first case is Dominic from the Madi in South Sudan, an adult orphan in his early 30s. Dominic narrates the experience of his family as follows<sup>26</sup>:

I was raised as an orphan in a town near the Sudan–Uganda border after my parents were killed during the Second Sudanese Civil War (supposedly 1980s–early 1990s). I stayed in [the] KRS, protected by a Catholic priest’s family during the 2000s, but I was chased away by the host family after the pastor died. After the signing of the CPA, I repatriated [to] South Sudan. When fighting broke out in Juba in December 2013, soldiers searched for houses and looted all properties. My house burned down. I decided to go back to Kiryandongo, but I have not registered yet and stayed in a settlement because I am afraid of my former ‘family’. When I asked them to add me as a family member, they refused. If there is no family, it is challenging for me to get support.

In 2014, Dominic started an informal job as a ‘mobile photographer’ with his friend’s support. He takes photos of people, both refugees and Ugandans, in and around the KRS. Every 10 days, he goes to photo studios in Kampala to retouch and develop them. There is a high demand for photographs of host communities and refugees among the residents of the KRS.

He expected to benefit from more business opportunities by staying in the town rather than settling. He emphasised that being a ‘mobile photographer’ was his only means of survival and said, ‘Suppose, I live in the refugee settlement, I will have no money. Nobody will help me’. He wants to resume his schooling at all costs, because it stopped at the primary level due to a lack of money.

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<sup>26</sup> This narrative is from my field note, written in 2015, based on my interview with Dominic.

His life was punctuated by several upheavals. He was robbed of most of his belongings by a thief in mid-2015. He can no longer rent a house in the town or take refuge in the nearby church. He told me that in such a situation, ‘All I can do is pray to God’. Moreover, he was hospitalised in a nearby city after he fell seriously ill and collapsed on the road.

Later, he told me that he had been unconscious in the hospital for some days and could not move even after he was revived. This crisis led to a new encounter. A Ugandan woman cared for him while he was hospitalised, and they began to live together in the town soon after he was discharged. They bore a son in 2016 and were registered as a refugee family in the KRS. Although his marriage was not guaranteed by any payment of a bridal price, the mother of his girlfriend allowed them to stay together<sup>27</sup>. When he had a new family, he decided to register as a refugee with his wife and son, and successfully obtained refugee status.

He is currently running a kiosk and resumed his job as a mobile photographer in Bweyale. He aspires to lease a plot of land in a town and bring over his aunt, who has lived alone in a suburb of Kampala since her husband passed away<sup>28</sup>. Like other South Sudanese youth, his life is uncertain and contingent on social conditions (*i.e.* war, death of biological family members, his adoptive family’s refusal to accept him, looting and theft). His future aspirations do not include repatriation, as his wife is unwilling to stay in South Sudan and he has no job and only a few relatives to care for them. Instead, he opted to settle in Uganda to stay with his family.

The second subject in this study is Alex, a former rebel soldier in his late thirties from Moru in South Sudan. He did not become a refugee until 2014. He had been ‘in the bush,’ implying that he was fighting as a guerrilla soldier for the SPLA, during the Sudanese Civil War. However, the SPLA targeted his ethnic group, due to political antagonism between the South Sudanese government and local supporters.

Soon after his arrival, Alex had several entrepreneurial ideas (*i.e.* the transnational trade of maize produced in the settlement to South Sudan). He received four acres of land from the OPM and began commercial farming. While many refugee farmers were not successful, he applied trial and error to increase agricultural inputs and productivity. He worked on farming various cash crops, such as vegetables, fruit, and sunflowers, and introduced an irrigation system into the settlement. His efforts were evaluated and rewarded by NGOs, and he was hailed as a ‘model farmer’ in the KRS. His tribesmen and kin have high expectations of him, and regard him as a leader who can rebuild the community in the KRS.

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<sup>27</sup> The woman hailed from Ugandan Acholi. The people from the Uganda–South Sudan border area, such as the Acholi and the Madi, have similar cultural habits. Inter-marriage between two ethnic groups is not rare, even though there are not many cases of marriage between refugees and Ugandans.

<sup>28</sup> The Refugees Act of 2006 in Uganda, states that refugees cannot own the land they cultivate or the homes they live in — even if they have lived in the country for years. However, the growing population of refugees requires the leasing of land outside of the refugee settlements for use in some refugee-hosting areas, which raises issues over land between refugees and Ugandan nationals.

However, this does not mean that Alex has become a successful farmer, fully managing household budgets. A lack of initial capital, an insufficient water system for irrigation, internal disputes between refugees, and low payments for NGO extension workers were all obstacles to living in the camp.

Alex believes that educational opportunities for his children will ensure a better future for him and them, although expensive school fees place a financial burden on the household. He said, 'I have to pay school fees for my children. Education for children will lead them toward a better future. However, school fees, including boarding, costs too much, and I cannot manage the total expenses'<sup>29</sup>.

He began to imagine a different future after five years of camp life. The first was the dream of resettlement in a third country. As refugees in the KRS believe, the transnational network between the refugee settlement and a third resettlement country can provide a great opportunity to overcome stagnation, and pursue a better life. In 2018, Alex's neighbour resettled in Australia through a family reunification program. It is believed in the KRS that only those with families and relatives abroad can manage life in the camp, as they receive remittances from them. Alex obtained a resettlement form from a friend in Australia and applied to the Ugandan authorities. His application was almost approved, but he was asked to pay a heavy bribe that he could not afford.

In February 2020, following signs that the South Sudanese government and the opposition could compromise in the implementation of the R-ARCSS, he decided to leave the settlement and return to Juba. Although he had already given up joining the opposition armed groups, he was always regarded as a rebel commander in his hometown. Travelling home could have been a risk to his life. He said, 'I decided to leave the military because it is extremely useless in the current situation. I lost interest in serving my country because everybody is engaged in fighting for no good reason. Thus, I cannot find any reason to fight in South Sudan'.

In February 2020, when the government decided to collaborate with the armed opposition groups to form a new government, he returned to South Sudan. He is now self-employed in Juba, and has decided to leave his wife and children in the KRS so that they can benefit from the safe environment and proper education offered in Uganda.

## 5. Concluding remarks

The dynamics of many contemporary South Sudanese movements across the South Sudan-Ugandan border suggest the continuation of the mobility patterns of earlier generations. During the fighting, both the Ugandans and South Sudanese repeatedly crossed the shared border to escape the civil wars. Currently, most of the South Sudanese who fled the recent conflict in South Sudan, remain in Uganda even after the peace agreement, looking at an opportunity to return. The South Sudanese who are living

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<sup>29</sup> This narrative is taken from my field notes written in 2018 based on my interview with Alex.

in exile have to cope with uncertain social and security conditions, while Uganda now hosts an unprecedented number of refugees.

Most refugees continue to investigate new possibilities to live and realise a better future in highly uncertain conditions. Most of their attempts to maintain their livelihoods are directed toward their and their descendants' futures, particularly focusing on education. The classic care and maintenance programme has been criticised as it does not include any plans, whereas self-reliance and resilience policies foster refugees' hope for a better future. However, many refugees face challenges due to structural constraints (*i.e.* income generation, employment, living costs and educational expenses). Transnational networks between their homes in South Sudan and refugees in Uganda, or between refugees in Uganda and their relatives in developed countries, play a key role in coping with uncertain lives. Even Alex, who was regarded as a successful refugee farmer by the NGOs, failed to realise his expectations and aspirations, due to insufficient NGO support.

In the camps, individual refugees aspire to different futures, according to their original plans for their lives, as well as their experiences in the settlement (*i.e.* third-country resettlement). Whenever they fail to find any tangible future in exile, they tend to escape into an imaginary world and harbour a fatalistic attitude toward their future.

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# **Beyond the Cessation Clause: Rwandan Refugees in Uganda—From Refugees to East African Citizens?**

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## **Abstract**

Since 2002, Uganda has been trying to find a durable solution to the Rwandan refugee issue without success. Despite various attempts at (in)voluntary repatriation, the majority refuse to return. Resettlement is not possible, and local integration is yet to be explored. Simultaneously, the recommendation for the cessation of refugee status by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has not addressed the problem. We analysed the prospects and challenges of granting *East African citizenship* to Rwandan refugees by issuing East African Community (EAC) passports or *residence permits* that would give them freedom of mobility, residence, and employment in the EAC in accordance with the Common Market Protocol. Searching for a durable solution at the EAC level comes at a time when efforts to establish the East African federation continue. This has the potential to end one of the most protracted refugee situations, promoting the rights of Rwandan refugees, and enhancing people-centred regional integration.

**Keywords:** Rwandan refugees, cessation clause, durable solutions, East African community, mobility, citizens, Uganda, Rwanda

## 1. Introduction

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), ‘by the end of 2020, 82.4 million individuals were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order’ (UNHCR 2021: 2). Out of 82.4 million, 26.4 million were refugees<sup>1</sup>, 48.0 million were internally displaced persons, and 4.1 million were asylum seekers (UNHCR 2021: 2). Developing regions hosted 86 percent of the world’s refugees in 2020 under the UNHCR mandate (UNHCR 2021). Uganda hosted over 1.4 million refugees in 2020, the highest among all African countries and the fourth highest in the world (UNHCR 2021: 2). The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and UNHCR put the total number of refugees in Uganda at more than 1.5 million by the end of August 2021 (OPM and UNHCR 2021). The majority of these refugees come from neighbouring countries and the wider region comprising South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Somalia, Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, among others. By August 2021, around 19,010 of the 1.5 million refugees in Uganda were Rwandan, who arrived during and after the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Rwandan refugees have settled in Nakivale, Oruchinga, Kyaka II, and Kyangwali refugee settlements in rural Uganda, while some others are in urban areas (Karoooma 2014: 11). Other Rwandan refugees are secondary movers – those who came from neighbouring countries such as Tanzania and DRC following the forced repatriations of 1996/1997, and were unable to return because they faced persecution on account of their first departure (ibid.). Rwandan asylum seekers (both Hutu and Tutsi) continue to come to Uganda claiming persecution, human rights violations, and dictatorship in Rwanda<sup>2</sup>. These asylum seekers and secondary movers include ‘recyclers’<sup>3</sup> who were repatriated to Rwanda but had to move back to Ugandan refugee settlements and urban areas (Amnesty International 2011).

This paper argues that despite various attempts to search for a durable solution, the Rwandan refugee problem has remained. Since 2002, Uganda has promoted (in)voluntary repatriation, but the majority of refugees refuse to return and continue to stay in the country. Resettlement is not available, and local integration is yet to be explored as a long-term solution. At the same time, the recommendation for the cessation of refugee status by the UNHCR has not addressed this problem. Using Long (2009); Adepoju *et al.* (2010); Long and Crisp (2010); Long (2011); Long (2015); Long and Rosengaertner (2016) work on mobility that goes beyond traditional durable solutions, this paper proposes granting *East African citizenship* to Rwandan refugees by issuing East African Community (EAC) passports or *residence*

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<sup>1</sup> Out of 26.4 million refugees, 20.7 million refugees are under UNHCR mandate and 5.7 million are Palestinian refugees registered by United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

<sup>2</sup> This is based on personal interviews, observations, and interactions with new Rwandan Asylum seekers in Mbarara, Kampala, Oruchinga, and Nakivale refugee settlements during the period June 2010 to 2019. Rwandan asylum seekers include government officials, genocide survivors, journalists, and students, together with ordinary people.

<sup>3</sup> The author has interviewed several ‘recyclers’ living in Nakivale and Oruchinga settlements in Uganda.

*permits* that gives them freedom of mobility and residence in the member countries in accordance with the EAC Treaty and Common Market Protocol. Searching for a durable solution at the EAC level comes at a time when efforts to establish the East African federation continue. Despite a number of challenges that might hinder its implementation, this solution has the potential to end a protracted refugee situation, promoting the rights of Rwandan refugees and enhancing people-centred regional integration in the region.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the understanding of the prospects and challenges of alternative durable solutions to protracted displacement. The UNHCR and refugee hosting countries, including Uganda, have attempted to find a durable solution for Rwandan refugees with little success. In fact, it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain solutions for contemporary forced migration flows using the traditional durable solutions provided by the existing refugee regimes (Long 2009). This paper responds to this challenge.

The paper is structured as follows: The following section presents the methodology, and subsequently, the search for a durable solution is presented. (In)voluntary repatriation, cessation of refugee status, and the challenges involved are discussed. Other durable solutions, such as resettlement and local integration, have not been used or are yet to be explored. Subsequently, the paper analyses the ‘new solution’ of granting Rwandan refugees *East African citizenship* by issuing EAC Passports or *residence permits* that gives them freedom of mobility, residence, employment, and other rights in the EAC in accordance with the Common Market Protocol. The prospects of this durable solution and the challenges that might affect its implementation are discussed, followed by the conclusion.

## 2. Methodology

This paper is the result of four research visits carried out at different intervals between 2010 and 2019. The first three visits were carried out at the Nakivale and Oruchinga settlements in south-western Uganda and focused on Rwandan new caseload refugees<sup>4</sup>. During these visits, I spoke to over 200 Rwandan refugees, with help from two research assistants. The fourth visit partly covered Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kampala. It looked at Rwandans among refugees from other nationalities.

While the first visit lasted for one month, the remaining were two weeks long. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from refugees and local hosts at the study sites. The research also included key informant interviews with OPM, UNHCR, and NGO officials. Focus group discussions (FGDs), with six to twelve refugees each, were organised. Direct observation was crucial for understanding some of the issues, such as living conditions, forced repatriation operations, victims

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<sup>4</sup> Rwandan new caseload refugees refer to the Hutu that came during and after the 1994 genocide. Before them, Uganda hosted old caseload Rwandan Tutsi refugees who arrived in 1959 and the early 1960s. The majority returned to Rwanda after the genocide, but a significant number stayed in Uganda.

of human rights violations, refugee-host relations, etcetera. I have also used documentary evidence such as text books, journal articles, magazines, newspapers, government and UNHCR policy documents, and legal instruments such as the 2006 Refugees Act, the 1999 EAC Treaty, and the 2009 EAC Common Market Protocol. Purposive criterion sampling was used to select the study respondents, namely the refugees and asylum seekers, Ugandan government officials, UNHCR and NGOs officials, as well as local hosts around the Nakivale and Oruchinga settlements, Isingiro District, and Kampala. In addition, ‘recyclers’ were identified through snowball sampling. Recyclers are Rwandan refugees who have been repatriated to Rwanda but have returned to Uganda claiming human rights violations, insecurity, persecution, and the inability to recover land and property in Rwanda.

In all four research visits, the Rwandan refugees and other categories of respondents answered questions on themes such as refugee physical security, refugee rights and obligations, refugee-host relations, voluntary and forced repatriation, local integration, resettlement, the so-called cessation clause, and alternative durable solutions. Thematic and content analyses were used to analyse the data. The analysis further made use of secondary data, both scholarly articles and grey literature. The study was cleared by the OPM and Isingiro Districts in Uganda. During the data collection, the respondents were briefed about the purely academic nature of the study and they participated voluntarily. Their confidentiality and anonymity were protected throughout the research process.

### **3. Challenges in the search for a durable solution**

#### **3.1. Voluntary repatriation**

Since October 2002, the government of Rwanda (GoR), the government of Uganda (GoU), and the UNHCR have played an active role in promoting the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees (UNHCR and IOM 2011). The GoR has strongly pursued the return of all its citizens, stating that the country is enjoying stability and economic growth, so there is no reason for anyone to remain in exile (MIDIMAR 2011). Rwanda would also like to see its refugee population return from exile so that they can take part in rebuilding the country, as well as put an end to vital security and justice issues which flow from Rwanda’s history of genocide (Human Rights First 2004, IRRI and Refugee Law Project 2010, Karooma 2014).

In 2003, a tripartite agreement was signed between Uganda, Rwanda, and the UNHCR, to set up a Tripartite Commission to oversee the repatriation process, and joint communiqués were issued from time to time. Sensitisation campaigns were also carried out in the settlements to encourage refugees to return. Furthermore, ‘Go and see, come, and tell visits’ were organised, under which refugee delegations to visit Rwanda were escorted by OPM and UNHCR. On return, the refugees shared their experiences about what they had or had not seen in Rwanda.

However, several challenges have hindered this repatriation exercise. First, the refugees do not trust

the information they receive from the UNHCR and officials from Rwanda and Uganda. In FGDs, refugees noted that, ‘We were shown videos and pictures which paint a good picture of Rwanda. They showed us the conditions in Rwanda and how they have improved to enable us to go home. However, we were not convinced because they only showed us the good things about Rwanda when we know very well that our country has another bad side’<sup>5</sup>.

Second, during the visits to Rwanda, the refugees complained that they were not taken to all the places they wanted to visit which cast a doubt on the whole process. For example, in the FDGs, the refugees noted that they were taken to selected areas in Rwanda that the government was interested in showing and not what they wanted see<sup>6</sup>. They observed that these visits were state-managed and aimed at painting a good picture of Rwanda<sup>7</sup>. They noted that they were not able to see or understand the other side of Rwanda, which is hidden from the public<sup>8</sup>. They noted that they would have loved to verify the stories of arrests at night by the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), disappearances of civilians, genocide ideology laws, human rights violations, and land conflicts to mention but a few of the things that they have heard<sup>9</sup>. These stories do little to convince the already apprehensive refugees.

Despite all efforts to promote voluntary repatriation, Rwandan refugees have been reluctant to return. Since 2004, refugee returns have remained low. The following are the number of refugees who have returned since 2004: 2004 (2,400), 2005 (1,591), 2006 (none), 2007 (2,732), 2008 (461), 2009 (5,583), 2010 (1,762), 2011 (19), and 2012 (157) (Rwandan Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugees Statistics Report 2012).

### 3.2. Forced repatriation

Because of the low numbers, in the late 2000s, repatriation became associated with forced repatriation operations, deadlines, threats, withdrawal of land for cultivation, and reduction of food rations. In short, what started as a voluntary process had taken a coercive turn. In other words, repatriation became a forced return (Ahimbisibwe 2020).

For example, on 5 October 2007 it was reported that ‘Ugandan security operatives on Wednesday night raided Kyaka II and Nakivale refugee settlements and violently drove out thousands of Rwandan nationals’ (Basiime *et al.* 2007). It was further pointed out that ‘reports indicate that up to 3,000 people were evicted but UNHCR official said 1,535 people were forcefully repatriated’ (ibid.).

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<sup>5</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Rubondo zone, Nakivale settlement, on 8 July 2010; Focus Group Discussion, Sangano Base Camp, Nakivale settlement on 10 June 2016; Focus Group Discussion, Sangano Base Camp, Nakivale settlement, on 28 November 2019.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Sangano Base Camp, Nakivale settlement on 10 June 2016; Focus Group Discussion, Oruchinga settlement on 29 August 2016; Focus Group Discussion, Juru zone, Nakivale settlement on 30 June 2010.

In another incident, ‘on 14 July 2010, the Ugandan and Rwandan government police and military entered Nakivale refugee camps in Uganda. Some 1,700 Rwandans were gathered together in Nakivale on the pretext that they were to be informed of the results of their refugee status claims, but then found themselves being herded into lorries at gunpoint to be returned in Rwandan military lorries’ (Harell-Bond 2011). According to refugees’ investigations and reports, 14 Rwandans died, families were separated, children were left behind, and 17 recognised refugees were refouled (ibid.).

Again, since 2009, Uganda has imposed a cultivation ban on Rwandan refugees. ‘Since then, refugees have become extremely food insecure and reported resorting to numerous coping mechanisms that, in turn, increased their vulnerability’ (Amnesty International 2011: 12). According to Amnesty International, ‘such a ban directly discriminates against the Rwandan refugees on the grounds of nationality and as such violates Article 3 of the 1951 Refugee Convention’ (ibid.). This ban on cultivation came at the same time when vigorous efforts to promote repatriation were put in place. Rwandan refugees were given a deadline of 31 July 2009 to repatriate or the Nakivale settlement would be closed (ibid. 13). This deadline was extended to 31 August 2009 (IRIN News 2010). ‘The ban on cultivation was used as a tool to force Rwandan refugees to return’ (ibid.). Despite these efforts to force Rwandans to return, the refugee issue has not been solved. Even those who were forcefully repatriated found their way back to Uganda, either returning to the settlements or disappearing into the host communities (Karoooma 2013, Ahimbisibwe 2015).

### 3.3. Cessation of refugee status

In 2011, the UNHCR put in place a Comprehensive Strategy for the Rwandan Refugee Situation (hereafter, comprehensive strategy) an important component of which was the elaboration of a common schedule leading to the cessation of refugee status<sup>10</sup>, initially foreseen to commence on 31 December 2011 (UNHCR 2011: 1). The cessation of refugee status targeted Rwandan refugees who fled their country between 1959 and 1998, thereby assessing that Rwanda had become a safe nation for these refugees to return (Gillaume 2012). ‘Unlike refugee flows from Rwanda after 1998, the above-mentioned periods shared the character of group or large-scale forced population movements as a result of armed conflict, events seriously disturbing public order and/or the presence of a consistent pattern of mass violations of human rights including genocide’ (UNHCR 2011: 6). It was asserted that all these disturbing events had since stopped and ‘Rwanda enjoys an essential level of peace, security,

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<sup>10</sup> Refugee law provides for cessation of refugee status: Article 1 C (5) of the 1951 Convention states that ‘He can no longer, because the circumstances in connection with which he has been recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist, continue to refuse to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality’; Article 1 (4) (e) of the OAU Convention states that ‘he can no longer, because the circumstances in connection with which he was recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist, continue to refuse to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality’; Section 6 of the 2006 Refugees Act also provides for cessation of the refugee status such that the person shall cease to be a refugee if the circumstances in connection with which that person was recognised as a refugee have ceased to exist.

reconciliation, democracy and human rights’ (ibid.).

However, Uganda did not officially implement the cessation clause. The cessation of refugee status originally set for implementation by the Ugandan government on 30 June 2013 was suspended until further notice. After the 2016 UNHCR executive committee meeting in Geneva, the implementation of the cessation clause was scheduled for 31 December 2017 and later postponed indefinitely. According to the Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, the postponement took place due to the pending resolution of legal ambiguities and the charting of a way forward towards the implementation of local integration and alternative legal status as required by the refugee law and comprehensive strategy (Government of Uganda 2013). Overall, the implementation of the cessation clause is not a solution to the Rwandan refugee problem (Kingston 2017). It risks creating stateless people and other protection challenges (ibid.). The threat of the cessation clause has made the refugees disappear and go off the radar, with a number of them moving away from the settlements and self-settling in different parts of the country<sup>11</sup>. This is not a solution. Rather it only complicates the situation further and makes protecting them even more difficult.

#### **4. Unexplored durable solutions**

##### **4.1. Local integration**

A possible durable solution for the Rwandan refugees in Uganda is local integration. This solution was provided in the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (hereafter, the 1951 Convention). Article 34 calls upon states to assist in the assimilation and naturalisation of refugees enabling them to become citizens of the host country. According to Crisp (2004: 2), ‘Strictly speaking, it can be argued that the process of local integration becomes a durable solution only at the point when a refugee becomes a naturalized citizen of his or her asylum country, and consequently is no longer in need of international protection’. Ahimbisibwe *et al.* (2017) argue that any integration without the attainment of citizenship may not be a durable solution, and despite the socio-economic integration of Rwandan refugees, naturalisation is yet to be explored for the Rwandan refugee caseload. Although it is not available as a solution, it is worth noting that the majority of the Rwandan refugees support this option (ibid.). It has even been argued that local integration has the potential to address the refugee challenge (ibid.). However, there are a number of challenges to naturalisation that range from legal ambiguities in Ugandan laws, unwillingness of Uganda and Rwanda to naturalise these refugees, security concerns regarding the possible hostility of the host population, etcetera (ibid.). These challenges have added to the dilemma of finding an appropriate solution for Rwandan refugees in Uganda.

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<sup>11</sup>Field Notes 2016, 2018, and 2019.

## 4.2. Resettlement

The second traditional durable solution is resettlement. Resettlement involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a state in which they have sought protection to a third state which has agreed to admit them as refugees with permanent residence status (UNHCR 2011). The status provided ensures protection against refoulement and provides a resettled refugee and their family or dependants access to rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals (*ibid.*). Resettlement carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalised citizen of the resettlement country (*ibid.*). However, there are no resettlement opportunities available to Rwandan refugees. The number of refugees is too high and the number of slots available for resettlement are usually very limited. Resettlement remains a dream, as there are no countries accepting large groups of refugees (Ahimbisibwe 2015). In general, only 1% of the world's refugees benefit from resettlement (Long 2011). In fact, 'given the narrow quotas, the chance of being resettled is slim, and indeed many people in refugee camps think of resettlement as akin to winning the lottery' (Jacobsen 2005: 55). Also, 'the Rwandan government has promoted the notion to the international community that there is peace in Rwanda. This has made the international community reluctant to resettling Rwandan refugees when their country of origin is secure and willing to welcome them' (Ahimbisibwe 2015: 290).

## 5. Beyond traditional durable solutions: A brief overview

As already stated, it is difficult to solve today's refugee problem using traditional durable solutions. Long (2009: 3) argues that 'it has become increasingly clear in recent years that the three durable solutions<sup>12</sup> are not always able to respond adequately to the complexity of contemporary forced migration flows'. Failure to find durable solutions, among other causes, has led to the emergence of protracted refugee situations. It is clear from the above discussion that the three durable solutions are limited in addressing the Rwandan refugee problem. Amidst these limitations, scholars have proposed a number of 'new durable solutions' to respond to the challenge of forced displacement. They range from addressing the root causes of conflicts in countries of origin to granting refugees freedom of mobility, establishment, and residence in host countries and regions with regional citizenship within regional integration blocs.

### 5.1. Addressing the root causes of displacement

The ideal solution would be to address forced displacement at the source and avoid a situation in which people flee as refugees in the first place. However, the reality is that Rwandan refugees in Uganda and other countries find themselves trapped in protracted. Guterres has argued that 'we have to recognise

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<sup>12</sup> As already shown, 'voluntary' repatriation has not addressed the Rwandan refugee problem. Local integration and resettlement have not been or are yet to be tried.

that there are no true humanitarian solutions to refugee problems. Rather, solutions require political will and leadership’ (Guterres 2012). This suggests there is a need to look for political solutions to refugee problems. We need to reconstruct the state and build institutions that promote accountability of leaders to the population, clearly separate powers between the arms of the government, and put the army under civilian control through good civil-military relations, and conduct regular free and fair elections. Mushemeza takes this idea further, arguing that ‘Rwanda, and Africa as a whole, must build institutions that allow popular participation in decision making, transfer of political power from one group or generation to the other, and generally, address the question of democracy and good governance’ (Mushemeza 2007). This will address the challenge of future displacement that might arise as a result of bad governance, undemocratic tendencies, and human rights violations in EAC member countries.

Furthermore, there is a need to create mechanisms for resolving disputes in the countries of origin peacefully. The use of violence has been the main reason behind the forced displacement of Rwandan refugees in the recent past. In the FDGs, refugees stated, ‘As Africans, we have to learn to resolve our conflicts using peaceful means. The use of force is responsible for the problem of refugees in our countries’<sup>13</sup>. They further pointed out that ‘our leaders should learn to use dialogue to resolve the differences. If President Habyarimana had sat with Kagame and RPF leaders to resolve the Tutsi grievances, perhaps we would have avoided the 1990 invasion, the 1994 genocide, and the wars that followed in Zaire/DRC’<sup>14</sup>.

Political ethnicity has been at the root of wars and conflicts in Rwanda that have resulted in considerable bloodshed as well as the displacement of people as refugees during and after the war. De-ethnicisation should be encouraged as a political solution aimed at creating harmony and peaceful coexistence. Government officials, civil society organisations (CSOs), religious leaders, traditional leaders, and the media can be the main vehicles for delivering the message and encouraging people to discard toxic notions in this regard. However, mere legislation is insufficient for de-ethnicising society, especially if there is continuous discrimination and segregation against a group of people. For example, the current legislation against genocidal ideology in Rwanda is ineffective unless the government is seen to be fair and willing to promote equal justice as opposed to one-sided justice that favours one group at the expense of others. Equal opportunities for all citizens of Rwanda, protection of human rights, and promotion of unity and democracy are necessary to bring about true de-ethnicisation of society instead of legislating ethnicity away. The refugees stated, ‘Kagame should be a leader for all Rwandans. He should not favour Tutsi and discriminate against Hutu. This has been the source of our conflicts in Rwanda. We should learn from history that exclusion and discrimination breed grievances

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<sup>13</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Sangano Base Camp, Nakivale settlement on 24 June 2010.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

and lead to violence, whereas inclusion and non-discrimination can lead to peace and security’<sup>15</sup>. The next section looks into the possible durable solutions of refugee mobility and regional citizenship of the EAC or future political federation.

## **5.2. Refugees, mobility, and regional integration**

Regional integration is one of the avenues through which the refugee problem can be addressed. With the East African countries as one political federation, there is hope that a bigger economy and a wider country would swallow the narrow attitudes of ethnic segregation. If the federation comes through, the people would be known as East Africans rather than Rwandans, Ugandans, Kenyans, Burundians, or Tanzanians. Rutinwa (1996) argued that regional integration has the potential of addressing political instability in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Economic integration is capable of addressing economic factors underlying the political conflicts. However, it would be a while before the political federation of East Africa is realised (Kasaija 2004).

Long and Crisp (2010) proposed a solution for the mobility of protracted refugees. They argued that from the point of view of labour migration, refugees’ mobility is a positive asset that can contribute to their lasting protection, and labour migration has the potential to ‘[address] the needs of protracted or residual refugee populations unable to access the three traditional durable solutions of repatriation, resettlement or local integration’ (ibid. 57). Long (2015: 6) argued that labour migration has been found to assist the traditional three solutions. She has highlighted the role of labour mobility in bringing an end to protracted refugee situations by allowing refugees access to markets through further migration or finding opportunities in the host country (ibid.).

In addition, ‘in a broader sense, it is now increasingly recognised that human mobility provides an important means for people to improve their standard of living and to contribute to the economic and social life of their countries of origin and destination’ (ibid. 56). Mobility enables refugees to obtain rights and protection in destination countries. Refugee mobility creates ‘transnational diasporic community networks that can contribute positively to the de facto protection of refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs and other persons of concern to UNHCR’ (ibid.).

However, Long (2009: 1) also states that ‘regularised labour migration cannot, and should not, replace the traditional citizenship-focused durable solutions of resettlement, local integration or repatriation’. She argues that labour migration should not be seen as a fourth durable solution but rather as a part of the solutions framework intended to address forced displacement (ibid. 5). She admits that labour migration is limited in its scope as it cannot function as a durable solution without being connected to some form of citizenship in the state of origin, country of asylum, and regional or

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<sup>15</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Rubondo zone, Nakivale settlement on 27 November 2019.

supranational organisation like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and East African Community (*ibid.*). She adds that without access to citizenship, labour migration is an incomplete solution (*ibid.* 23).

Long and Rosengaertner (2016) expanded on the notion of labour migration to include mobility for education and training, family reunion, and marriage. Young refugees face the challenge of disrupted education cycles and, hence, the acquisition of skills due to displacement (*ibid.*) even though schools and training institutions are available in host countries. Allowing refugees to cross borders for further studies enables them to expand on the opportunities available to them and take control of their future. This is relevant for Rwandan refugees in Uganda. Their mobility for school and training within the East African region is necessary to build their potential, provide opportunities, and deepen people-centred regional integration. However, financial aid and scholarships would have to play a key role in opening study and training migration channels to refugees (*ibid.*). Left on their own, the costs of education and training programs would be too high for refugees to bear.

In practice, refugee mobility has been implemented in the context of ECOWAS which was founded in 1975 to promote trade and economic integration in the West African sub-region (Adepoju *et al.* 2010). A protocol on free movement was adopted by ECOWAS in 1979 ‘which confers on community citizens the right to enter, reside in and establish economic activities in the territory of any ECOWAS member state’ (*ibid.* 123). Furthermore, ‘the ECOWAS protocols extended residency, including the right to seek and carry out income-earning employment, to community citizens in host ECOWAS member States, provided they had obtained an ECOWAS residence card or permit’ (*ibid.*). The protocols further state that ‘obliged member states to grant migrant workers, complying with the rules and regulations governing their residence under ECOWAS, equal treatment with nationals in areas such as security of employment, participation in social and cultural activities, and, in certain cases of job loss, re-employment, and training’ (*ibid.*).

Within the ECOWAS protocols, refugee mobility and right to residence have been guaranteed. For example, in 2009, Nigeria issued three-year ECOWAS residence permits alongside re-issuing passports of residual refugee populations from Sierra Leone and Liberia (Long and Crisp 2010: 57). Similarly, Gambia also issued ECOWAS residence permits to Sierra Leonean refugees who chose to stay in Gambia. At the same time, Sierra Leonean passports were issued to these refugees by the Sierra Leonean High Commission in Gambia (Long 2009: 10).

According to Long (2009: 26), ‘the success of the ECOWAS migration-based solutions framework for Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees suggests that labour migration could prove particularly useful when incorporated into wider regional frameworks intended to promote economic integration’. Although this approach had its own set of challenges (Omata 2016), it was an innovative durable solution in a world where durable solutions to forced displacement are becoming increasingly difficult.

The EAC is one region that can learn from the ECOWAS refugee mobility experience and deal with residual refugee populations including Rwandans within the framework of the Common Market Protocol that provides rights of movement and residence to East African citizens (Long 2009).

### **5.3. Refugees and regional citizenship**

Refugee mobility and residence are linked to regional citizenship, which creates new dimensions of identity and belonging away from the nation-state. According to IRRI (2014: 1), ‘Citizenship is understood both as access to legal citizenship, and more broadly as a recognition of the right of a person to belong in a community and the power of that acceptance/belonging as a means of accessing other rights’. Citizenship is defined at two levels: legal and empirical citizenship. Legal citizenship ‘denotes a legal status given at the national level that designates full membership in a state with concomitant rights or entitlements and duties’ (ibid. 5). It refers to the relationship between the individual and the state. The individual has rights and duties under the law, and the state has certain responsibilities in this legal bond (ibid.). It spells out how individuals and groups are related to their state or community (ibid. 5). Legal citizenship, under which an individual carries a passport or national identity card, shows a level of belonging at the national level. On the other hand, empirical citizenship ‘is about individuals’ or the groups real life experiences of belonging and being able to claim rights on an equal footing with other community members’ (ibid.).

Although citizenship, to a large extent, still operates at the national level, regional citizenships, like the one seen above under ECOWAS, are emerging. Under such regional citizenship citizens are able to move freely within a regional bloc. The West African bloc introduced an ECOWAS passport and residence permit that allowed Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees to settle in member countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and Gambia. Long (2011: 35) points out that:

[O]ne important insight from these case studies is to recognize that new citizenships may unlock elements of protracted displacement crises by sitting either below or above traditional or formal state-citizen structures. The emergence of new ‘citizenships’ or community memberships within regions of protracted crisis, as described above, is one facet of this development. The other is the development of new supra-national and regional citizenships that may in coming years have a profound effect on both integration prospects and mobility, helping both to unlock and to prevent protracted displacements. ECOWAS citizenship has proved useful in resolving residual displacement of Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees.

Similarly, Long and Rosengaertner (2016) argue that regional citizenship may be crucial for the

mobility of recognised refugees. As citizens of regional blocs, recognised refugees would be able to move for protection and livelihoods. We now look at the possibility of refugee mobility and regional citizenship in the context of the EAC and its challenges.

## 6. The EAC Treaty and Common Market Protocol

The EAC was first established in 1967 by three countries: Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. The EAC collapsed after 10 years in 1977 due to a number of factors, including ideological, political, and economic factors (Ojo *et al.* 1985, Rwekaza 2000). A treaty re-establishing the EAC was signed by the founding nations in 1999. Rwanda and Burundi joined the EAC in 2007, followed by South Sudan in 2016. The DRC and Somalia have also expressed interest in joining the EAC.

Chapter 17, Article 104 of the EAC Treaty provides for the free movement of persons, labour services, right of establishment, and residence. Article 104 (1) states that ‘partner states agree to adopt measures to achieve the free movement of persons, labour and services and to ensure the enjoyment of the right of establishment and residence of their citizens within the community’. Member states are to achieve this goal by: (a) ease border crossing by citizens of the partner states; (b) maintain common standard travel documents for their citizens; (c) effect reciprocal opening of border posts and keep the posts open and manned for 24 hours; (d) maintain common employment policies; (e) harmonise their labour policies, programmes, and legislation, including those on occupational health and safety; (f) establish a regional centre for productivity and employment promotion and exchange information on the availability of employment; (g) make their training facilities available to persons from other partner states; and (h) enhance the activities of the employers’ and workers’ organisations with a view to strengthening them. The Common Market Protocol was put in place to ensure the effective implementation of this last goal of the EAC Treaty.

The Protocol for the Establishment of the EAC Common Market was signed in Arusha, Tanzania by the Republic of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the United Republic of Tanzania, on 20 November 2009, and it came into force in 2010 (Kago and Wanyama 2017: 345). Article 4 of the Common Market Protocol provides that the ‘overall objective of the Common Market is to widen and deepen cooperation among the partner states in the economic and social fields for the benefit of the partner states’. One of the specific objectives is to ‘accelerate economic growth and development of the partner states through the attainment of the free movement of goods, persons and labour, the rights of establishment and residence and the free movement of services and capital’. Article 7 of the Common Market Protocol provides for free movement of persons such that ‘the partner states hereby guarantee the free movement of persons who are citizens of the other partner states, within their territories’. Partner states further commit themselves to respect the principle of non-discrimination of each other’s citizens based on their nationality.

Rwengabo (2015) argues that the Common Market Protocol guarantees freedom of cross-border movements of persons, immigration, right of residence, and ensures the creation of a regional sense of belonging that spans the EAC geo-social space, leading to the creation of an East African Citizenry.

Under the Common Market Protocol framework, East African citizens are free to move within the EAC. The Common Market emphasises the mobility of East African citizens as a way of strengthening regional integration. The Common Market provides an opportunity to discuss solutions for residual refugee caseloads, including Rwandans, with freedom of movement and residence in the region. With no clear traditional durable solution in sight, guaranteeing mobility and regional citizenship to refugees could be a starting point in the search for a solution. In fact, Long (2011: 35) hopes that ‘EAC citizenship could address the problem of refugees in East Africa, a region with historically high levels of displacement’. The International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) (2014: 4) made a similar observation: ‘New regional arrangements such as the EAC are building a sense of regional belonging that may prove powerful in promoting access to rights across the region. Guarantees of freedom of movement and establishment for community members may act to protect refugees in practice (with or without formal reference to refugee status)’.

One way to explore this is by granting East African passports to refugees. The first EAC passport was introduced in 1999 and was recognised as a travel document within (but not outside) the regional bloc. This passport enabled East African citizens to travel freely within the region. A new internationally recognised and valid EAC e-passport with increased security features was introduced in January 2018 (UNHCR 2018). The new passport is issued by member states of the EAC with their coats of arms and other national symbols. This paper proposes the EAC passport, could be offered to Rwandan refugees as a step towards shedding off the refugee label.

The other option is to give them EAC residence permits that grant them the right to be permanent residents within the EAC. This would allow them freedom of movement and residence, get employment opportunities, and pursue other livelihood strategies. This will end their legal status as refugees in the short run while also opening a window for future solutions such as East African permanent residents, citizens of the federated state of East Africa, or naturalised citizens of member countries of the EAC like Uganda.

The granting of both EAC passports or residence permits, will only be a part of the solution which may become a durable solution when linked to support other solutions, such as naturalisation. This is in line with an earlier argument by Long (2009) that labour migration is not a complete solution until it is linked to citizenship in the country of origin, host country, or regional organisations. Rwandan refugees willing to get Rwandan passports can access them in Uganda. This is a renewal of their Rwandan citizenship, which means that they will remain Rwandan citizens but live as diaspora. However, our findings suggest that not many Rwandan refugees would be willing to take on Rwandan citizenship out

of fear and uncertainty about the Rwandan state. The other category is naturalisation in Uganda. This is based on the fact that Rwandan refugees have received *de facto* integration in Uganda. They have successfully attained socio-economic integration (Ahimbisibwe *et al.* 2017). In addition, a good number of them already have Ugandan *de jure* citizenship through unofficial channels (Ahimbisibwe 2022).

Furthermore, there is a potential of citizenship at the level of the East African community. Although the East African community is a young organisation, it has the potential to grant citizenship to Rwandan refugees, especially in the future when the East African federation becomes a reality. IRRI (2014: 4) opined that, ‘Although rights at the regional level are envisaged as relying on a base of national citizenship, its potential should be developed in such a way as to expand protection and complement current refugee protection structures’. Some lessons can be drawn from the ECOWAS regional durable solution for residual Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in West Africa and develop it further with innovations, making it appropriate and relevant for the East African region.

## 7. The prospects of an EAC durable solution

This proposed durable solution has some possibility to succeed owing to a number of factors that might favour it. These include the *de facto* integration of Rwandan refugees, similar ethnicities across borders, the EAC Common Market Protocol, and the fact that Rwandan refugees favour integration as East African citizens. We will discuss each of these below.

### 7.1. *De facto* integration of Rwandan refugees

Rwandan refugees have acquired *de facto* integration in Uganda. Faced with forced repatriation and cessation of refugee status, a large number of Rwandan refugees have resorted to integrating themselves into the local communities. During the data collection exercise, I observed Rwandan refugees who had integrated themselves into the local communities<sup>16</sup> in the surroundings of the Nakivale settlement. I also found that a large number of refugees had migrated to the Isingiro, Mubende, Kyenjojo, Kamwenje, and Mbarara districts of Uganda. Those who had money had bought land, built a house, and bribed the local council officials to get a voters’ card or village residents’ identity card (Ahimbisibwe 2022). With time, the refugees are able to claim that they are Ugandans, especially since the country is open to refugees and immigrants and local officials and populations are not strict to new people coming into their areas of jurisdiction. Rwandan refugees who have used this option benefited from the fact that they speak Runyankore, the local language spoken in the Ankole sub-region, and share the physical appearance of the Banyankore of south-western Uganda. I found that although it is easy to identify a Rwandan Tutsi

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<sup>16</sup> The researcher met *de facto* integrated Rwandan refugees in Ngarama, Kashumba, Rugaaga, and Mbaale sub counties surrounding the Nakivale Refugee Settlement. A number of them had already acquired identity cards from local councils or village leaders showing that they are Ugandan permanent residents.

by physical appearance and features, this was not possible with Rwandan Hutu. In addition, many Ugandan Banyarwanda have made it easy for the Rwandan population to mingle and interact. This also includes the former old case load Rwandan Tutsi refugees that arrived in 1959 and the early 1960s. As noted above, although the majority returned to Rwanda after the 1994 Rwandan genocide, a significant number stayed in Uganda. Rwandan refugees are locally integrated and spread across different parts of Uganda. They are able to reside and move freely, work, and carry out businesses and other livelihood activities. Granting them East African citizenship or residence status only reinforces the already existing reality on the ground.

## **7.2. Similar ethnicities across borders**

Some of Uganda's population shares cultural, linguistic, and ethnic ties with the Rwandan refugees. The colonial borders that separated people shared similar cultures, languages, and tribes. The World Bank (2016: 17) argues that:

[T]he shared ethnicity among communities living along all of these countries' borders is another important contributor, with nearly half of Uganda's 64 constitutionally recognized indigenous communities having become administratively divided from their kith and kin by the colonial borders.

For example, as already pointed out above, there is a large population of Banyarwanda in Uganda similar to Banyarwanda in Rwanda. The 1995 Constitution recognises Banyarwanda as one of the tribes in Uganda. In addition, the Bafumbira in Kisoro district in the south-western part of the country speak Rufimbira, a dialect of Kinyarwanda spoken by Rwandans. It is common to find groups such as the Acholi and Madi in Uganda and South Sudan; the Kakwa are found in Uganda, South Sudan, and DRC; the Bakonjo and Alur are found in Uganda and DRC; and the Samia, Iteso, and Sebei are found in Uganda and Kenya. In situations of forced displacement, refugees usually cross borders and stay with their tribesmates. This was the case when Rwandan Tutsi came to Uganda in the late 1950s and the early 1960s when they settled in most parts of the south-western region. The current Rwandan Hutu refugees also settled in most parts of this region. Even the settlements hosting Rwandans like Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyaka II border the local hosts of similar tribes and languages. This has facilitated interactions, intermarriages, and other socio-economic relations between the local hosts and Rwandan refugees. An East African regional durable solution builds on the existing interactions and relations and is likely to strengthen people-centred regional integration.

### 7.3. The EAC Common Market Protocol

The enactment of the Common Market Protocol that grants East African citizens the right to establish, settle, and reside, and the freedom of movement and employment is a positive development. The Common Market Protocol provides a legal framework that governs the mobility and citizenry of the people of East Africa. Although there are a number of challenges for making the common market a reality in the lives of ordinary people, the fact that the protocol exists is a step in the direction of regional integration. This is similar to the 1979 ECOWAS Protocol on free movement, which has been used to grant the right of movement, residence, and employment to Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees by ECOWAS member states. The existence of this protocol provided a foundation for creating a durable solution. Similar to the West African sub-region, what is necessary is the political will and commitment to make durable solutions work and respond to complex forced displacement crises like the Rwandan refugee problem.

### 7.4. Rwandan refugees favour integration in East Africa

Refugees in a focus group discussion argued: ‘We fully support the idea of the East African Federation. It will help us look beyond our own small countries. As people of East Africa, we will be able to move and live in any of the countries without any hindrance. Why should we be forced to return to Rwanda when we can settle here in Uganda, Kenya, or Tanzania? Besides, regional integration will strengthen our economies and address the conflicts that come as a result of competition for power and resources’<sup>17</sup>. Another group of refugees had the same thoughts about East African integration. They said, ‘We request the EAC to consider us as East African citizens. We don’t want to return to Rwanda and face harassment and death’<sup>18</sup>.

The refugees asserted that an EAC-based solution would be the best solution, especially if President Museveni<sup>19</sup> spearheaded it. They look at President Museveni as a Pan-Africanist who believes in the unity and cooperation of Africans. They stated, ‘He is a great leader who looks at them as fellow African brothers and sisters who need to be assisted through local integration. He has helped many Africans, including those from Somalia, Burundi, and South Sudan. He has been a champion of East African unity and does not believe in small countries and their borders. He wants a united East Africa. We support his idea of one East Africa, where East Africans can stay where they want. This would save us the trouble of returning to Rwanda which we don’t want’<sup>20</sup>. Others said that refugees should be granted a chance to stay wherever they wish. For example, they talked about regional integration of the EAC, where people would be free to stay in any of the East African countries without hindrance. They believed that this

<sup>17</sup>Focus Group Discussion, Juru zone, Nakivale settlement on 30 June 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Oruchinga settlement on 29 August 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Museveni is the president of Uganda. He took power in 1986 after a guerrilla war in Uganda.

<sup>20</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Rubondo zone, Nakivale settlement on 8 July 2010.

could be a durable solution to the refugee problem in Africa, since people would live where they felt most secure. According to some refugees, there is a need for a discussion on the proposed East African federation, where member countries would federate into one East African state. They observed that such a solution would address the Tutsi-Hutu ethnic tensions in Rwanda and Burundi and make them look at themselves as citizens of a larger entity called East Africa<sup>21</sup>.

However, they are aware of the challenges of establishing the East African federation, especially given the current tensions between Uganda and Rwanda on the one hand, and Rwanda and Burundi on the other. ‘We have heard about the tensions between Museveni and Kagame. This makes us wonder whether we shall ever achieve East African integration’<sup>22</sup>.

## **8. Challenges of an EAC durable solution**

A number of challenges are likely to hinder the progress and success of the proposed solution of granting East African citizenship and residence status for greater mobility to the Rwandan refugees. These range from the slow pace of the integration process, Rwanda-Uganda tensions, security concerns, and issues of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### **8.1. Slow pace of the integration process**

Article 5 (2) of the treaty for the establishment of the EAC states: ‘The partner states undertake to establish among themselves as in accordance with the provisions of the treaty, a customs union, a common market, subsequently a monetary union and ultimately a political federation’. Although the EAC Common Market has been established, the revived integration process is moving slowly (Kasaija 2004). It is not clear when political federation will be achieved (ibid.). Some countries like Tanzania and Burundi are slow to implement the political federation and other stages of the EAC (Ngari 2016). Even those advocating for it are not trusted by others and the Common Market is yet to be fully implemented by all member states (Bainomugisha and Rwengabo 2016). We have argued above that creation of a federated East African state would be crucial in granting citizenship at a supranational level and neutralising ethnic and national identities. The more the political federation is delayed, the higher is the likelihood of delaying the East African federated state and its associated citizenship.

Meanwhile, there is also a lack of political commitment to the integration agenda. Despite the rhetorical declarations by leaders, practical commitment is still lacking. Member countries are not committed and willing to put in place agreed upon policies and plans. Leaders have made decisions contrary to the principles of the EAC Treaty. For example, the decision by Rwanda to close the border with Uganda in early 2019 contravenes the spirit of the Common Market Protocol and raises questions

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<sup>21</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Oruchinga settlement on 30 November 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Sangano Base Camp, Nakivale settlement on 28 November 2019.

on Rwanda's commitment to the EAC integration trajectory.

## **8.2. Tensions between EAC member states**

Another challenge relates to the tensions between the member states of the EAC. Regional integration tends to slow down every time member states engage in conflict. Instead of focusing on how to advance the integration agenda forward, they busy themselves in engaging in actions that undermine integration. This is a reality that the EAC currently faces. For example, Uganda and Rwanda are engaged in a number of disputes, including the border dispute that led to the closure of the common Katuna/Gatuna border in 2019 (Byaruhanga 2019). The border closure has negatively affected trade, business, and other economic activities between the two countries (*ibid.*). This is contrary to the EAC Treaty and Common Market Protocol that emphasise open borders, free movement, and granting residence to each other's citizens.

The citizens of the two countries have paid a heavy price for the ongoing tensions. Rwanda does not allow its citizens to travel to Uganda, warning them with arrest, imprisonment, and torture (*ibid.*). In some cases, those who did not abide by their government's directives have been shot and killed for crossing the common border. In Uganda, Rwandan citizens and the Ugandans of Rwandan origin have been greatly affected. A number of them have been arrested and imprisoned after being accused of being Rwandan spies. The fact that her citizens face harassment and human rights violations on Uganda's soil is one of Rwanda's grievances against Uganda. Consequently, there is a section of Ugandans of the Banyarwanda tribe who have called for a change of their name to Abavandimwe, citing political witch hunting, discrimination in accessing passports and national identity cards, public service jobs, and other opportunities (Council for Abavandimwe Uganda 2021). Although they are Ugandan citizens, their identity as Banyarwanda has been a source of insecurity. They are victims of the political tensions between the two countries and feel it is safer to rebrand their identity (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, Rwanda and Burundi have had tensions amidst accusations that they are undermining each other's security and territorial integrity (Feyissa 2021). Burundi accused Rwanda of being behind the failed coup d'état of 2015 and at the same time giving military support to Burundian refugees (*ibid.*). The common border remains either closed or inactive, and this has greatly affected socio-economic interactions between the countries. Amidst these tensions, regional integration has suffered. It is difficult for these countries to focus on the EAC integration agenda when they do not see eye to eye.

## **8.3. Rwanda's security concerns**

Rwanda has only favoured repatriation as a feasible solution and opposed other alternative solutions. For example, since 2002, Rwanda has repeatedly requested the UNHCR to invoke the cessation clause on Rwandan refugees who were unwilling to return (Fahamu 2011). Rwanda has always regarded all its

nationals abroad as either a political liability or security threat (IRRI and Refugee Law Project 2010, Ahimbisibwe 2019). Rwanda thinks that it is easier to control people on its soil than as diaspora. Granting East African citizenship or residence status may not take away Rwanda's fears that its population abroad may be a security threat, especially now that there are groups opposed to the Kigali government that can easily get support from this diaspora population. Therefore, such a solution may be curtailed by these Rwandan forces that are only interested in a solution that brings refugees back to its own soil where they will be able to monitor them well. According to Barongo (1998: 124), granting permanent asylum to refugees who have political interests in the country of origin would mean placing permanent conflicts on the political agenda of the neighbouring countries. This is similar to granting citizenship or permanent residence to Rwandan refugees who may have political interests in Rwanda and may use the new legal status to advance their political agenda. Rwanda's fear is premised on the fact that Rwandan refugees might use residence or citizenship abroad for political mobilisation, freedom of movement, acquiring wealth and education etcetera. It would be hard to control such an empowered population especially when they decide to engage in subversive activities against Rwanda. The Rwandan Tutsi did exactly the same thing during the period they were refugees in Uganda. After achieving empowerment, they formed a rebel movement called the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and attacked their country of origin on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1990. This was followed by a civil war and the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

#### **8.4. Sovereignty and territorial integrity**

Kasaija (2004: 31) has argued that 'the fundamental principles of the community seem paradoxically to be working against the establishment of the political federation/union'. Article 6(a) of the EAC Treaty emphasises the sovereignty and equality of member states. A federation requires the surrendering of sovereignty to a central political unit (Rwekaza 2000: 89). In practice, member countries are still preoccupied with sovereignty instead of focusing on the bigger picture. For example, we have seen some countries like Rwanda closing the border with Uganda in early 2019, prioritising national agendas at the expense of the EAC. Some countries like Tanzania and Burundi have been slow on the East African integration programmes, leaving Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda to be at the forefront of the integration process. At this point, the three EAC countries were called the 'coalition of the willing' (Onyango 2015). But this was before tensions emerged between Uganda and Rwanda. At that time, they were willing and committed to fast-track EAC activities and projects, including the East African federation. One wonders how a political federation will be achieved when the treaty and member countries are still focusing on sovereignty, both in theory and practice. This presents an obstacle to achieving the East African federation.

## 9. Conclusion

This paper has argued that despite various attempts to search for a durable solution to the refugee crisis in Uganda, it has remained elusive. Since 2002, Uganda has promoted (in)voluntary repatriation, but the majority of Rwandans have refused to return and continue to stay in the country. Resettlement is not available, and local integration is yet to be explored as a durable solution. At the same time, the recommendation for cessation of refugee status by the UNHCR has not addressed these problems. Given these challenges, this paper proposes a durable solution for granting *East African citizenship* to Rwandan refugees by issuing EAC Passports or *residence permits* that give them freedom of mobility and residence in the member countries in accordance with the EAC Treaty and Common Market Protocol. Searching for a durable solution at the EAC level comes at a time when efforts to establish the East African federation continue. Despite a number of challenges that might hinder its implementation, this solution has the potential to end a protracted refugee situation, promoting the rights of Rwandan refugees and enhancing people-centred regional integration.

The insights in this paper have methodological and policy implications. From a methodological perspective, it is necessary to conduct further research to understand the potential contribution of mobility, regional citizenship, and other alternative durable solutions to similar protracted refugee situations in the Great Lakes and Eastern African regions associated with the complex forced displacement phenomenon. Since it is becoming increasingly difficult to address the refugee problem with traditional durable solutions of voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement, it is important to think of other possible alternative durable solutions.

From a policy point of view, it is important that the EAC enacts the necessary policy framework in the context of the treaty and Common Market Protocol for freedom of movement and residence, and grant regional citizenship to refugees. There is a need for political will, focused and courageous leadership, and cooperation of the member states to ensure that the EAC policies are implemented and respected. A number of times, good policies are made but fail at the implementation stage. For us to be able to address the Rwandan refugee problem in Uganda, the implementation of EAC policies on refugees will be crucial going forward.

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# **The African Sovereign Debt: Financial Dominance over Development**

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## **Abstract**

The Sub-Saharan African countries began borrowing from the international capital market in the 2000s. African sovereign bonds are accepted in the international market; however, the accumulation of liability triggers international scepticism against debt sustainability, the necessity of borrowing, the legitimacy of spending, and the responsibility of foreign lenders. A brief review of the African sovereign bonds issued in the international capital market in the post-debt cancellation period poses fundamental questions regarding the ability of the market to foster the development and stabilisation of African economies.

**Keywords:** Africa, sovereign debt, due diligence, bond market

## 1. Introduction

The financial environment around African economies changed drastically in the 2000s. The primary factor was the completion of the long-lasting debt reduction and cancellation procedures. Most of the western aid donors presented the condition that those countries which were exempted from debt repayment should not to be eligible for new concessional loans; however, it appears that none of them had expected that the interest rate in the international capital market would remain lower than the concessional loans at the time of negotiation for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) scheme (Figure 1). The international society soon witnessed the accumulation of the new African debt which even coincided with the completion of debt cancellation (Demachi 2019).

In the meantime, the introduction of private money to the investment projects in developing countries has started to gain ground. The private-public partnerships (PPPs) in development projects have been promoted in a certain circle, especially in developed economies since the end of the 2000s. The 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan in 2011 is often cited as the turning point of the introduction of private funding to the investment projects in developing countries (IOB 2013). Based on evidence, critics have been consistently opposing to PPPs, listing the failure of PPP projects worldwide (AUC/OECD 2021, Eurodad 2018, Leigland 2018). Although the effectiveness of PPP in the context of developing countries is still disputable, the report published by the African Union and the OECD in 2021 strongly supports the further promotion of ‘blended concessional finance’ by combining concessional funds with commercial financing for investment in Africa.

Given the international trend that private money should be introduced to the relatively large public projects in developing countries, especially in the construction of infrastructure and natural resource development, the international market has responded with a relatively favourable view of African countries’ entry into the international capital market. Several countries have succeeded in rolling over sovereign bonds. However, the situation gradually aggravated as external debt piled up and some countries defaulted while others turned to the facilities provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Africa is not the only group of countries that has accumulated external debt. The *International Debt Statistics 2021*, the World Bank’s annual publication on the world external debt status, has already warned about the accumulation of external debt since 2019, indicating that ‘almost half of all low-income countries were either already in debt distress or at a high risk of it’ (World Bank 2021b: vii). At the inception of the recent global pandemic crisis in 2020, most governments of the G-20 member countries agreed on the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI). DSSI became effective in May 2020 and was originally meant to continue until the end of 2020, but it was extended by one year (World Bank 2021a<sup>1</sup>). Many African countries are eligible for this initiative. However, given the difficult pandemic situation that has originated from the pandemic along with poor institutional and fiscal capacities, the debt burden

<sup>1</sup>‘Covid 19: Debt Service Suspension Initiative,’ 24 September 2021. The World Bank homepage, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/debt/brief/covid-19-debt-service-suspension-initiative> (last accessed on 18 October 2021).

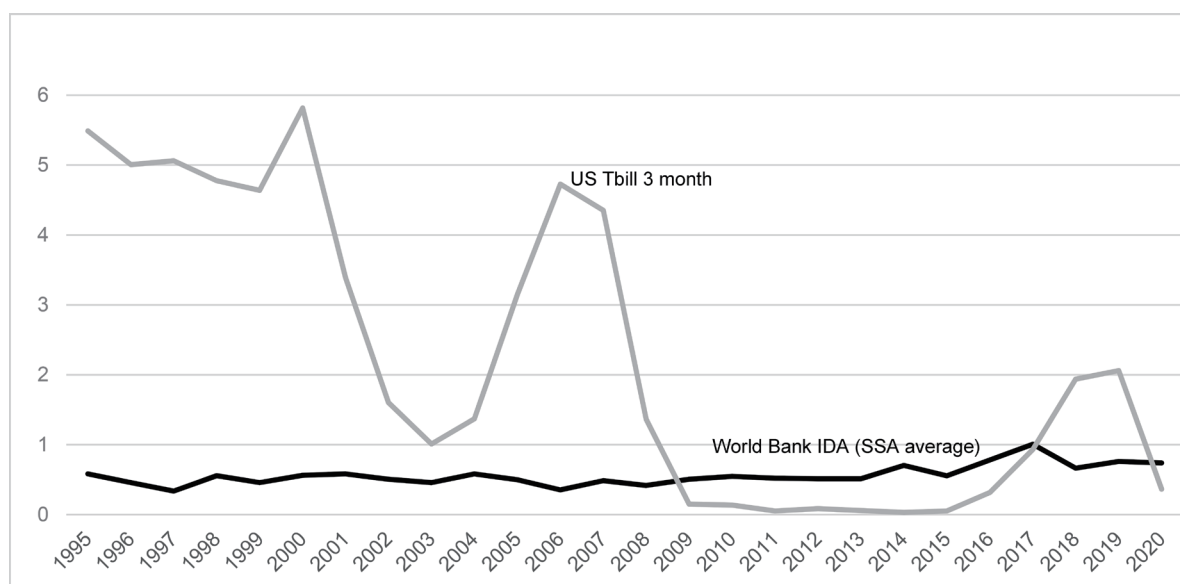


Figure 1. The world interest rate and concessional loans to Sub-Saharan Africa

Data source: *International Debt Statistics: DSSI* for World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) data. The data were retrieved via the World Bank's DataBank. The data for the U.S. Treasury Bill were retrieved from the *FRED* published by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Note: SSA average is the average interest rate of lending applicable to the 36 countries eligible for lending under the IDA term. The T-bill rate is computed as a simple annual average.

on African countries is expected to linger.

This unexpected temporary suspension of the debt problem stands as a fitting opportunity to review the changes in the economic situation of the African HIPC's after the previous debt cancellation. Has access to the international capital market enabled African governments better steer their investment and growth? How is the raised capital invested? The increase in the number of studies and reports published not only in academia but also in the business society stressing on the lenders' responsibilities and the importance of due diligence implies that the answer is not very positive.

Numerous studies have observed the relationship between the governments of the emerging Latin American countries and the international financial market. Studies on sovereign bond risk premiums and economic performances suggest that the international capital market responds to the economic behaviours of the borrower countries so that the risk premium and the spread in interests reflect the market response to the debtors' risks (*e.g.* Grandes 2007). If this is the case for *any* emerging economies, the market mechanism should automatically evaluate the debtor governments' effort in minimizing the default risk, while the government putting in insufficient effort must face a higher cost of capital. However, as discussed below, recent studies suggest that this is not applicable to the African sovereign debt. If raising capital in the private market is neither cost-effective nor discipline-enhancing for the African governments, what is the implication of the recent external borrowing? This study aims to review the background of new debts and their impact on African countries. While the debt of African countries consists of several types of

borrowing, this study puts more weight on the issuance of eurobonds, as it is a new feature of borrowing adopted by of the African governments in the post-debt cancellation period. In the following sections, the term ‘sovereign bond’ is used interchangeably with ‘eurobond,’ denoting the government’s borrowing from the outside of the country, often in the U.S. dollar or euro, through the issuance of bonds.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. The next section provides an overview of the debtor countries’ prevalent situation. The third section examines the recent discussions on the sovereign debt of developing countries. The final section concludes by referring to the responsibility of the investors and lenders.

## 2. The new African sovereign debt

The aggregated amount of debt outstanding for each country is officially reported and publicised by the international financial institutions, but there is no publicly consolidated information about the details of each sovereign debt (*e.g.* issue date, amount, tenure, coupon, type, currency, and yield at the issue). International financial institutions, especially the IMF, provide the Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA) for the member countries, and their primary concern is the total amount of debt outstanding. However, how to pay back the debt in what timing is sometimes more important than the total amount of debt. On this point, notably, the World Bank started to publish the *Debt Report* in 2020. The report provides detailed information on each new issuer, which is usually referenced in the market. This can be viewed as the international financial institution’s response to the rapid increase in the eurobonds issued by the emerging and developing countries.

### 2.1. Who has borrowed and from whom?

The previous debt cancellation process has induced a debate between opponents of and proponents for debt cancellation. Several studies (*e.g.* Easterly 2002) argue that debt cancellation induces moral hazard, and the debtor country will expect another debt cancellation in the future. Cohen *et al.* (2007) offer a fundamental discussion on ‘loans or grants’ and insist that both need to be combined to achieve the aim of international development. Although the international society exerted a strong push for the cancellation of developing countries’ debt, the rationality of debt cancellation was backed by the studies on debt distress and debt overhang (Krugman 1988).

The creditor governments in the HIPC’s debt cancellation process have indicated the possibility that after the old liability was exempted the offer for new bilateral concessional loans would become difficult. For example, the Japanese government expressed its outlook on official development assistance in April 1999 and stated that, ‘Once debt relief is extended to a country, it will be quite difficult to extend new loans there in the future’ (MOFA HP<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>2</sup>‘Japan’s Comprehensive Plan for Development and Debt Relief for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries,’ 28 April 1999. The

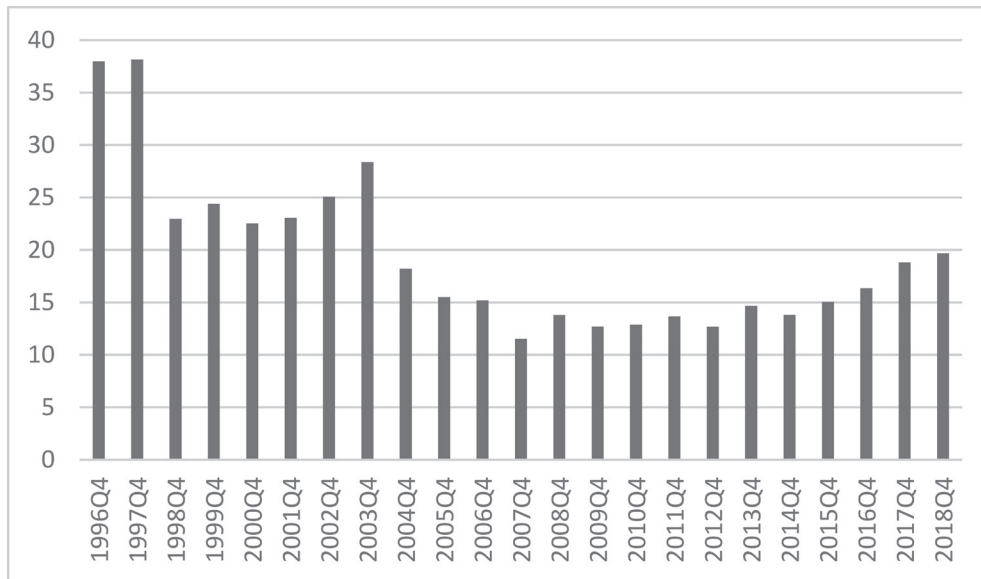


Figure 2. Official bilateral loans to Sub-Saharan Africa (billions USD)

Data source: *Joint External Debt Hub*. Data is retrieved via the DataBank of the World Bank (World Bank 2021c).

Note: Sub-Saharan Africa includes South Africa.

Bunte (2018), on the other hand, argues that sovereign creditors have incentives to lend money to the creditor governments that once defaulted. However, in reality, the actual stagnation, if not decrease, of official loans and grants to Sub-Saharan Africa has been recognisable since the beginning of the debt cancellation process. Figures 2 and 3 show the trends of bilateral loans and grants provided to the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand, Figure 4 shows the other selected financial flows along with bilateral loans. The increase in other flows to African countries is remarkable, and the size of other flows dwarfs the size of the official bilateral loans.

This study focuses on governments' external borrowing as sovereign bonds (or eurobond, described as 'international debt securities' in the figure); it is noteworthy that cross-border loans also increased in the post-cancellation period. A relatively large share of such financial flows is attributed to the investments in South Africa and Nigeria. However, it is still astonishing to see the increase in 'debt securities held by nonresidents,' which suggests that there was a surge in the inflow of capital to the domestic capital markets of African countries.

Regarding debt securities, it is worth noting that most of the African sovereign bonds are not in the investment category according to the ratings provided by credit rating agencies; therefore, it is less likely (though not impossible) for passive investors and long-term investors, such as pension funds of developed countries and life insurance companies, to invest in the African sovereign bond. Mecaguni *et al.* (2014), for example, show the composition of investors in the Nigerian sovereign bond listed on the London Stock

webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/loanaid/plan9904.html> (last accessed on 19 October 2021).

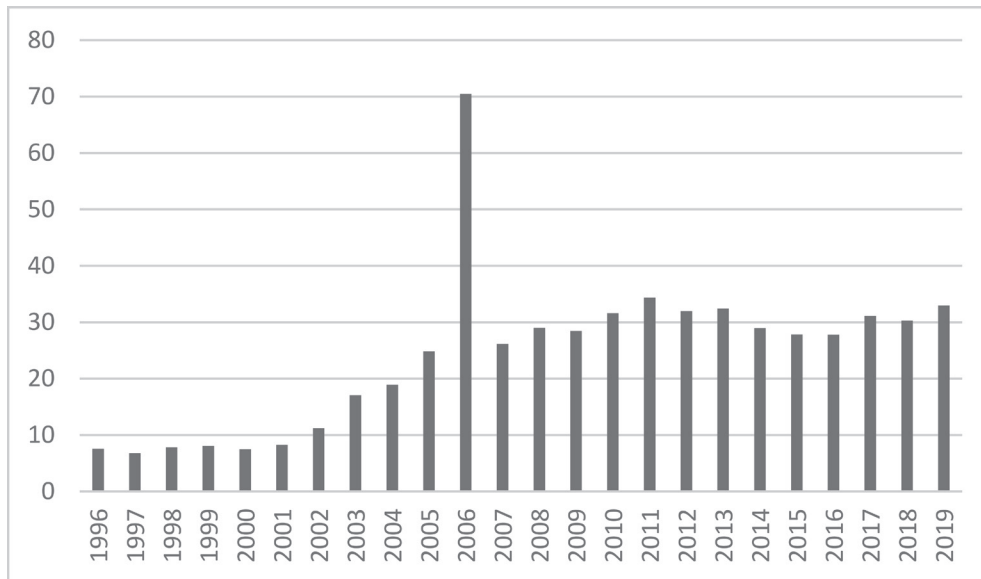


Figure 3. Grants received by Sub-Saharan Africa (billions USD)

Data source: *The World Development Indicators* (World Bank 2021d).

Note: Excluding technical cooperation. Sub-Saharan Africa includes South Africa.

The spike in 2006 indicates the debt cancellation.

Exchange since 2011. Majority of the investors (70%) are fund managers, 12% are banks and private banks, and 10% are hedge funds. This suggests that the investors searching for high yields are more likely to invest in African sovereign bonds.

## 2.2. *de jure* and *de facto* purposes of spending

Governments have several reasons to borrow money, but the intended use of the bond proceeds is usually not publicised, especially in the case of international sovereign debt. Related to this point, Olabisi and Stein (2015) analysed the cost of borrowing for African countries using the market data, but their appendix also provides an extensive qualitative summary of the selected countries' use of sovereign debt proceeds. They cover the period between 2006 and 2014 and summarise the information related to sovereign debts, such as the usage of proceeds, background, and market responses at the time of issuance, for the selected African borrower countries. Their sources of information are mainly media and official documents. They cover seven HIPCs, namely, Ghana, the Republic of Congo, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Zambia, Tanzania, and Rwanda, and five non-HIPCs, namely, Seychelles, Gabon, Nigeria, Namibia, and Angola. Table 1 is based on the appendix provided by Olabisi and Stein (2015) but is extended and supplemented by the available information. As Table 1 shows, as long as officially known, there are 15 Sub-Saharan African countries that issued sovereign bonds until October 2021, excluding South Africa and Mozambique. South Africa is excluded from the study because the country issues a relatively large amount of sovereign bonds annually, and this behaviour should be distinguished from the other African countries. Mozambique is also excluded for its limited availability of bond information, possibly due to

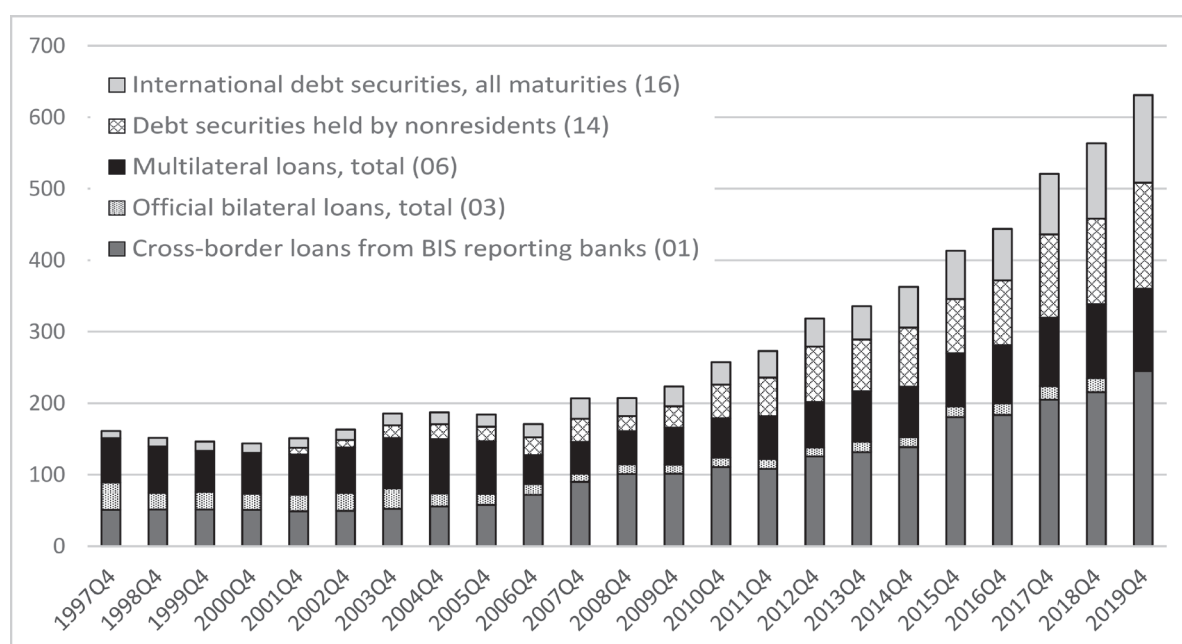


Figure 4. Liabilities of Sub-Saharan Africa (billions USD)

Data source: *Joint External Debt Hub*. Data is retrieved via World Bank's DataBank of. Note: Sub-Saharan Africa includes South Africa. The numbers in the parentheses are the variable codes used in the database.

its default in 2017 and related scandals.

In the early phase of sovereign debt issuance, that is during the end of the 2000s, the stated purpose and intended usage of the bond proceeds were often investments in infrastructure. For example, the Ghanaian government intended to invest in the Volta River Authority, which is in charge of managing hydropower plants and power generation, the Electric Company of Ghana, and other dams and ports. Senegal, Gabon, and Namibia have also reported the intention to invest in infrastructure.

However, it became clear that the intended purpose of bond issuance has often not been fulfilled, or the project halted far before its completion. Considering the period between 2013 and 2014, Tyson (2015) argues that in Cote d'Ivoire and Rwanda, sovereign bond issues are associated with an increase in infrastructure investment, while in other countries, the effect of debt is mixed. Other countries' governments also used the proceeds in a controversial way; for example, Ghana boosted the salaries of public servants and Mozambique purchased gunships using the proceeds. The stated purpose of the recently issued eurobonds is often dominated by the repayment of old debt. Several prospectuses of African eurobonds, which can be browsed on the internet, state simply 'funding its fiscal gap' as the planned use of proceeds (such as the 2020 issuance by Ghana).

Such a shift in the purpose of African sovereign debt from genuine investment in infrastructure to mere debt financing is an alarming trend. However, there are no binding regulations on raising money for international sovereign bonds. Submission of a prospectus is stipulated in the European market, but there is no penalty even if the bond issuer allocates the proceed to other purposes. In 2019, an article in *The*

Table 1. The issuance of eurobond by the SSA governments, 2006-2021(October)

	06	07	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Total
Angola						1							2			3
Benin													1		2	3
Congo		1														1
Cote d'Ivoire			1*	1*		1		1	1					2	2	9
Ethiopia								1								1
Gabon		1					1							1		3
Ghana		1					2	1		1		2	3	3		13
Kenya								2				2	2			6
Namibia					1											1
Nigeria					1		2				2	1				6
Rwanda							1									1
Senegal			1		1			1				2			1	6
Seychelles	1*	1*		1*												3
Tanzania							1									1
Zambia						1		1*	1							3
Total	1	4	2	2	3	3	7	7	2	1	2	7	8	6	5	60

Source: Author's summarisation based on the appendix of Olabisi and Stein (2015) and the collected information. Note: South Africa and Mozambique are excluded. The year starts from 2006, denoting the time of bond issuance. More than one issue in a year means either the issuance of different tenure bonds at one time or issuance in different months. An asterisk indicates that the bond is defaulted or restructured. Congo denotes the Republic of Congo.

*Financial Times* claimed that 'Africa's eurobonds are a blank cheque,' suggesting that there is no binding check mechanism in the market, as the blank statement of the 'purpose of spending' and the borrowers' mission drift still do not hinder the investors from bidding on African eurobonds (Roche 2019<sup>3</sup>).

### 3. Merits and risks of borrowing from the international capital market

According to Olabisi and Stein (2015), bond issuers are expected to be bound by the market mechanism, and the governments of the developing countries need to choose between the market discipline and conditionalities attached by international financial institutions. One possible reason of the increase in sovereign bond issuance is their reluctance to the conditionalities attached to concessional loans. Although Olabisi and Stein (2015) consider several African countries, especially oil exporters, who issued eurobonds to appeal to foreign investors, the low market interest rate suggests the possibility of sovereign bond issuance being cost-effective.

#### 3.1. From concessional loans to eurobonds

Through the post-debt cancellation period, some African countries have moved up on the ladder to middle income category (Table 2). Although the gap between the leading 'emerging' economy, that is South Africa, and the other African countries is still large, the change in the official income category makes

<sup>3</sup>Andrew Roche, 'Africa's eurobonds are a blank cheque,' 17 October 2019, *The Financial Times*, <https://www.ft.com/content/25589487-78ba-4892-9fcf-cfe8556861b7> (web edition, last accessed on 19 October 2021).

Table 2. Income categories of the Sub-Saharan African countries by the World Bank, 1995-2020

Country name	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Angola	2	1	1	2	3	2
Burundi	1	1	1	1	1	1
Benin	1	1	1	1	1	2
Burkina Faso	1	1	1	1	1	1
Botswana	2	3	3	3	3	3
Central African Republic	1	1	1	1	1	1
Côte d'Ivoire	1	1	1	2	2	2
Cameroon	2	1	1	2	2	2
Congo, Dem. Rep.	1	1	1	1	1	1
Congo, Rep.	2	1	1	2	2	2
Comoros	1	1	1	1	1	2
Cabo Verde	2	1	2	2	2	2
Eritrea	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ethiopia	1	1	1	1	1	1
Gabon	3	3	3	3	3	3
Ghana	1	1	1	1	2	2
Guinea	1	1	1	1	1	1
Gambia, The	1	1	1	1	1	1
Guinea-Bissau	1	1	1	1	1	1
Equatorial Guinea	1	1	1	4	4	3
Kenya	1	1	1	1	1	2
Liberia	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lesotho	1	1	1	2	2	2
Madagascar	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mali	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mozambique	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mauritania	1	1	1	1	2	2
Mauritius	3	3	3	3	3	4
Malawi	1	1	1	1	1	1
Namibia	2	2	2	3	3	3
Niger	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nigeria	1	1	1	2	2	2
Rwanda	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sudan	1	1	1	2	2	1
Senegal	2	1	1	2	2	2
Sierra Leone	1	1	1	1	1	1
Somalia	1	1	1	1	1	1
South Sudan					2	1
São Tomé and Príncipe	1	1	1	2	2	2
Eswatini	2	2	2	2	2	2
Seychelles	3	3	3	3	3	4
Chad	1	1	1	1	1	1
Togo	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tanzania	1	1	1	1	1	2
Uganda	1	1	1	1	1	1
South Africa	3	3	2	3	3	3
Zambia	1	1	1	1	2	2
Zimbabwe	1	1	1	1	1	2

Source: Author's summarisation based on the information collected from various World Bank documents. The World Bank does not officially provide historical records and data of the member countries' income categories.

Note: The figures in the table denote the income category, 1: Low, 2: Lower middle, 3: Upper middle, 4: High income countries.

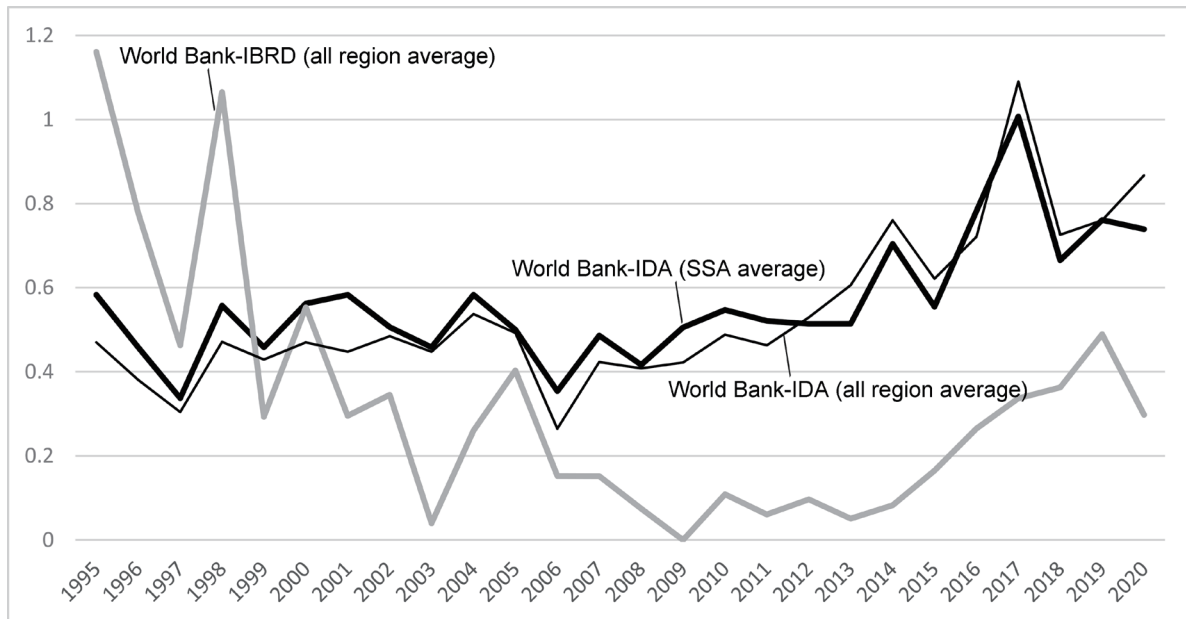


Figure 5. Concessional interest rates of the loans offered by the World Bank, 1995-2020

Source: *International Debt Statistics: DSSI*, retrieved via DataBank of the World Bank.

a remarkable shift in the development plans of the countries. One significant change associated with the official increase in the income of developing countries is the loss of the eligibility for IDA's loans provided by the World Bank to the least-developed countries. Some studies, such as Guscina *et al.* (2014) and Olabisi and Stein (2015), ascribed the increase in bond issuance by developing economies' governments in the private market to the decrease in concessional loans from aid donors. In fact, outside Africa, a number of countries have debuted in the international capital market as they graduated from low income to middle income country, and experienced a decrease in the opportunity for concessional financing (Guscina *et al.* 2014).

However, as Table 2 indicates, African countries have started to access the international capital market before or without its shift to middle-income category. Moreover, the comparative size of private financial flow to public flows indicates that private money inflow by far surpasses the possibly expected size of aid flow. The increase in international liabilities for African countries needs to be explained by other aspects, especially the financial environment in the international capital market. While a separate analysis based on an appropriate data set is required, the comparison of Figure 1 and Table 1 implies the correlation between the issuance of eurobonds by the African governments and the spread between concessional and market interest rates. In the period when the market interest rate (represented by the three-month U.S. Treasury Bill rate) is higher than the concessional lending rate (represented by the loan provided by the International Development Association of the World Bank), the eurobond issuance slows down.

Moreover, the interest rate average for IDA loans is, in fact, *higher* than that for the term provided for the eligible countries to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the World

Bank, for most of the post-debt cancellation period (Figure 5). This may be rational in terms of market mechanisms (good borrowers get a loan at a lower price), and IDA loans usually have a longer grace period and maturity than IBRD loans. However, it is pervasive as the price of the tool for development assistance. The main reason for this reversal is the world's low interest rate, led by financial policies in developed economies, especially after the international financial crisis of 2007-08. Increasing access to the international capital market by developing countries is rational given the skew in conditions of concessional lending.

### **3.2. Risks of being an 'emerging' in the international market**

If concessional loans are no longer the primary financial source for the governments of developing economies, the question that needs to be asked is what kind of risks are associated with borrowing from the international capital market for promoting growth. Guscina *et al.* (2014) express the recent increase in eurobond issuance by the governments of developing countries, including Africa, as '*déjà vu*' and point out that there was an increase in debut to eurobond issuance in the 1990s, mostly by the Latin American countries. In the 1980s, these countries suffered from international debt problems. Still, as the Brady Plan successfully resolved the issue of old debt (mainly from the western and U.S. private banks), many countries started to borrow in the international market and rapidly accumulated debt again. While African countries also suffered from international debt problems in the 1980s, the debt cancellation process HIPC's were much more complicated because a large part of the debt was owed to other governments and the international financial institution. It took an additional decade for the HIPC's for the old debt problems to be resolved, but now they are experiencing the same boom in debt as Latin American countries.

The experience of Latin American countries in the 1990s was not that impressive. Latin American countries have shifted from a government-led import-substitution style of development to market-based development. The currency regimes anchoring to the U.S. dollar enabled several governments to achieve macroeconomic and price stabilisation (Demachi, forthcoming). However, as Nishijima (2003) suggests, the liberalization of economies was associated with the increase in unemployment, deterioration in reallocation of wealth, fragile financial system, and currency crises.

Several Latin American governments defaulted their sovereign bonds. Repeated default and comeback to the capital market of Argentine are widely known. Given the economic size, the Argentina sovereign bond remains attractive even after a serial default. However, the relationship between the international market and emerging economies today indicates that access to the international capital market comes at a great cost.

### 3.3. ‘You surrender, but the game goes on’

The most serious risks and costs are associated with borrower countries’ default on debt. Unlike bank loans, the bondholders participate from across the world; the borrower government is required to communicate and negotiate with the creditors. The holdout problem is now well known, and an increasing number of sovereign bonds follow the recommendation to include collective action clauses in the contract at the issuance of eurobonds (Van der Wansem *et al.* 2019, Fang *et al.* 2020, Demachi 2018). Nonetheless, the debt restructuring process is stressful and costly; this may lead to disruptive litigation, which will have a detrimental effect on the government’s functioning of fostering growth.

Today, sovereign defaults do not simply imply the *unilateral* suspension of payment and debt cancellation. Rather, it leads to a prolonged process of negotiation on debt restructuring, with a haircut (reduction in either principle or interest, or both) and extension of the period, though this was far from the norm observed in the past (Roos 2019). This indicates that once the developing countries’ governments enter the international capital market, they cannot simply stop participating by citing a default. The relentless market mechanism will not allow the emerging governments to halt and rebuild the economy until the debt is paid back.

The issues related to the vulture funds and creditors’ holdout clearly indicate the weakening of sovereign immunity in the international capital market. Closely related to this point, Roos (2019) argues that the strengthening of private credit is the main reason behind the dramatic decrease in the unilateral sovereign default after the collapse of the Bretton Woods system. He points out that along with the integration and centralisation of the international credit market, the unison of the principle of the private market and the intervention of international financial institutions (namely, the IMF) has created the base of the current financial dominance over the sovereigns.

### 3.4. Specificity of the African sovereign bond

Roos (2019) argues that the concentrated and centralised international credit market provides market discipline; the market mechanism skilfully holds that the debtor government keeps financing and is threatened. However, whether the market provides the discipline to the debtor is in question, especially when the debtor is small and risky, such as the African government.

Recent studies on African sovereign bonds using market data reveal the possibility that the international capital market does not provide discipline to debtor governments. Morsy *et al.* (2021) show that there exists an investors herding behaviour in the African sovereign bond market and suggest the possibility that the bond yield and risk, measured as the CDS (credit-default swap) spreads of the African bond, does not correctly evaluate borrowers’ risks in the market. Closely related to this point, Olabisi and Stein (2015) argue that African bond issuers pay a higher cost of borrowing from the market, contrary to the general expectation that access to the international capital market enables the African government to raise

capital at a lower cost. Based on empirical analysis, Senga and Cassimon (2020) suggest the existence of a contagion effect among the eurobonds issued by the African governments. These studies all point to the possibility that the international capital market is not providing market discipline to the African borrowing governments, as the investors lump all the different countries' eurobonds as African bond; individual economic conditions and risks are not reflected in the prices of bonds in the market.

Unlike the Latin American debt problem that occurred in the 1980s, the current form of sovereign finance through the issuance of eurobonds exempts any possible loss of private banks, which only arrange debt issuances, distribute bonds, and charge fees. Given that the Latin American debt crisis was in fact the creditor's crisis, the involvement of developed economies' governments, namely the United States and the IMF, was reasonable. However, this understanding also implies that there will be no future 'debt crisis in emerging Africa'. Given the small size of the African sovereign borrowing and the nature of the capital market where African sovereign bonds attract risk-takers, any default and restructuring of debt will not attract enough official attentions to extend a support. The faith in the market mechanism that provides no appropriate discipline to the borrowers leads to international indifference with regard to the development issues of Africa.

#### **4. Conclusion: The limit of the market mechanism**

It is now widely accepted that the market has a short memory. Given the insatiable risk appetite in the international market, even the governments that once defaulted, such as Argentina and Cote d'Ivoire, can return to the market. This fact may be welcomed by the emerging governments; however, the real setback of resorting to easy financing in the international capital market needs to be recognised.

Roos (2019) argues that the sovereign defaulter's exit-and-back process may exacerbate the dominance of private finance and the subordination of sovereign power, which oversees the steering for growth. Repeated debt restructuring processes may undermine the development of democracy in the borrower country, while the distribution of limited capital may be further skewed (Roos 2019: 299). The issuance of an international sovereign bond may provide an easy and quick solution for mitigating the fiscal deficits of the cash-short governments, but it may hinder the medium and long-term orthodox efforts to consolidate the institutions and systems to raise the tax from the citizens and disburse it in an accountable way.

The recognition that the growing influence of world creditors needs to be associated with stronger responsibility in lending has already begun to take shape. The move forwarded by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was triggered by the Argentine experience of prolonged and conflicted litigation with creditors (Buchheit and Gulati 2010). OECD has also started to provide official guidance for the required due diligence in responsible business conduct in several sectors, such as mining and banking.

In 2015, Deloitte, a multinational consultant and auditing company, published *Sovereign debt audit*:

*A way to mitigate future sovereign debt crises* (Deloitte 2015). This guide was published based on the UN general assembly in 2010 and the UNCTAD initiative. Although the publication envisages the conduct in European countries such as Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and Cyprus, it is still remarkable that the market side has gradually started to recognise the risks associated with sovereign debt. In Africa, the African Legal Support Facility (ALSF), hosted by the African Development Bank, has also published a guide, *Understanding Sovereign Debt—Options and Opportunities for Africa* in 2020 (ALSF 2020). This guidance mainly envisages the African borrowers, and such movements suggest the real need for the international assistance for capacity building in the area of financial management in Africa.

As the issuance of eurobonds by African governments is relatively new, there are many issues that require further analysis. For example, bond issuance is associated with additional costs, such as the cost of roadshow (the advertising of debt issuance beforehand) and the cost of carry (interest incurred by the untapped proceeds). These additional costs may render the international borrowings to be more expensive than that expected by the borrower governments. The impact of the issuance of eurobonds on domestic policies, such as elections, investment policy, and taxation, are also entirely unknown in Africa, and further studies are required to be conducted in this regard.

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# **Over-indebtedness of Microfinance in Rural Africa: A Sociological Perspective of Tanzania**

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## **Abstract**

Focusing on Tanzania's examples, this article aims to enumerate and analyse social factors, identifying the specificity of microfinance (MF)'s over-indebtedness in African rural areas for further discussions. As globalisation advances due to the remarkable development of information and communication technology, 'financial inclusion' has become a new slogan for poverty reduction. The financialisation of the MF movement proceeds as a part of financial inclusion. However, MF movements in Asia, Latin America, and Africa have not advanced as expected. Since the early 2000s, MF markets and institutions have experienced severe global crises. Over-indebtedness is a severe problem in the 'developing' and the 'developed' countries, including those in Sub-Saharan Africa, facing rapid urbanisation. The increasing expenditures to meet daily necessities and satisfy material desires make people depend on debts. The vicious circle of the debts deteriorates the borrowers' daily lives and puts the MF institutions' performance quality at risk. Although over-indebtedness can be explained by an individual's lack of financial literacy, this clarification is not enough regarding the rural social structure, mode of production, and social relationships, playing important roles in redressing the balance of household management.

**Keywords:** microfinance, over-indebtedness, rural areas, Tanzania

## 1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, the microfinance (MF) industry has been celebrated for its social impact on poverty reduction and profitability. Today, globalisation advances supported by the remarkable development of information and communication technology, the ‘financial inclusion’ has become a new slogan for poverty reduction. International society promotes financial opportunities for poor people who have no access to formal financial services to provide them with different types of loans, credits, savings, and insurance. This is how the financialisation of the MF movement has advanced financial inclusion. Nevertheless, excessive financialisation may negatively impact society.

As expected, MF movements in Asia, Latin America, and Africa have not developed. Since the early 2000s, MF markets and institutions have experienced severe crises worldwide (Guérin *et al.* 2015). There are increasing fears about excessive ‘financialisation’ caused by the expansion of the global economy and the availability of colossal capital in the MF markets, causing instability (Servet 2006, Guérin *et al.* 2014; 2015; 2018).

Among the many global concerns related to the financial situation, household over-indebtedness has become a common and severe problem for the ‘developing’ and the ‘developed’ countries such as the USA, EU, and Japan. The same phenomenon has appeared in Sub-Saharan African nations, facing rapid urbanisation (Koomson and Peprah 2018, Mutsonziwa and Ashenafi 2019).

Notably, the rapid globalisation compares the world’s households to American lifestyles regarding material consumption based on many kinds of debts. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the middle classes increased in urban areas, eager to attain a privileged goal to buy a new car, TV set, refrigerator, and washing machine. This social change in the urban areas also stimulates material desires in rural areas. However, economic indicators such as the income-to-debt ratio are limited in clarifying rural reality. This study examines the social factors that identify the specificity of the MF’s over-indebtedness in the rural areas of Africa and foresee where the overindebted persons look for help.

From a neoliberal perspective, over-indebtedness is considered a personal cause, such as a lack of financial literacy. However, can over-indebtedness be solved if people learn to manage their debts at school?

We need to understand the phenomenon from a broader perspective: living in the financially connected world ruled by the preconceived assumption that we cannot design our daily life without debt in the name of ‘financial inclusion’. This worldwide campaign oriented by the financial sector, international cooperation agencies, and donors have provided a positive image for debt and encouraged the poor to borrow easy money, regardless of the objectives. This study does not deny the importance of the financial sector. However, its excessive dependence could alienate the value of broader social

exchanges embedded in the other side of the monetary sphere<sup>1</sup>, where money is defined as a catalyst of social structure rather than as a strict economic tool. This sphere, where the meaning of money differs, may play an important role in maintaining social structures as a buffer zone, especially as a shelter from debt in terms of strict economic regulations. We define this concept more clearly in the next section.

Depending on each context, there are different meanings of money in rural and urban areas. However, many MF studies do not consider the different roles of money in them analyses. Few studies on over-indebtedness exist, featuring the background of the economic and social structure of rural areas based on the different production cycles related to the natural environment. However, it is also important to focus on the portfolio of agricultural production, different types of income, and reciprocal social relationships that help keep their structure stable.

Moreover, it is difficult to treat all points cited above. With page limits, focusing on a Tanzanian case, this study aims to enumerate some social factors indicating the incompatible aspects of the MF mechanism with reality. This may contribute to rethinking the broader meanings of money in the context of over-indebtedness.

## **2. Definition of the related terms**

Before entering the discussion, we define the terms MF, over-indebtedness, and spheres where money plays different roles to clarify the range of this study.

### **2.1. Definition of microfinance**

Microfinance is a collective term of the different kinds of small financial services such as credit, saving, and insurance, for the poor and the low-income brackets with the aim of poverty reduction. Its common definition is usually limited to financial services provided by outsiders for the poor. For example, MF offers credits or loans with minimum interests without a mortgage for the poor, as they do not have any properties to mortgage. However, some institutions require mortgages or charge high interest due to management issues.

The borderlines of MF are expanding in theoretical and practical fields due to the complexity of the contemporary world. This study discusses small loan services and their users in the rural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa, such as small-scale farmers, pastoralists, tenant farmers, farm labourers, small entrepreneurs, and artisans.

The MF is classified briefly into three categories:

- (1) Financial aid programmes offered by governments, international cooperation agencies, and NGOs.

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<sup>1</sup> This expression is provisional and interchangeable. You could find for example ‘non-commercialised sphere’ later in this article. I am still looking for more adequate words to express this sphere.

- (2) Financial services offered by specialised MF institutions (MFI).
- (3) Self-reliant financial activities (saving and credit) made of users: cooperatives, rotating saving, and credit associations (ROSCAs).

We cannot exclude the traditional ROSCA type from the third category because the distinction between cooperatives and ROSCAs is unclear. As many kinds of ROSCAs are popular everywhere (Ardener and Burman 1995), some NGOs provide ROSCA-type assistance programmes such as VICOBA (Village Community Bank) in Tanzania. Moreover, traditional money collecting services (*i.e.* ‘Ajo’ in Nigeria and Ghana) (Falola 1995) are adopted by some MFIs as efficient, practical tools for saving.

Although we cannot ignore that local financial services such as pawns and usuries provide specific options for the local context, they are not in the MF category because they do not aim to reduce poverty.

Karlan and Goldberg (2011: 21) enumerated nine characteristics of MF. As they call them ‘traditional features’ of MF, many variants have appeared based on mobile money and e-money. However, these new services are based on digital tools. Therefore, we need another opportunity to examine the characteristics of newcomers.

- (1) Small transactions and minimum balances (whether loans, savings, or insurance).
- (2) Loans for entrepreneurial activity.
- (3) Collateral-free loans.
- (4) Group lending.
- (5) Focus on poor clients.
- (6) Focus on female clients.
- (7) Simple application processes.
- (8) Provision of services in underserved communities.
- (9) Market-level interest rates.

Karlan and Goldberg (2011: 21) emphasise the significant difference among MF programmes in terms of their targets and conditions. Generally, MFIs provide loans to improve micro entrepreneurs’ businesses. Thus, money must be invested in income-generating activities instead of daily consumption and family obligation. Some MFIs ask their clients to submit their business plans and visit borrowers’ business places to verify their correct usage. Other MFIs are less interested in the purpose of loans, disburse loans with few conditions, and operate more like consumer credit lenders. Moreover, the use of credits is not strictly defined.

## 2.2. Definition of over-indebtedness

Kasoga *et al.* (2019) describe that ‘Over-indebtedness occurs when a customer continuously struggles to meet repayment deadlines and has to make unduly high sacrifices related to their loan obligations that have more than transitory effects’. However, over-indebtedness deteriorates the borrowers’ daily lives; it puts MFIs’ performance quality at risk, spreading to donors, investors, and the MF industry as a whole (Kasoga *et al.* 2019: 35).

These are the criteria of an over-indebted person (Mutsonziwa and Fanta 2018: 5).

- (1) if a person is borrowing to repay another debt.
- (2) does not want to borrow because of too much outstanding debt.
- (3) had loan applications turned down because of too much debt.
- (4) had debt restructured;
- (5) defaulted on debt obligations; and
- (6) had an order of seizure.

Generally, the three indicators are used to identify a client’s state of over-indebtedness are the debt-to-income ratio, multiple borrowing, and delinquency (DeVaney and Lytton 1995). However, these indicators are rather suitable for urban situations and have difficulties illustrating the specificities in rural areas. The types and regularity of incomes vary significantly, self-production still plays an important role. Moreover, mutual support in cash or in-kind could be practised individually. Economic indicators do not reveal this fact.

## 2.3. The different meanings of money and their spheres

For convenience, we propose to distinguish briefly two different meanings of money. On the one hand, it is defined as strict economic tools that belong to the ‘commercialised sphere’, and on the other hand, as a catalyst of a social structure founded by the interaction of people belonging to the ‘non-commercialised sphere’. This distinction is referred to from Parry and Bloch’s proposition for the two different cycles of exchange: short and long cycles of money exchange.

Many urban residents, salaried workers, or informal business people rely on money. However, in rural areas, some spaces remain for subsistence agriculture<sup>2</sup> and pastoralism, other subsistence activities, and irregular and small income-generating activities. Moreover, in both cases, the meaning of money differs. First, money exists as an economic tool to gain and accumulate more money. However, it

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<sup>2</sup> Instead of adopting the strict term of ‘self-sufficient’, in this article, we use ‘subsistence’ as larger meaning, which indicate small-scale, family-based agriculture which produce their daily food and sell surpluses in the local market.

circulates in and outside society as a lubricant to elaborate the social foundation.

Parry and Bloch (1989: 7) critically remarked on the distinction between ‘monetary’ and ‘non-monetary’ societies. In traditional anthropology, there is a tendency to consolidate a fundamental division between non-monetary and monetary economies or even societies. This stereotype brings us to the world in other dichotomic ways: capitalist vs pre-capitalist, modern vs traditional, commodity economy vs gift economy.

For example, Bohannan (1955) reported that the Tiv people in rural Nigeria had principles for distinguishing different types of traditional transaction spheres. Bohannan emphasised how the introduction of Western money destroyed the ‘primitive society’, where the people organised transactions and exchanges without the mediation of Western money. Currently, this discourse is an excessive dichotomy that created a fixed view of ‘primitive’ societies. However, Bohannan clarified the existence of multiple exchange routes and their conversion before the penetration of the Western monetary economy (Sugiyama 2007: 148).

Parry and Bloch (1989) provide a good perspective for clarifying two different spheres on the diversity of money exchanges. The authors emphasised that two modes of money exchange, namely short and long cycles of exchange, must contribute to analysing the different meanings of money. The authors defined that the short cycle of money exchange is practised to obtain economic gains based on individual competition. The long cycle is defined as money exchange that contributes to maintaining the social foundation over generations, such as funerals, local festivals, seasonal community works, and community infrastructure maintenance. Mutual support in kind or cash must be included in this category. The lengthy exchange cycle is hardly considered in MF discussions because of the invisibility of the immediate profit in economic terms. But the ‘non-commercialised sphere’ referred to as the long cycle, plays a significant role in debt management in daily life. We can see an example of ‘Bank of Affection’ in Case 1, presented in Section 3.

Graeber emphasises that the ‘obligation’ through reciprocal trust between those who know each other differs from the debt in the financial sense, calculated and quantified under the economic rules (Graeber 2012: 21). In Graeber’s sense, money is an economic tool to realise the debt. However, in the ‘obligation’ in daily life, money can stimulate social relationships. If we define the two different monetary spheres precisely, the diverse meanings of money can be considered economic tools and catalysts in the social systems<sup>3</sup>. In this regard, what factors clearly distinguish the two monetary spheres? The existence of interests and mortgages must be examined as creating a border between commercialised and non-commercialised spheres.

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<sup>3</sup> Several studies about the diversity of meanings of money exists in the anthropology and sociology. Among many, see for example: Parry and Bloch (1989), Guyer (1995), Aglietta and Orléan (1998).

### 3. Household over-indebtedness

#### 3.1. The context of the global and Sub-Sahara African over-indebtedness

Referring to the French regulation theory, Servet and Saiag (2014) explain a current radical change in the economic and social structure established under the 1960s ‘mass-production and consumption cycle’ symbolised by the USA’s Fordism, accompanied by the consumption style-oriented by the instalment plans. Later, credit cards allowed users with stable employment and secure salaries to purchase goods through easy credit. Although the domestic industrial production and trade cycle had served the financial industry until the early 1980s, this cycle has deteriorated due to globalisation. Credit purchases continue to grow globally, and finance has become increasingly predatory. The expansion has been draining resources for the benefit of the financial sector (ibid. 27). In this regard, financial intermediation plays an important role. According to the digital money transaction, all types of exchanges must be realised through financial companies with a transaction fee, permitting the financial sector to be more prosperous.

Generally, over-indebtedness has become severe based on the current financial atmosphere, explained by exacerbating the gap between needs and incomes (ibid. 31). While income does not increase further, households’ expenditures rise considerably. This situation pushes households to depend on increasing debts to meet the necessities of life.

African countries also follow the same path as consumption-oriented societies in cities (Mutsonziwa and Fanta 2019). Although the enlarging gap between income and expenditures is that the middle classes realised a new lifestyle based on the USA model, material consumption depends upon debts and stimulates daily expenditures. Additionally, imports of several cheap Chinese goods may also stir up material desire (Kernen and Mohammad 2016). Moreover, more opportunities to access debt in the name of financial inclusion ironically encourage over-indebtedness. Koomson and Peprah (2018) expressed this situation as an addiction to MF.

Using the World Development Indicators, Servet and Saiag (2014: 32) explained that the percentage of domestic credit to the private sector in most regions increased significantly between 1980 and 2007, doubling in Africa and the Middle East increasing by almost 150 per cent throughout Asia and the Pacific. Only Latin America and the Caribbean seem to be exceptions, marking less than 30 per cent. The process of urbanisation accompanies these figures.

This remarkable increase in domestic credit is partly due to consumer credit. However, the authors highlight that such data tend to underestimate household debt in the South because the statistic bureaus consider indebtedness only to financial institutions. Still, most household debts in developing countries come from informal practices. It shows the difficulties in quantifying the reality of the households’ debts in developing countries, differing in volume and form. Notably, informal financial practices are diverse; rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) and many kinds of organisations and intermediators serve the financial means at the local level, covering funeral expenses, local celebrations, community

works, and infrastructure. Regarding local market business, market mammals borrow products from their intermediate merchants and repay them with sales at the end of the day<sup>4</sup>. We discuss this aspect in Section 4.

### **3.2. Specificities of the MF's over-indebtedness in the rural areas: Tanzania's case**

#### **3.2.1. Urbanisation**

We examine the rural areas in Dodoma, Tanzania. Since 2010, we have conducted field research in several villages neighbouring Dodoma City. This semi-arid area has historically suffered from severe famines, considered the nation's poorest region (Sakai 2016a). Although Dodoma became the capital city in 1974, Dar es Salaam remained the national capital, and Dodoma remained the 'rural', keeping the 'traditional' production system. However, since the ex-president Magufuli's era began in 2015, it has faced rapid urbanisation due to his strong initiative to construct Dodoma as the real capital city. This rapid and radical change in the social structure directly impacted local people's daily lives.

The main residents in the region are the Gogo people, agro-pastoralists, relying on subsistence agriculture and livestock keeping with small casual incomes. Gogo agriculture can be characterised as 'rainfall-dependent subsistence'. They mainly cultivated maize, sorghum, millet, mixed beans, and vegetables for daily food and groundnuts and sunflowers as cash crops. They mixed crops and vegetables in the field and cultivated different crops to minimise the risks of food shortages.

However, as the suburban area was considered the bedroom town of Dodoma, the administration requisitioned N village's residents' lands to relocate a national bus terminal. The small compensation and delay became big problems, and people's dissatisfaction exploded over the government's dishonest attitude. Moreover, many new residents, mostly office workers, commuted to Dodoma and bought land to build new modern houses. However, some old residents were blinded by large amounts of money and sold their land carelessly. Consequently, they lost the means to produce their food and needed more money to meet their necessities.

The pastoralists shared a huge common pasture in the northeast of N village, which became the construction site for a new international airport. Prohibited to access and graze their cattle in the area, they were forced to seek alternatives; some sold their cattle, moved to other regions, and some asked for their relatives living far away to care for their cattle.

People's lives consisted mainly of subsistence production, complemented by irregular small incomes such as day-labour in the construction site, farmwork, night watch, selling charcoal and firewood, and small agro-products in the market. However, rapid and abrupt urbanisation deteriorated the social and economic structures of local people. This radical change reveals the importance of subsistence

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<sup>4</sup> For some more examples of Southern part of Chad, see Sakai (2007; 2016b: 214-217).

production in rural households, derived by partially ‘non-commercialised sphere’. Although the rapidity of urbanisation varies, many rural areas in Africa have faced similar structural changes that impacted local production patterns. Therefore, it is necessary to examine whether MF provides adequate structural support for this situation or just a temporary measure.

### 3.2.2. Introduction of MF in Tanzania

The government of Tanzania introduced MF institutions with the first MF policy in 2000 to increase access to financial services for the poor. It revised the second MF policy in 2017 for MF’s better promotion (The Government of Tanzania 2017). Therefore, the financial sector has experienced a remarkable increase in local and foreign MF service providers, investors, development partners, government funds, and programmes. In rural areas, different types of MF services coexist. On the one hand, international MFIs such as FINCA, PRIDE, and BRAC<sup>5</sup> provide group lending and individual lending; on the other hand, self-reliant groups VICOBA (village community bank) multiply NGOs’ support. However, cooperative SACCOs have a long history in Tanzania (Sakai 2016b: 221). These MF actors compete with each other for the acquisition of new clients. For example, in Dodoma, Care Tanzania launched the VICOBA type MF programme called ‘Ongeza Akiba<sup>6</sup>’ in early 2000. As Coreen, an NGO, ‘Good Neighbours’, expanded their programmes in the same region, Care Tanzania decided to withdraw. Additionally, PRIDE and FINCA organised seminars in villages to expand client networks in rural areas.

### 3.2.3. Case studies

Here, we introduce two cases of over-indebtedness collected in field research in ‘N’ village, 10 km away from Dodoma City. The Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) is one of Care Tanzania’s ‘Ongeza Akiba (Accumulate the capital) Project’ from 2008–2011. Although another NGO introduced the VICOBA system, the local people call all the ROSCA-type activities ‘VICOBA (Village Community Bank)’ as a general term of this methodology. After the withdrawal of Care Tanzania, some NGOs were dismissed, and some remained and continued their activities by themselves.

#### [Case 1] Bank of Affection

We met Ms A when we visited our Japanese friend, Ms T, engaged in a small business of traditional medicinal plant products in Dodoma City. Ms A asked my friend to borrow money or in-kind to meet her MF’s repayment. Ms T is always ready to help people who need little money. Instead of giving them

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<sup>5</sup> FINCA (Foundation for International Community Assistance), PRIDE (Promotion of Rural Initiative and Development Enterprises, BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee).

<sup>6</sup> ‘Increase the capital’ in Swahili

money directly, she bought raw materials like baobab leaves and seeds, hibiscus in exchange for handmade soap, bottles of baobab oil, and packages of hibiscus tea to sell the products and earn money. I used to call her service the ‘Bank of affection’. Those who failed to manage their repayment schedule sought her help.

Ms A was a farmer in the neighbouring village and bought second-hand clothes in Dodoma City to sell them in the peripheral rural areas for a long time. Since 2010, she has participated in the microfinance group VICOBA (A). The members must save money (5000 Tanzania Shillings/week) every Wednesday as an investment (‘hisa’ in Swahili). After three months of saving capital, they can apply for a loan. She started to get a loan of 30,000 TZ shillings to complement the purchase of used clothes. Three months later, after completing her first repayment, she could borrow 60,000 shillings. She needed to earn a certain amount of money regularly to respect the repayment period fixed at three months. Still, she could not get a regular income because of the instability of her small business. The ‘hisa’ and the repayment of loans became a burden. She participated in a VICOBA (B), meetings are held every Monday in her village. She tried to tide over the loan repayment or ‘hisa’ payment in Group A with this money. She became the third group member to stabilise her money management. However, she said, ‘Although I participated in MF groups to be richer than before, I am forced to be busier working for repayment. I feel loaded with paying money every time. I never feel rich’.

[Case 2] Drop out

In 2013 in ‘N’ village, suburban Dodoma, we saw a young couple who had participated in the VICOBA groups. The husband had run two kiosks in the village. The wife helped her husband’s kiosks, walked around selling homemade mandazi (doughnuts) and tea. They had taken part in several VICOBA groups to manage debt repayments and earn more money. However, we could not see them two years later when we revisited the VICOBA group. Based on other members, the young couple dropped out of the group because they failed their business and defaulted on their debts. Thus, the regular members that remain in the MF groups are considered successful, and those who failed leave as losers.

#### 3.2.4. Some findings

As these cases show, over-indebtedness and multiple debts become common problems for MF in the rural areas of Tanzania. Several types of MF encourage local people to borrow money easily, and this atmosphere brings the users to juggle their debts for survival and for some to drop out of the MF’s repayment cycle. However, only a handful of people master debt management and benefit from the loans and reinvest in their small businesses.

Kasoga *et al.* (2019) surveyed urban and rural areas toward the international MFIs PRIDE and FINCA. They interviewed the PRIDE and FINCA users randomly selected by MFIs, 398 persons in four

areas<sup>7</sup>: 118 in Dar es Salaam, 113 in Dodoma as urban areas, 87 in Kibaigwa, and 80 in Gairo as rural areas<sup>8</sup>.

Over 50% to 60 % of the users commit to three or more credit contracts, indicating that multiple borrowings become frequent and common among users. A high percentage of income-to-debt ratio (75–90%) for most MF users shows that the money received from the MFI as credit passes through the clients' hands and drain to the outside for their repayments. This vicious circle does not contribute to an increase in income.

Meanwhile, Mpogole *et al.* (2012) researched Iringa Municipality to analyse the incidences and reasons for multiple borrowing and its effects on loan repayment. According to the inquiry results of 250 MFI borrowers, notably, over 70% of users engage in two or three or more debt contracts, and over 70% of respondents delayed their repayment. For the 4<sup>th</sup> question about the reasons for multiple borrowing, the responses can be briefly classified into three categories: first, for managing the debt repayments (loan recycling and delayed loan disbursement, 15.6%), second, to meet the family obligations (24.0%), and third, related to the MF's mechanism itself (too small loans 32.0% and relaxed procedure 18.0% = 50%).

The second reason, 'to meet the family obligations', scored 24%. Remarkably, 50 % of respondents wanted to have more loans. Among them, for 32 %, the amount of debt offered by MF is too small to fulfil their needs, or for 18%, the easy procedure of the debt contracts encouraged them to have more debts. Additionally, the influence of friends with multiple borrowings cannot be ignored (10.4%).

Regarding delays in repayments, 42.4 % of respondents provided poor business turnover as an answer. However, 34 % mentioned that multiple loans become a cause of the delay of repayment, illustrating a vicious circle of multiple debts. Heavy obligation on family issues is consistently cited as an important cause of over-indebtedness and delay of repayments (23.6 %). According to the principles, MFIs provide loans as investments to improve clients' small businesses, and they set the target to encourage small entrepreneurs with loans. In reality, over 40 % expressed that the business invested by MF debts did not benefit enough for repayments, and most clients used loans to complement household expenditures.

#### 4. Analysis

In many studies, the causes of over-indebtedness are analysed on the borrowers' and MFIs' side (for example, Schicks 2010, Duflo 2010)<sup>9</sup>. Some look for the causes of over-indebtedness at the individual

<sup>7</sup> Des Salaam, Dodoma City, Kibaigwa (Dodoma Region), and Gairo (Morogoro Region).

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the difference between the urban and rural could not appear in the figures, which reveals the slight limit of this approach depended on only economic indicators.

<sup>9</sup> Among many, Duflo (2010), in the third chapter sacrificed in the MF, approaches from the economic point of view, the correlation between individual behaviours such as moral hazard and the credit market mechanism.

level: lack of financial literacy, laziness, and uncontrolled desire, reaching a moral hazard<sup>10</sup>, and adverse selection<sup>11</sup> of clients. In the logic of neoliberal individualism, those who make full use of MF tools with financial literacy would flourish, and those who lack this ability would impoverish themselves. However, these individual defects constitute only one side of the problem. We must also look for causes in the MFs' and the credit markets' mechanism, provoking multiple debts and over-indebtedness.

Moreover, the economic gap between the poor and the rich extends in the case of Tanzania. However, it must be also be highlighted that the radical change of social and economic structure is derived from urbanisation. Therefore, the differences between urban and rural areas must be studied with sociological interest. The urban-rural borders may highlight the significance of the different monetary spheres where commercialisation differs. However, this buffer zone does not exist separately, correlates with individual and collective situations at the local level, and is influenced by the mechanism of capitalism. The results of the studies shared above were explained instead in the individual behaviours. It is hard to judge whether those findings can be considered general or specific to the research areas because of the lack of contextual information. Therefore, we analyse three levels: individual behaviours, MFIs in the credit markets, and social and economic structure, which vary according to the local context.

#### **4.1. Analysis at an individual level: limit of the economic indicators**

Kasoga and Tegambwage (2021) focused on income-to-debt, multiple borrowing, and delinquency as indicators that suggest a positive correlation with over-indebtedness. However, these economic indicators cannot clarify the complexity of the income situation and debt management. The authors interviewed 535 clients from two international MFIs (FINCA and BRAC), and 96 % of respondents were female. Most (78%) respondents were in the age group of 26–45, productive, and had family and other social responsibilities (Kasoga and Tegambwage 2021: 8). Although this survey did not identify rural and urban areas, it could provide us with a rough sketch of the over-indebtedness of MF in Tanzania.

This study shows a high percentage of the debt-to-income ratio, indicating that most respondents (503 / 535 persons, 94%) spent 75% or over 75 % of their monthly income repaying debts. Similar results were reported by Kasoga *et al.* (2019) for Dodoma and Dar es Salaam. Therefore, most respondents use 75-90% of their total income to repay their debts in this research. According to DeVaney and Lytton (1995), when debt repayments exceed 50% of a borrower's income, it indicates a significant risk of over-indebtedness. Thus, the figures show that most respondents were already highly over-

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<sup>10</sup> Moral hazard means the risky situation provoked by the users, who do not respect the promises to implement of his or her project, in spite of enough benefit by the success of the business, he or she neglects the repayment of the debt, and so on (Duflo 2010: 103).

<sup>11</sup> Adverse selection means here the situation in the credit market where the debtor does not give to the creditor the personal information such as his or her credit records, which increase the risk of bad debt to the creditor (Duflo 2010: 103).

indebted.

The most important remark here is that some respondents seem to hang on. In contrast to DeVancy and Lytton's argument above, 6 % of borrowers whose debt-to-income ratio exceeds 50% but less than 75% seem to afford food, education, and medical expenses. This fact suggests that even if the income-to-debt ratio is over 50 %, they might not suffer from serious repayment delinquency. The authors speculate without any evidence that 'these borrowers might be receiving free financial assistance from close relatives and friends, not disclosed to the researchers (ibid. 9)'. Although it is difficult to quantify and visualise the effectiveness of affectional relationships, this supposition may not be irrelevant. The role played by the 'Bank of affection' in case 1 can be frequently seen in daily life. More qualitative research is needed in this area.

#### **4.2. Analysis of the mechanism of MFs in the credit markets<sup>12</sup>**

Regarding MF mechanisms, several critical points exist. The three categories are described below.

##### **1) Disfunction of the Microcredit mechanism for the poor (Bateman and Chang 2012)**

This approach looks for the reasons for success or failure in the function of MF services based on the economic perspective: the number of clients, the total amount of credit via the number of running projects, validity of interest rates, and percentage of repayment, among others (Duflo 2010).

##### **2) Mis-management of the MFIs**

This approach is based on organisational theory, categorising different MFIs' organisations. The main discussion points are, for example, the balance between economic independence and subsidies. If MFIs pursue their total economic independence, they must adopt stricter loan requirements to avoid risks, preventing the poor from the service. However, if fund management is based on donors' subsidies, MFIs tend not to demand repayment of debts for clients. The looseness of management could bring the MFI to corruption (Sinclair 2012).

##### **3) The excessive financialisation and commercialisation of MF industry/ markets**

Lazzarato (2011) criticised that the current wave of financialisation at the international level makes our society overindebted. Megabanks have increasingly injected massive capital into the MF industry through the global financial market. This tendency is supported by the global trend of SDGs and ESG investments, considering social and environmental sustainability. Commitment to the MF activities

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<sup>12</sup> For the situation of MF in Chad under the influence of the Petroleum Development project in late 1990s, see Sakai (2007).

shows how those companies resolve global issues. The slogan of poverty reduction adds an extra touch of sincerity to them. The ‘SDGs wash’ must be examined from the perspective of the MFIs’ reliability and the balance between economic benefits and ethics.

In reality, avoiding the risk of delinquency or default is the top priority for all financial institutions, preferring to lend money to those with financial stability and used to manage the debt repayment. Thus, some MFIs seek more clients among the middle class instead of the poor, while others require mortgages or higher interests for their security. Consequently, this may contribute to excluding the poor from MF services. This type of mission drift of MFIs is often discussed as the main problem. Moreover, MFIs must continue maximum efforts to get new clients to maintain their organisational structure. Therefore, some of them become more flexible in their principles. Although some MFIs provide loans only for investment in small-scale businesses, others favour more consumer credits for the clients’ sake.

For example, in M village in Dodoma, an MFI organised a seminar to invite residents for MF activities. One of the audiences (Ms C) told us that the lecture had attracted them, saying, ‘Do you not want to buy a TV set? How about a refrigerator? If you participate in MF activities, I am sure that you can afford those kinds of electric home facilities’<sup>13</sup>. This phrase was attractive to Ms C and made her join MF activities. However, she could not manage her debt repayment with her charcoal sales and dropped out.

MFIs have the nature of financial institutions that respect management policies for the stability and expansion of institutions. Meanwhile, they have to undertake the role of poverty reduction and maintain a charitable image. MFIs constantly waver between the two contradictory roles.

We cannot deny that the MF’s small credits or loans help low-income people in urgent situations. Access to financial services allows them to spend a certain amount of money on an investment in their business, providing a chance to expand their possibilities. Nevertheless, debt is not a donation. In other words, the essence of the debts consists of delaying tactics, just borrowing money from the future. According to economic theories, it is natural that the excessive accumulation of debt becomes a heavy burden and harms borrowers’ daily lives. Kasoga and Tegambwage (2021: 12) have shown that over-indebtedness forces people to forego daily necessities. Authors call this ‘sacrifice’. Among the 535 respondents in over-indebtedness, 94 % had difficulty buying enough food and paying children’s education fees. They did not have pawn assets for repaying loans. For some people, their assets have been seized by MFIs for missed repayments<sup>14</sup>. However, 6% of respondents in multiple borrowings

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<sup>13</sup> Interview in M village, North East of Dodoma (August, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> It is regrettable that the authors put all these individual reactions or ‘sacrifices’ in the same category for analysis, it is difficult to clarify the detailed states of the over-indebted persons.

seem to hang on to their debt situation.

Are there any spaces in the social system to refuge overindebted persons to complement their economic difficulties? The non-commercialised sphere can be a shelter. Is it too idealistic to expect? However, it seems that the economic sphere in the strict term cannot offer such incalculable support beyond management policies or even companies' ethics. The mechanism of the debts itself, as we can see, creates vicious circles. In the next section, we discuss the non-commercialised sphere where economic indicators cannot be clarified.

### 4.3. Analysis of the social structures

Financialisation cannot be reduced to expanding financial markets, impacting daily life (Servet and Saiag 2014: 30). First, it is necessary to understand that monetarisation induces the commodification of the necessities of life. As households do not produce daily convenience goods or food, they are substituted by industrial products offered by companies. Therefore, households need more money to meet daily necessities. Table 1 shows the change in the percentage of households' daily expenditure share in urban and rural areas in Tanzania.

Table 1. The percentage share of consumption by type of item consumed

	Dar es Salaam		Other urban areas		Rural areas		Total: Mainland Tanzania	
	91/92	00/01	91/92	00/01	91/92	00/01	91/92	00/01
<b>Food-purchased</b>	67.1	52.2	56.9	52.8	30.5	35.2	35.8	38.6
<b>Food-home produced</b>	0.7	2.1	9.4	7.9	41.8	31.8	35.5	26.8
<b>Durable goods</b>	7.6	7.8	7.4	8.0	7.2	7.1	7.2	7.3
<b>Medical expenditure</b>	0.9	2.9	1.2	2.4	0.9	2.1	0.9	2.2
<b>Education expenditure</b>	1.1	4.0	1.1	3.0	0.8	1.6	0.8	2.0
<b>Other non-durables</b>	22.6	31.1	24.0	25.9	18.9	22.1	19.7	23.1
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>of which, total food</b>	67.8	54.3	66.3	60.7	72.3	67.0	71.3	65.4

Source: Made by author referenced by Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics (2002: 70).

In Table 1, the highest increase in expenditure between 1991–92 and 2000–2001 is in education, four times in Dar es Salaam, tripled in the other urban areas, and doubled in the rural areas. Following this,

medical expenditure also showed a sharp increase in all areas. Regarding food supply, households in rural areas now purchase more and grow less food for their consumption than they did in 1991–92. However, subsistence agriculture and livestock keeping continue to play an important role in the daily food supply in rural areas, evading buying them with money. Interestingly, in Dar es Salaam, the percentage of homemade food production tripled (0.7 % in 1991/1992, to 2.1% in 2000/2001). This may be the return to self-reliance strategies for survival.

The self-production of food has not received much attention because it is difficult to visualise and valorise its ‘profit’ in the economic context. In economic development theories, monetarisation and marketisation are effective tools for modernising society. Subsistence production is considered to be underdeveloped and inefficient in terms of productivity. Therefore, this area tends to be rapidly discarded. Tanzania’s Household Budget Survey in 2000–01 emphasised the percentage share of purchased food and home-produced food; this category has disappeared in the successive Household Budget Survey reports (National Bureau of Statistics 2014; 2020). Financial inclusion contributes to shrinking non-commercialised agriculture, but it contributes to fulfilling the necessities of life without the market economy. Moreover, it plays an important role in social and environmental stability and may provide shelter from the debt burden.

## 5. Conclusion

Mpogole *et al.* (2012) conducted a survey with practical recommendations for MFIs.

- 1) MFIs should devise a way of sharing clients’ loan information.
- 2) MFIs should provide adequate loans.
- 3) Some form of training should help clients distinguish between business and family matters.

However, there is a doubt that these recommendations can solve the over-indebtedness of MF users. The authors recommend that MFIs improve their management to solve over-indebtedness. Furthermore, their recommendation encourages users to contract more loans by improving their financial literacy. With irony, Servet and Saiag (2014: 39) describe the reality of financial institutions and their recognition of over-indebtedness.

However, if the dominant forms of private credit are at the root of the crisis, it is difficult to imagine that they (the banks) will solve it. It is as if a therapist who, after forcing a patient to become an alcoholic to attain illusory happiness, proposes a treatment that involves drinking more wine (Servet and Saiag 2012: 40).

The problem consists of radical changes in socio-economic structures due to excessive urbanisation and financialisation. Therefore, those with access to the land to produce food were alienated and impoverished regarding money and social safety. This situation forces people to depend on more debts to meet their necessities.

It means that the MF mechanism, consisting of the ‘investment-profit-reinvestment’ cycle of the capitalist rule, does not allow many users to manage their debts. As the steady growth model designs the MF mechanism, income must be increased in the users’ business plans. Typically, it is expected to create incompatibility with the recycling-oriented societies, surviving with frequenting between the commercialised and non-commercialised spheres. However, the borders are not divided. Currently, financialisation accelerates in globalising societies, in which the social structure itself extends the gap between the rich and the poor. In this sense, another financial literacy is required to critically judge the real necessity of debt to use MF services. MF has not yet established an adequate model to connect two different spheres to adapt to reality, especially in rural areas. The excessive use of loans should worsen the situation. Through our reflection, we realise that outside the commercialised sphere could provide a shelter to avoid delinquency risks and juggling multiple debts. Further analysis of the shelter where strict economic rules do not work is needed to understand if it could resist the instability and volatility of the values in a commercially oriented world.

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# **Mobile Money and Structural Transformation: Evidence from Tanzania**

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## **Abstract**

In less than a decade, mobile money has risen from a simple tool to transfer money with cell phones to an innovation that delivers credit and insurance. We use rich panel data from Tanzania from 2008 to 2019 to investigate whether mobile money adoption leads to structural transformation. Leveraging the staggered introduction of mobile money agents through difference-in-differences and event-study strategies, we find evidence that areas with mobile money agents experience a sharp reduction in agricultural employment and agricultural land use. While released workers reallocate to non-agricultural sectors, we also find that these changes cause extensive migration of people. Mobile money also leads to an increase in the use of improved seeds as they become more available, a decrease in the use of banks and cooperatives, and promotes new migration patterns.

**Keywords:** mobile money, agriculture, employment, structural change, difference-in-differences

## 1. Introduction

The era of mobile money is perhaps one of the most important innovation episodes in fintech history in Africa. In 2007, Safaricom introduced M-Pesa in Kenya to enable people initially excluded from the formal financial system to perform financial transactions via cell phones. Six months later, more than 17 million users and 65,000 agents were registered with M-Pesa (Mizutani 2021). In 2008, Tanzania introduced a mobile money service with further innovations that could revolutionise the way people interact financially in the country. In 2020, Tanzania's mobile money penetration reached 53%, with 29.7 million mobile money subscriptions. Ghana introduced a mobile money service in 2009. By 2020, there were 14.7 million active mobile money accounts and 235,000 active agents. Today, there are nearly 146 million active accounts in sub-Saharan Africa (henceforth Africa), representing 10% of the region's GDP (compared to less than 2% in most other parts of the world). In addition to providing money transaction services, mobile money operators have been increasingly providing credit and insurance services.

Recent evidence suggests that mobile financial services have positive effects on economic outcomes and can reduce transaction costs (Jack and Suri 2014). Most of these studies have focused only on the micro side, such as households and firms. However, we still lack a clear understanding of how the process of structural transformation generated by the introduction of mobile money influences these effects. In particular, little is known about the structural effects of mobile money due to the lack of consistent panel datasets in African countries. In this study, we compiled a novel dataset on mobile money penetration in Tanzania between 2008 and 2019 to estimate their effects on structural change at the sub-national level, on the magnitude and direction of labour movements that they generate, and on the allocation of factors across sectors. Using Difference-in-Differences (DiD) and an event study, we find that areas with mobile money agents experience a sharp reduction in agricultural employment and land use for agriculture, while the released workers are absorbed in the non-agricultural sector. We also find that mobile money increases competition in the seed market, leading to a decrease in seed prices and an increase in consumption. Furthermore, there is evidence of substitutability between mobile money and traditional finance systems, such as banks and cooperatives. Finally, we show that mobile money affects migration patterns.

This study contributes to the literature by measuring the potential effects of mobile financial services on the local economy while addressing the knowledge gaps identified in recent studies on mobile financial services. We contribute to a few studies that attempt to assess the macroeconomic effects of mobile financial services. More broadly, extant literature has documented that mobile money helps households share risks and smooth shocks (Abiona and Koppensteiner 2020, Batista and Vicente 2020, Jack and Suri 2014, Riley 2018) and reduce poverty (Suri and Jack 2016). This literature has also focused on women, as they are the most facing discrimination in access to finance. Jones and Gong

(2021) found that promoting mobile money savings improves women's ability to cope with adverse shocks. Van Hove and Dubus (2019) find that the introduction of mobile money services has improved financial inclusion, but those left behind are poor, non-educated, and women. Our study also adds to the work on firm growth, which shows that mobile money is strongly correlated with measures of firm performance, such as firm investment (Islam *et al.* 2018) and productivity (Beck *et al.* 2018).

Our analysis also fits within work on structural change in Africa, which has documented a pattern of increasing agricultural productivity and a declining share of the labour force in agriculture. Otchia and Otsubo (2021) found that agriculture and manufacturing labour productivity growth was almost three times higher than productivity growth in the service sector. Several explanations for this pattern may also explain our results. For instance, Diao *et al.* (2019) found that the nature of technologies available to African firms is highly capital and skill intensive and may be an important reason behind this structural change. Alternatively, rapid growth in agricultural labour productivity coincides with the expansion of small and informal firms' manufacturing employment (Diao *et al.* 2021). This study helps to better understand the underlying causes of these observed patterns of structural changes.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 provides background information on mobile money in Tanzania. Section 3 discusses the data and provides descriptive statistics. Section 4 presents the empirical strategy, and section 5 discusses the results. We conclude the paper in section 6.

## 2. Mobile money in Tanzania

Mobile money is a form of digital wallet operated by mobile network operators as a platform for receiving, sending, and saving money. The service is provided through pre-registered e-wallets to customers' phone numbers facilitated by registered agents who act as money points. Its convenience and simplicity make it a popular banking option for the financially excluded population segment. It operates on the USSD (quick codes) system, meaning that customers can also use feature phones to access their accounts where internet connection is not a requirement. Users can withdraw or deposit cash from an extensive network of mobile money agents available throughout the country. Mobile money combines an innovative way of obtaining market information, value-added services, and digital currency technology for the majority of the population in developing countries. Market information, credit payments, utility bill payments, international transfers, microinsurance, airtime purchases, and salary disbursements are some of the value-added services enabled by mobile money.

Mobile money has emerged as a powerful platform to improve financial inclusion because it provides an innovative and effective way to finance millions of people in Tanzania. What can be seen in Figure 1 is the growth of mobile money agents in Tanzania. One of the many striking features is the phenomenal growth of mobile money between 2008 and 2014, followed by a gradual increase. With respect to traditional financial systems such as banks and cooperatives, one can see that the incidence of banks is

still small and remains steady over time. Since many households in developing countries possess mobile phones but not bank accounts, access to mobile money could enhance their financial power, increase productivity, improve security, lower transaction costs, and create a platform to grow business.

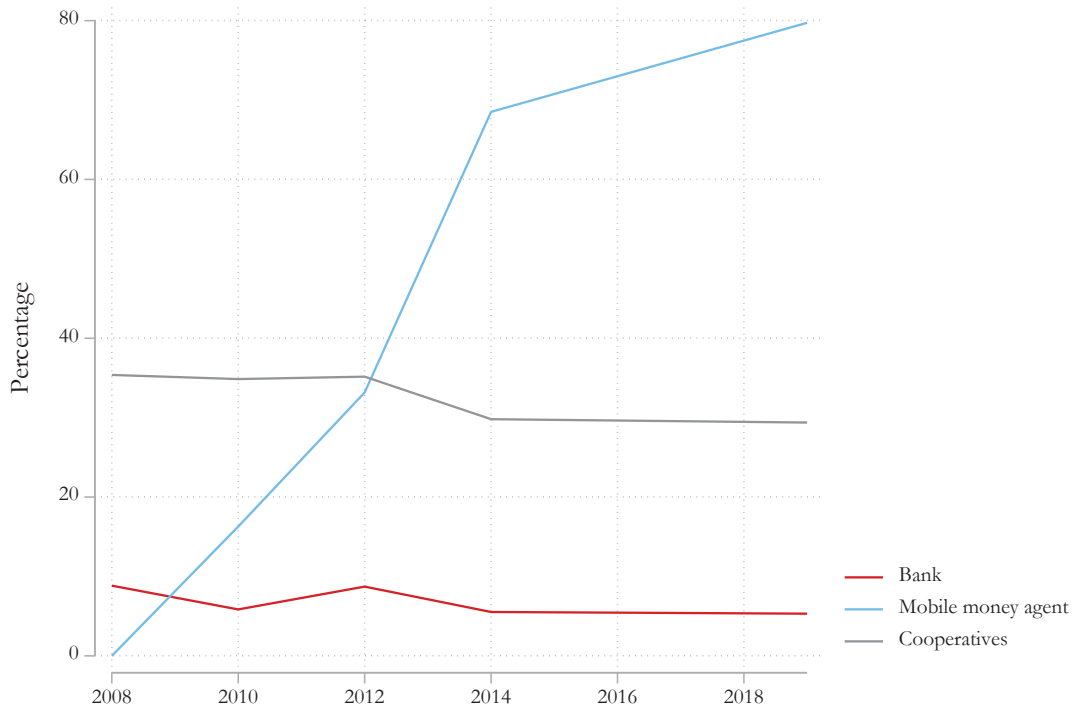


Figure 1. Access to finance in Tanzania

Source: World Bank (2021).

While the traditional financial system is lagging, it is important to note that access is even worse for rural populations, smallholder farmers, and women (Mushi *et al.* 2017). Between 2004 and 2011, there was an average of 1.56 commercial bank branches and 2.22 ATMs per 100,000 population. Furthermore, in 2012, 17 percent of the adult population (aged 15 years and above) had a bank account (Abiona and Koppensteiner 2020). The figures indicate that traditional financial services provision is still low, resulting in a financial gap between rural and urban populations, between men and women, and between rich and poor. Mobile money has the potential to include all populations in the financial ecosystem owing to its availability. Figure 2 shows the substantial growth in the availability of mobile money agents in 2010 and 2019.

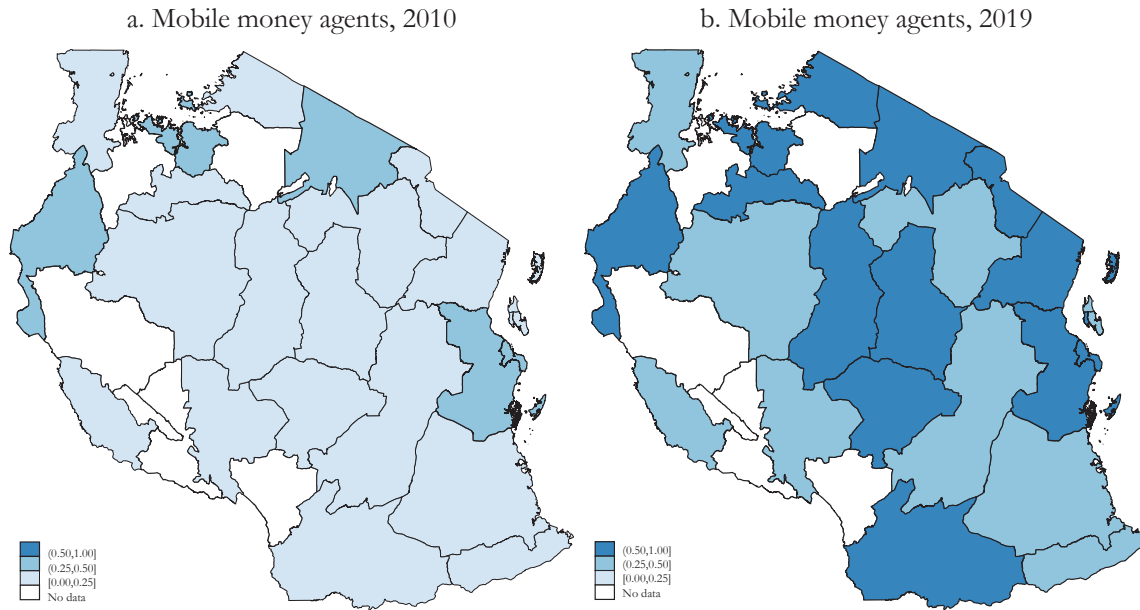


Figure 2. Mobile money availability in Tanzania

Source: Author's computation from World Bank (2021).

### 3. Data and empirical strategy

#### 3.1. Data

The principal objectives of our analysis are to estimate the effect of mobile money on structural change and assess whether mobile money can accelerate industrialisation as more finance becomes available. To carry out this analysis, we use data from five rounds of the Tanzania National Panel Survey (NPS) conducted biennially since 2008. The survey was administered in collaboration with the World Bank and Tanzania's National Bureau of Statistics. The first wave was conducted in 2008/2009, the second wave in 2010/2011, the third wave in 2012/2013, the fourth wave in 2014/2015, and the fifth wave in 2019/2020. The NPS uses a stratified, multistage cluster sampling design. The sampling frame is the 2002 Population and Housing Census, which includes a list of all populated enumeration areas. Multistage sampling involves the following stages: First, a simple random selection of districts, villages, and wards was taken to be included in the survey. Then, simple random selection was employed for the sampled households<sup>1</sup>. Households represent the sampling units for data collection. A total of 409 primary sampling units (clusters) were randomly selected based on their population sizes.

The survey has three datasets: household (household demographics and consumption expenditure),

<sup>1</sup> The method was used to avoid bias in the selection of households. In this way, all households had an equal chance of being selected.

community (finance), and agricultural (agricultural inputs, crop production, and harvest). The survey provides detailed information, which results in the choice of variables to be used. Although it has uniform coverage, the NPS has information on several important variables, such as the total number of workers, workers in the economic sector, the existence of cooperatives and banks, and mobile money agents. Table 1 defines the variables employed in our analysis, as well as their descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Description	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Mobile money	Mobile money agent point	0.375	0.484	0	1
Agriculture labor	Share of employment in Agriculture	0.809	0.569	0	2.73
Agricultural land	Share of agricultural land	0.594	1.500	0	49.90
Wage job	Share of wage worker in non-agricultural sector	3.331	5.936	0	25.69
Employee	Share of employer in non-agricultural sector	3.117	6.409	0	31.03
Self-employed	Share of self-employed in non-agricultural sector	3.069	5.412	0	24.69
Improve seed	Share of improved seed	0.323	0.468	0	1
Immigration	Households migrating into the districts	2.343	1.187	0	6.91
Emigration	Households migrating out of the districts	2.133	1.129	0	6.91
Cooperatives	Cooperatives	0.330	0.470	0	1
Bank	Bank	0.068	0.253	0	1

Source: Author's calculation.

### 3.2. Empirical strategy

We begin the estimating the following DiD specification

$$y_{it} = \alpha \text{Mobilemoney}_{it} + X'_{it}\beta + \gamma_i + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{it}, \quad (1)$$

where  $y_{it}$  refers to a set of structural change measures in district  $i$  and year  $t$ . For example, in our study, the share of workers employed in agriculture and the share of land use in agriculture. These two variables are suitable proxies for the first stage of structural transformation, as shown in previous studies. Results on other measures such as the share of wage workers, the share of employers, the share of self-employed workers, and the share of land used for residential, are provided later as a robustness check to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact on structural change.  $\text{Mobilemoney}_{it}$  is a dummy variable taking the value of 1 if the district has a mobile money agent in year  $t$ . Hence,  $\alpha$  is the coefficient of interest which measures the effect of mobile money adoption. We control for a large set of covariates  $X_{it}$  to account for the variation in the cross-section.  $\gamma_i$  and  $\delta_t$  denote district and year fixed effects,

respectively, to account for time-invariant district characteristics and common macroeconomic shocks, respectively. In robustness specifications, we control for district-and region-level linear time trends to account for the underlying heterogeneity and region-specific trends.

For  $\alpha$  to be identified, it is required that districts connected to the mobile money agent would have had similar trends to districts without mobile money agents, in the absence of mobile money services. To validate this assumption and understand the dynamic nature of the effects, we also study differences in structural change before and after mobile money adoption by estimating the following event-study regression:

$$y_{it} = \sum_{j=-2, j \neq 0}^3 \pi_j 1(t = E_i + j) + X'_{it}\beta + \gamma_i + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{it}, \quad (2)$$

where  $E_i$  is the year in which district  $i$  connects with a mobile money agent and  $j$  represents years relative to this event. The  $\pi_j$  coefficient estimates the effect of mobile money adoption at time  $t = E_i$  for two years around the mobile money adoption event. We follow standard practice and normalise the year prior to each event to zero, such that  $\pi_{-1} = 0$ . This means that each coefficient is interpreted as the difference in the outcome compared to the year before the mobile money adoption status. We assume that if there are no observable differences between mobile money adoption districts and non-mobile money adopting districts prior to district gains connection to the mobile money agent, it is more likely that any difference post mobile money adoption can be attributed to mobile money adoption.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Main impacts

We begin by evaluating the identification assumption for the DiD design. Figure 3 shows the results from estimating Equation (2) for agricultural employment and land. Throughout, we find no evidence of pre-trends in the outcome variables prior to a district adopting a mobile money agent. This suggests that the parallel-trend assumption was satisfied. Moreover, the figure illustrates a negative effect on agricultural employment and land in the years after adopting mobile money. This implies that the introduction of mobile money accelerates structural change by releasing labour and land from agriculture to other economic sectors. The effect on structural change appears immediately in the year after districts connect to mobile money agents and remain throughout.

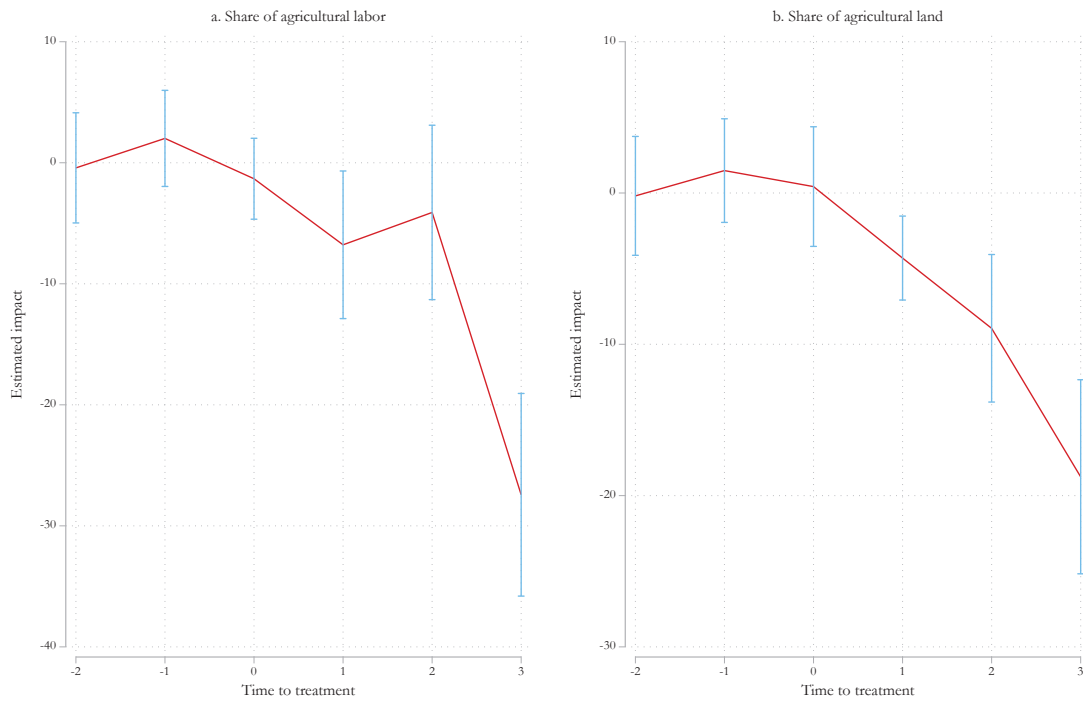


Figure 3. Event-study impact of mobile money on agricultural labour and land

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 2 reports the results from estimating Equation (1) on two measures of agricultural outcomes. Column 1 presents our estimates with district fixed-effect and district-year fixed effects. Column 2 estimates an alternative specification, which replaces the district-year fixed effects with time trend whereas column 3 introduces the region-specific time trend. Column 4 is similar to column 1 but includes our set of time-varying control variables. Panel A presents estimates for agricultural employment. We find that in areas where mobile money agents were introduced, agriculture's share of employment decreased. We find a negative effect of 0.231 which is statistically significant at the 1% level. This estimate implies that mobile money adoption reduces agricultural employment by about 23% on average. These estimates are similar when we control for time trends but slightly decrease when we include control variables and region-specific time trends. Panel B presents the effect of mobile money on agricultural land use. Throughout the specifications, the results suggest that the share of agricultural land also fell in districts where mobile money was introduced. Our estimates are also large, as they vary between 15% and 19%. This can be interpreted as labour-saving technological change in agriculture. These findings suggest that mobile money leads to an increase in agricultural productivity, leading to a release of labour and land to other sector of the economy. Another possible explanation is that increased in agricultural productivity increased the demand for non-agricultural goods such as local manufacturing products and services.

Table 2. Mobile money impacts on agricultural outcome

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel A: Dependent variable is Share of agricultural labor</i>				
Mobile money	-0.231*** (0.031)	-0.240*** (0.030)	-0.129*** (0.026)	-0.193*** (0.031)
Observations	2,042	2,044	2,044	2,042
R-squared	0.087	0.066	0.430	0.131
<i>Panel B: Dependent variable is Share of agricultural land</i>				
Mobile money	-0.169*** (0.048)	-0.189*** (0.049)	-0.923*** (0.021)	-0.159*** (0.049)
Observations	2,042	2,044	2,044	2,042
R-squared	0.141	0.050	0.122	0.150
Controls	No	No	No	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Year FE	Yes	No	No	Yes
Time trend	No	Yes	No	No
Region-specific time trend	No	No	Yes	No

Source: Author's calculations.

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ .

To explore this possibility, we now proceed to look at the question of whether non-agricultural employment expanded (contracted) in areas where mobile money services were introduced. Table 3 reports DiD estimates of Equation (1) for three non-agricultural sector outcomes: share of workers in wage employment (column 1), share of employer (column 2), and share of self-employed workers (column 3). We find that areas which introduced mobile money agents experienced a faster increase in non-agricultural employment. The estimated coefficients show that wage employment and the share of employers in non-agricultural sectors increased more than that of the self-employed. These results imply that mobile money expansion led to an increase in both employment and wages. There are several possible explanations for this result. The finding on wage employment growth might be driven by the fact that the local non-agricultural sector absorbed workers released from agriculture to meet the increased demand for goods and services. It is also possible that areas with mobile money agents could attract different types of workers because of the new opportunities it brings through access to finance. These mechanisms are explored in the next section.

Table 3. Mobile money impacts on agricultural outcome

	(1) Wage job	(2) Employer	(3) Self-employed
Mobile money	2.082*** (0.291)	2.356*** (0.330)	1.677*** (0.268)
Observations	2,042	2,042	2,042
R-squared	0.302	0.231	0.289
Control Variables	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Author's calculations.

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ .

#### 4.2. Mechanisms and additional explanations

Having established the importance of mobile money in structural transformation, the next step is to evaluate the potential mechanisms. We first discuss the mechanisms driving the negative effects of mobile money on agricultural outcomes. To do so, Table 4 estimates the effects of adopting mobile money on different inputs in the production function, which can be a substitute or complement to employment. We focus our attention on the price of seeds sold within the village (column 1), the price of seeds sold at the closest sales point (column 2), and the use of improved seeds (column 3). Column 1 shows that the effect of mobile money agents on the price of maize seeds sold within the village is positive, small, and not statistically significant, which implies that mobile money has no effect on the price of seeds sold within the district. In column 2, we find a negative and statistically significant effect, implying that the price of seeds fell in areas where mobile money agents were introduced. Column 3 consistently shows a positive and significant effect on the use of improved seeds. Putting the results together, the effect of introducing mobile money substantially increases the use of intermediate inputs as they become more available and affordable. This result confirms our previous findings that mobile money leads to labour-saving and land-intensive technological change.

Table 4. Mobile money impacts on agricultural outcome

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Local price of seeds	Market price of seeds	Improved seed	Bank transaction	Sacco transaction	Immigration	Emigration
Mobile money	0.361 (1.864)	-1.011*** (.056)	0.137*** (0.026)	-0.377** (0.183)	-1.234*** (0.204)	0.474** (0.231)	0.790*** (0.245)
Observations	2,042	2,042	2,042	2,042	2,042	2,042	2,042
R-squared	0.161	0.161	0.066	0.201	0.218	0.042	0.041
Control Variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Author's calculations.

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ .

Next, we provide additional evidence to understand the mechanisms behind the positive effects on non-agricultural employment. We estimate Equation (1), in which the number of transactions in the bank and cooperatives, the number of immigration and emigration are dependent variables. The results are reported in Table 4. Columns 4 and 5 show a negative and significant effect of mobile money on the number of bank and cooperative transactions, which indicates that areas where mobile money was introduced tend to have a low number of banks and cooperatives. It seems possible that these results are due to the fact that mobile money can be a substitute for traditional financial institutions. These findings are consistent with the evidence presented in Figure 1, where the share of Tanzanians who have bank access has not increased since mobile money was introduced. Our findings also corroborate Mbiti and Weil (2011), who observed that mobile money services have quickly replaced the former money transfer services offered by bus companies, the post office, the Western Union, or through friends. Next, we analyse the second group of variables related to migration. Column 6 shows that the districts which introduced mobile money saw an increase in immigration. Mobile money could have attracted a new type of worker with a different skillset to take advantage of new opportunities in rural areas. Column 7 shows that emigration also increases. Comparing Columns 6 and 7, our results suggest that the magnitude of the effect on emigration is larger than that of immigration.

## 5. Conclusion

This study examines the effects of mobile money on structural changes in Tanzania. We find that areas that introduced mobile money agents had a lower share of agricultural workers and a lower share of agricultural land. Using event-study analysis, we also find that the share of workers and land in agriculture decreased faster in the year immediately after the introduction of mobile money agents. These results are robust across various specifications and suggest that mobile money can be assimilated

to a labour-saving and land-intensive technical change in agriculture. In the second set of results, we find that mobile money leads to employment growth in the non-agricultural sector. We found that wage jobs, the share of employers, and the share of self-employed increased in areas that introduced mobile money agents.

Four additional mechanisms support the evidence of structural changes caused by mobile money in Tanzania. We find that the decreased employment and land used in agriculture could be explained by the increase in the use of improved seeds and the decrease in the price of seeds. We explained the increase in non-agricultural employment by the fact that mobile money increases access to finance and thus becomes a substitute for traditional sources of finance such as banking and cooperatives. The basis of this interpretation is the reported decrease in transactions in banks and cooperatives, following the introduction of mobile money. The results also show that mobile money led to both immigration and emigration. While the impact of immigration is smaller, the findings suggest that mobile money creates new opportunities that require new skills.

### Acknowledgements

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# **The Trans-region Movement of Seasonal Labour in Ghana: Settlement Formation of Populations in the Upper West Region and Trade Network**

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## **Abstract**

The Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana (now divided into the Bono East, Brong Ahafo, and Ahafo regions) is located in the vegetation transition zone and is also known as the ‘food basket’ of Ghana. In 2001, 18% of the crops distributed in Ghana were produced in this area, and many agricultural products were exported to neighbouring countries. Crop production in this region is performed by local people and the Dagaaba people from the Upper West Region, who rent farmland from locals. In the late 1980s, the Dagaaba people began engaging in crop production in the Brong Ahafo Region. They have since set up production bases and sent their families to the Brong Ahafo Region. Savannah people such as the Dagaaba people and the Akan people, who live in the humid southern regions, differ in their culture, religion, and customs; but they have established relatively good relations and have avoided conflicts. Immigrant communities called *zongo* established themselves rapidly in various parts of the country during the migration of the Dagaaba. This likely made it possible for the Dagaaba people to engage in production in a new area far from their ethnic territory.

**Keywords:** migration, Dagaaba, kola trade, Hausa, *zongo*

## 1. Introduction

In the savannah zone, an alluvial plain formed in the middle basin of the Niger River in West Africa, ecological conditions are finely differentiated, presenting an extremely complex mosaic (McIntosh 1998). Constant negotiations with the environment have promoted diversification among human communities, contributing to the development of specialised livelihood strategies (Gallais 1962). Sustaining diversified livelihood strategies in West Africa requires supplementation through the exchange of products, and local communities are organised in a system of exchange based on livelihood strategies and social differences.

Food shortages also occur frequently in West Africa due to unpredictable precipitation fluctuations in the short and long terms, river floods, drought, the effects of damage to crops caused by desert locusts, and rapid human population growth in recent years (Oyama 2020). Communities in the region have dealt with unforeseen circumstances by complementing each other to sustain their livelihoods. A commercial trade that compensates for shortages has developed, along with relationships of mutual aid, providing the basis for the formation of great nation-states in inland arid areas.

Against this background, communities have actively interacted with each other in West Africa since ancient times, and complex trade routes have developed. Trade with the Arab world (Trans-Saharan trade), which may have begun before the Christian era, has energised inland trade in West Africa. In the 15th century, when Europeans arrived on the coast of West Africa, inland trade networks became connected to coastal areas, further expanding and developing the region's trade networks. Railways and roads were constructed during the latter half of the 19th and 20th centuries under British and French colonial rule (Van der Geest 2011). After independence, colonial construction projects provided a basis for further infrastructure development. Since the 1980s, active cross-border exchanges between communities have occurred in West Africa, which is equipped with well-developed means of transportation. In particular, movements from inland arid areas to wet coastal areas have intensified. However, problems have arisen because the number of immigrants has increased each year.

For instance, Côte d'Ivoire gained independence in 1960 and experienced rapid economic growth in the 1970s. Its coffee and cacao production sectors grew rapidly from 1975 to 1977. Between 1976 and 1980, 1.3 million immigrants entered the country, mainly from the savannah zone (OECD 2009: 75). A large number of immigrants settled and started farming in the southern area of Côte d'Ivoire with political support; they have continued to occupy and own land without former registration. The rapid influx of agricultural workers and settlers both from abroad and moving within the country created an underlying structure of conflict between migrants and local residents in the woodlands that served as a reception site for the new arrivals. This developed into a civil war in 2003.

This study focuses on the migration of people from the savannah zone to the wet regions of modern Ghana and the interpersonal network that supports it. This movement is common among West African

countries and contributes greatly to securing labour in the wet regions. On the other hand, this intensified migration can cause friction between people, as it did in Côte d'Ivoire. Thus, this study seeks to clarify how people from the savannah zone migrate and maintain relationships with the host society by examining the case of the ethnic Dagaaba people in the north-western part of Ghana.

## 2. Migration in West Africa

### 2.1. Ghana's ecological zones and migration

West Africa's topography is generally flat, with a low elevation. Therefore, differences in topography have little effect on precipitation; annual precipitation generally changes along the latitude, with more northerly areas being drier. Ghana also has a dry savannah zone in the north and a wet semi-deciduous broadleaved forest zone (woodland) in the south (Figure 1).

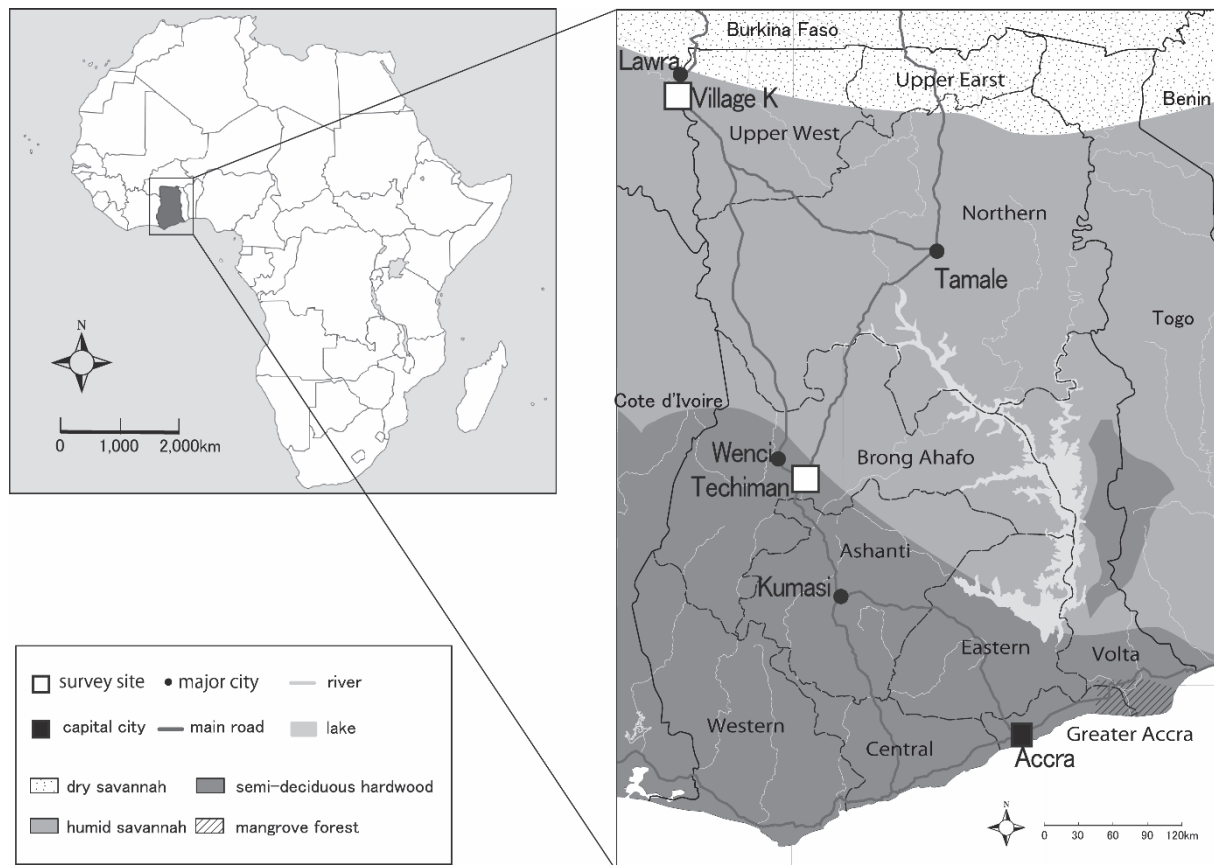


Figure 1. Ghana's ecological zones and research sites (regional lines as of 2014)

The savannah zone of northern Ghana has clearly divided rainy and dry seasons. In the rainy season, grains and vegetables that are resistant to dryness are cultivated. However, since the dry season is an agricultural off-season, younger men tend to look for seasonal labour (migrant work) in the wet regions and urban areas in the south. On the other hand, the woodland in the southern area does not have clearly

distinguished dry and rainy seasons, and precipitation falls throughout the year. This woodland area has become the centre of cacao production, and people from the savannah zone migrate there to join in the production.

The transitional zone between the woodland and savannah zones is an essential area for Ghana's food production. Although the region has a very short dry season, crops can be produced throughout the year; varieties such as grains, root vegetables, green vegetables, and fruits are cultivated. The transition zone is called the 'food basket' of Ghana. In 2001, 18% of the crops distributed in Ghana were produced in the Brong Ahafo Region (now divided into the Bono East, Brong Ahafo, and Ahafo regions) located in the transition zone, and many agricultural products are exported from this region to neighbouring countries (FAO 2002). Many people from the savannah zone come to labour in the areas of this transitional zone and borrow farmland from locals for agricultural production.

## **2.2. Kola trade and its trade hub, *zongo* settlements, in West Africa**

*Zongo*, immigrant communities formed around the trade of kola, play an important role in the migration of people in West Africa. Kola nuts are seeds of *Cola nitida*, a tree belonging to the Malvaceae family *Cola* genus that is native to tropical West Africa and has been produced and consumed in large quantities in the region for several centuries. Kola exportation began from southern woodlands to European countries in the 19th century. Kola was used as an ingredient in early Coca-Cola production.

Kola is a luxury good among Muslims living in the savannah zone and has a high ritual and social value among the people in the zone. Kola contains a high content of components such as caffeine and theobromine; when chewed, it can relieve drowsiness and act as a stimulant (Lovejoy 1980: 2-5, Burdock *et al.* 2009). Men and women purchase kola daily and work while chewing it. People tear kola into small pieces with their fingers, put it in their mouths, and chew it like chewing gum for about 10 to 30 minutes to alleviate feelings of hunger or thirst (Abaka 2005: 128).

Kola is mainly consumed in the savannah zone of West Africa, but production is limited to woodlands, so it requires long-distance trade across climatic zones. The transportation of kola can follow a trajectory of more than 2,000 km until it reaches the savannah zone and the Sahara Desert. While kola is consumed daily in the savannah zone, which is its consumption area, it is not consumed in the woodland zone where it is produced, although its ritual value is high.

Kola requires long-distance transportation, but freshness must be maintained since it is perishable. Therefore, speed is a transportation requirement. *Zongo* trading hubs built in various parts of West Africa enable the rapid transportation of kola. In the 18th and 19th centuries, *zongo* emerged in the cola trade between the Hausa Kingdoms and Asante Kingdom, in an area that is home to a large number of merchants. Kola is transported by merchants living in a *zongo*, who hand it over to merchants in the next

*zongo*, using the *zongo* network. Kola producers are ethnic Akans<sup>1</sup>. Christians living in the south, and its consumers are Muslims (ethnic groups such as the Hausa) living in the savannah zone; kola is thus transported not only across regions but also across ethnicities and religions.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, *zongo* was established in large cities like Accra or Kumasi. However, in the late 1980s, according to kola merchants, *zongo* became rapidly established in various parts of the country, even in small villages. This *zongo* establishment coincided with a period of crisis caused by drought. People from the savannah area needed opportunities to earn money in forest areas such as cacao production, kola trade, and other informal sections.

*Zongo*, originally a Hausa word meaning ‘encampment’, is used to indicate a trading settlement, but it has in recent years increasingly become understood to refer to a community of migrants. Historian Philip Curtin describes *zongo* where other ethnic groups gather in a space mainly occupied by Akan ethnics as ‘ethnic islands’ formed in the city (Curtin 1998). Many of the migrants from the savannah zone first set foot in *zongo*, where they establish their livelihood base. This is true even for migrants who have no relation to the kola trade.

### 2.3. Demographic change in Ghana

According to *2010 Migration in Ghana*, a report compiled by the Ghana Statistical Service based on the 2010 census, three regions located in the savannah zone (the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions) and three regions adjacent to the Greater Accra region (the Central, Volta, and Eastern regions) all had a negative net migration. On the other hand, net migration numbers were positive for the Greater Accra, Ashanti, Western, and Brong Ahafo regions, with arrivals outnumbering departures (Table 1).

Of the four regions with positive net migration, Greater Accra includes the capital, Accra. Ashanti includes Kumasi, the former royal capital of the Asante Kingdom, which flourished between the 17th and 19th centuries. Accra and Kumasi are large cities that always compete to have Ghana’s largest economy and population. The other two regions are in the transition zone described above. A vast farmland extends throughout, and trade cities such as Techiman and Wenchi have emerged at nodal points. Among the cities in these four regions, Accra, Kumasi, and Techiman have large markets, and *zongo* migrant communities are distributed in areas near them.

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<sup>1</sup> An ethnic group that speaks the Akan language residing in an area extending from Togo to Côte d’Ivoire.

Table 1. Out- and in-migration and net migration by region (in populations)

Region	Out-Migrants	In-Migrants	Net Migrants
Western	279,394	561,513	282,119
Central	612,458	374,443	-238,015
Greater Accra	322,874	1,598,326	1,275,452
Volta	681,833	146,162	-535,671
Eastern	750,400	418,314	-332,086
Ashanti	613,731	853,751	240,020
Brong Ahafo	339,687	457,571	117,884
Northern	433,121	100,524	-332,597
Upper East	328,990	61,298	-267,692
Upper West	252,841	43,427	-209,414
Total	4,615,329	4,615,329	0

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2013b).

Note: Created by the author using Table 3.6: Migration effectiveness ratio for each region.

Table 2 reports the migration status and employment type of workers aged 15 to 64. It shows that the percentage of self-employed workers without employee(s) is higher regardless of migration status, and this trend is stronger in rural areas. In addition, an examination of migrants (both intra- and inter-regional) reveals that the proportion of those working as employees is relatively high, and that this trend is more pronounced in urban areas. On the other hand, the proportion of domestic employees<sup>2</sup> is higher in rural areas. In such areas, there are many self-employed agricultural operations consisting of a business owner who runs the agricultural farmland and household members who stay on the farm to provide services. It is assumed that agricultural workers working under such an arrangement are counted as domestic employees in rural areas.

This study examines workers engaged in agricultural activities in the rural area of Brong Ahafo (those categorised as ‘self-employed without employee(s)’ and ‘domestic employee’ in Table 2), focusing on ethnic Dagaaba people, originally from the Upper West Region.

### 3. Research summary

#### 3.1. Research methods

The main research site was K-village in the Lawra district in the Upper West Region of the Republic of Ghana. Research was also conducted in the Techiman municipality, Brong Ahafo Region (currently the Bono East Region; see Figure 1).

<sup>2</sup> A domestic employee is a self-employed worker who provides services for household members running a marketable business establishment but who is not considered a partner due to the lower degree of involvement in management relative to that of the owner (determined by national standards such as working hours; see <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=665>).

Table 2. Proportion of workers 15 to 64 years old by migration and employment status (in percentages)

Employment / Migration Status	Total	Urban	Rural
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employee	18.6	28.5	8.4
Self-employed without employee(s)	58.9	53.3	64.7
Self-employed with employee(s)	4.8	6.7	2.8
Casual worker	2.0	2.1	1.9
Contributing family worker	12.0	4.3	19.9
Apprentice	2.8	4.3	1.4
Domestic employee	0.6	0.6	0.6
Other	0.2	0.2	0.2
<b>Non-migrants</b>			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employee	13.3	23.2	5.6
Self-employed without employee(s)	62.6	57.9	66.3
Self-employed with employee(s)	4.2	6.3	2.5
Casual worker	1.6	1.9	1.4
Contributing family worker	15.0	6.0	21.9
Apprentice	2.6	4.1	1.4
Domestic employee	0.6	0.6	0.7
Other	0.2	0.2	0.2
<b>Intra-regional migrants</b>			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employee	22.1	30.6	12.4
Self-employed without employee(s)	57.4	51.3	64.3
Self-employed with employee(s)	5.7	7.7	3.3
Casual worker	1.9	1.9	2.0
Contributing family worker	9.0	3.2	15.7
Apprentice	3.3	4.7	1.6
Domestic employee	0.5	0.5	0.5
Other	0.2	0.2	0.2
<b>Inter-regional migrants</b>			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employee	26.5	34.6	13.0
Self-employed without employee(s)	52.9	48.2	60.8
Self-employed with employee(s)	5.5	6.8	3.3
Casual worker	2.9	2.7	3.3
Contributing family worker	8.3	2.8	17.5
Apprentice	3.0	4.0	1.2
Domestic employee	0.8	0.8	0.7
Other	0.2	0.2	0.2

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2013b).

Note: Created by the author using Table 3.7: Proportion of workers 15-64 years by employment status,

sex, and migrant status.

Research was conducted in Village K from December 8, 2013 to January 8, 2014 and then from September 2, 2014 to January 5, 2015, totalling approximately 150 days. Research in Techiman was conducted for two days, on March 12 and 13, 2014.

The investigator lived in Village K during the research period while also conducting micromorphological research using a hand level and vegetation research using GPS (Garmin e-Trex 20xJ), and collecting data on farmland distribution and area. In addition, in parallel with the results of the present study. Quantitative data collection, interviews, and participant observation were also conducted on agriculture, livestock care, cooking, housework, migrant work, and other activities. Dagaare and English were used in the course of the research.

For research in Techiman, the investigator requested an informant from Village K to serve as a guide, and data collection consisted mainly of interviews. The interviews, conducted mostly in English in farmlands and markets, concerned agricultural activities, ethnic composition, and migration history.

### 3.2. Environment in surveyed areas

Northwestern Ghana, including Village K, is located in a wet savannah area. The average annual rainfall is 1,119 mm, and the average annual temperature is 28.5 °C (Figure 2) <sup>3</sup>. The seven months from mid-March to mid-October constitute the rainy season; mid-October to January is the relatively cool, dry season; and February to March is the hot, dry season. Although the annual temperature range is small during the rainy season, when the amount of clouds increases, the temperature drops slightly during the Harmattan season<sup>4</sup> from December to January because clouds and dust block the sun.

What mainly characterises this location is the iron pan distributed over a wide area. The soil distributed in this area is classified as plinthosol. Plinthosols are widely found in the area stretching from Burkina Faso to central Ghana (EC-JRC 2013). This soil is rich in iron and tends to form a hardened iron pan. When the iron in the soil comes to the surface, it hardens owing to the strong sunlight and precipitation in the savannah area and becomes an iron pan. At the survey site, this hardened iron pan was exposed on the ground surface, and the crop layer was thinly deposited on top (Figure 3). The thickness of this layer in the iron pan area is approximately 10–20 cm, which is not suitable for cultivating crops.

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<sup>3</sup> Ghana Meteorological Agency observation data were used. Average precipitation was calculated from 2004–2014 data observed in Lawra. Average temperatures were calculated using data from 2004 to 2014 in Wa, the capital of the Upper West Region. As the temperature was not observed in Lawra, observation data for the capital, Wa, were used.

<sup>4</sup> This is a local wind that blows in the Gulf of Guinea region in West Africa. It is often observed in the dry season from November to February due to eastern or north-eastern winds. It is extremely dry and contains fine dust because it blows in from the Sahara Desert.

The environment of Techiman is very different from that of Village K. Techiman, located in the transition zone from the forest to the savannah, is slightly dry from December to January, but precipitation is observed year-round (Figure 4). The average annual rainfall is 1,463 mm, with an average annual temperature of 27.7 °C<sup>5</sup>, which makes it a milder climate than that of Village K. This area has a wide variety of cultivable crops, including grains such as corn (*Zea mays*), root crops such as yams (e.g. *Dioscorea rotundata*), and vegetables such as tomatoes (*Solanum lycopersicum*). Fruits such as cashews (*Anacardium occidentale*) are also cultivated, similar to rice (*Oryza sativa*) near the river. The soil is fertile, but the crop layer is not very thick. The creation of mounds is indispensable for crop cultivation because crop growth is affected by topsoil runoff due to precipitation. Therefore, the Dagaaba people are often required to grow crops using mounds. As Figure 5 shows, the people of the Upper West Region tend to stay in the ecological transition zone of the Brong Ahafo region.

The Brong Ahafo Region, where Techiman is located, is the ethnic territory of the Bono people, an Akan ethnic group. The town of Techiman developed as a trading hub before the 18th century and functioned as the economic centre of the Brong Ahafo Region (Dickson 1969: 62). However, its population density has remained low until recent years, perhaps because it is located on the periphery of the Asante Kingdom. Therefore, it has a surplus of land that attracts many people.

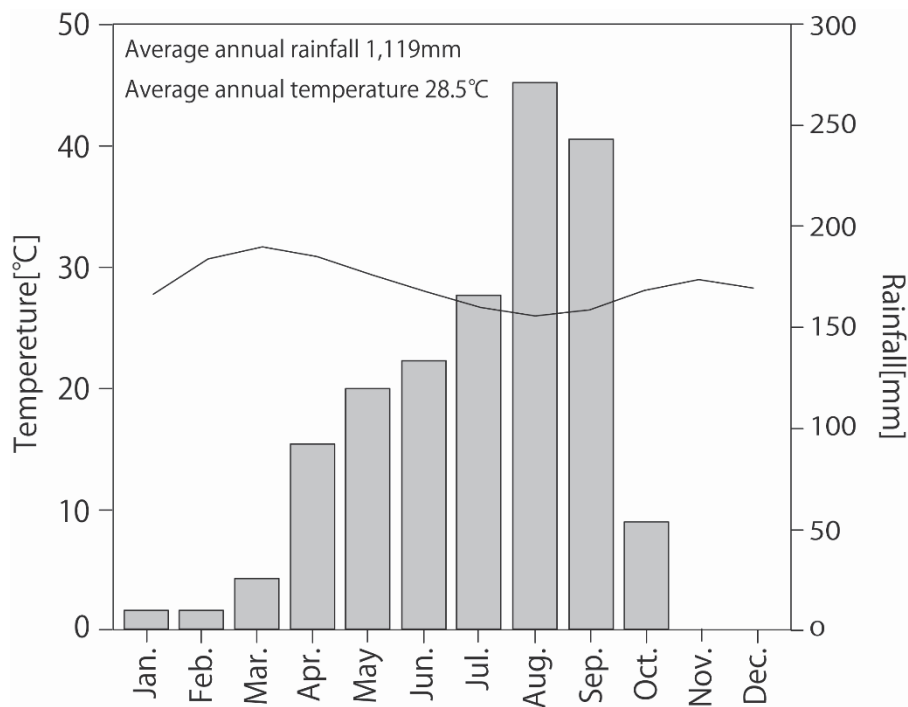


Figure 2. Average precipitation by month in Lawra and average temperature by month in Wa from 2004 to 2014

<sup>5</sup> World Weather Online was used for Techiman climate data (see <https://www.worldweatheronline.com/techiman-weather-averages/brong-ahafo/gh.aspx> / Accessed on 17 September 2021).



Figure 3. Cultivated land with iron pan exposed; an iron pan is exposed on the surface, with a thin layer of soil deposited on top

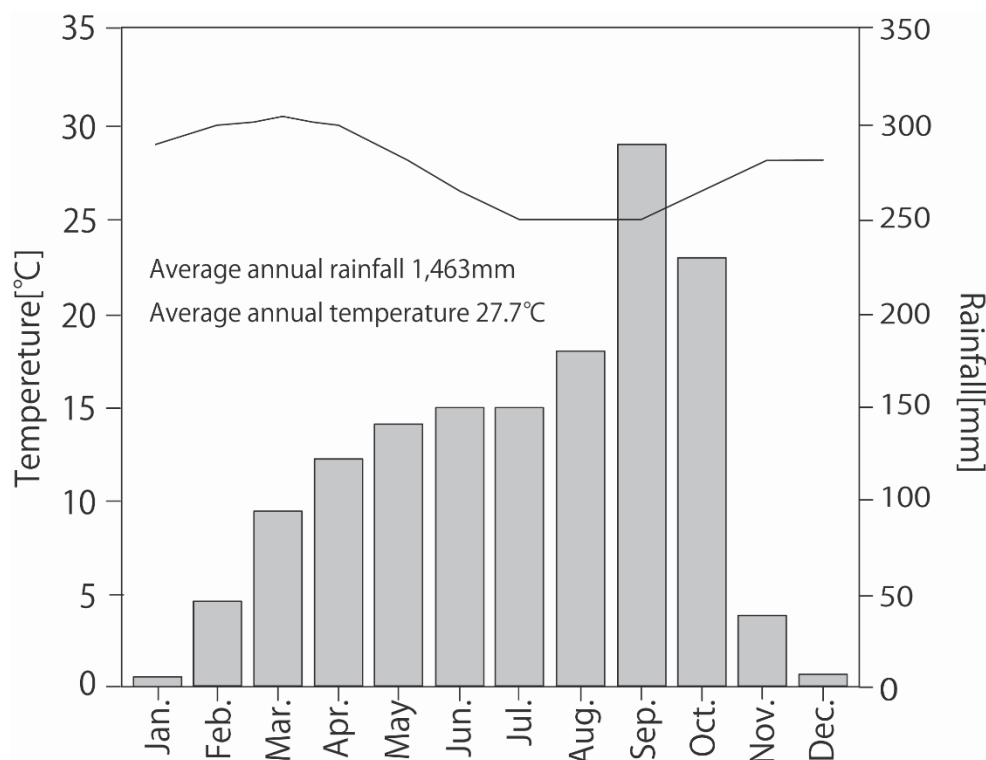


Figure 4. Average precipitation and average temperature by month in Techiman

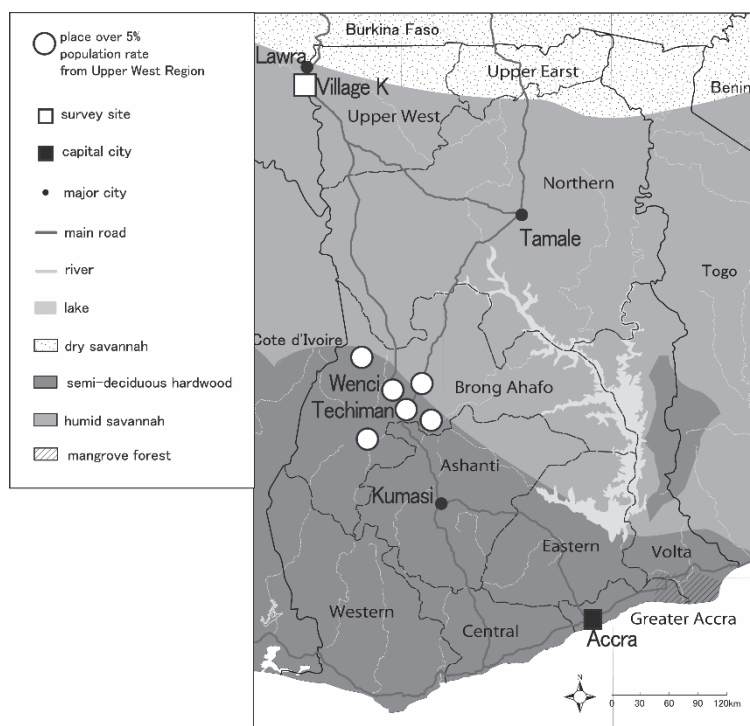


Figure 5. Places where over 5% of the population comes from the Upper West Region

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2013a; 2013b).

Note: Created by the author.

### 3.4. Daily lives of people in Village K

The people of Village K are agricultural Dagaaba people. In the Lawra District, where Village K is located, Christians make up 58% of the total population, 37% follow traditional religions, 4% are Muslims, and 1% are ‘other’ (Lawra District 2015).

In December 2013, Village K had six compounds<sup>6</sup>, 44 households, and 971 people. Dagaaba society is composed of patrilineal extended households that join together to form a compound. The compounds are residential groups composed of multiple households.<sup>7</sup> In these compounds, joint activities such as exchanges of food and fuel logs take place across households. Households in compounds are composed of multiple families (Figure 6).

The households comprising the compound consist primarily of the male household head and his relatives, including married men and their wives and children. Agricultural work is carried out on a household basis, with men in the household cooperating to cultivate the land owned by the head.

The nuclear family that makes up a household consists of a husband, wife, and children, all of whom

<sup>6</sup> Compounds in Dagaaba are called *yiri*, which means ‘family’ or ‘residence’. Resident groups called *yiri* have also been confirmed among Burkina Faso’s Mossi people. These are resident groups consisting of paternal relatives and the spouses of married men, and they are regarded as the basic unit of social life. Even in this surveyed area, *yiri* are regarded as residential groups, which are the basic unit of social life.

<sup>7</sup> Households forming compounds are called *rol* in the Dagaaba language.

eat and sleep in one house. Each nuclear family owns one cooking stove, on which the wives of each nuclear family prepare meals. Daily meals are prepared in rotation by multiple wives in the household. Wives prepare meals for the entire household with their own stoves and distribute them to each nuclear family in the same household.

The survey participants were 13 households in four compounds in Village K (see Table 3). The heads of households within the same compound have a common grandfather or father, with the compound name indicated by the name of the founder of the compound followed by the compound's *yiri* in the Dagaaba language. Fili *yiri* is a compound with a male founder, Fili, from Debuo *yiri*. Doro *yiri* is said to come from other compounds in Village K. Garo *yiri* is a compound that moved from another village. Frequent exchanges of crops and meat between Debuo *yiri* and Fili *yiri*, who were originally one group, still occur.

### 3.5. Agriculture in Village K

The people of Village K cultivate staple foods such as sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*), pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*), yams (early variety: *Dioscorea alata*; late variety: *Dioscorea rotundata*), corn, rice, secondary foods, peanuts (*Arachis hypogea*), Bambara groundnuts (*Vigna subterranea*), black-eyed peas (*Vigna unguiculata*), okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*), and roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*). Though the region has many cultivars, the distribution of the iron pan imposes restrictions. In addition, each planted area is small, and food is often exhausted during the in-between seasons (see Table 3).

Cereals are sown and yams planted in March to April before the rainy season, and the period from September to November is used for weeding. Men engage in farming in Village K during sowing and harvesting time but travel to areas in southern Ghana such as Techiman for seasonal labour at other times. Men are often absent from the village during weeding time; thus, women and children typically perform this task.

Farming in Village K is characterised by a variety of mounds and ridges formed within the cultivated land (Figure 7). As mentioned, the thickness of the crop layer in the iron pan area is 10–20 cm, which is insufficient for crop growth. For example, for pearl millet, the thickness of the crop layer needs to be at least 30 cm because the roots grow. Mounds and ridges must be created because a sufficient crop layer cannot be obtained in the iron pan area, which occupies a wide part of the village (Figure 8).

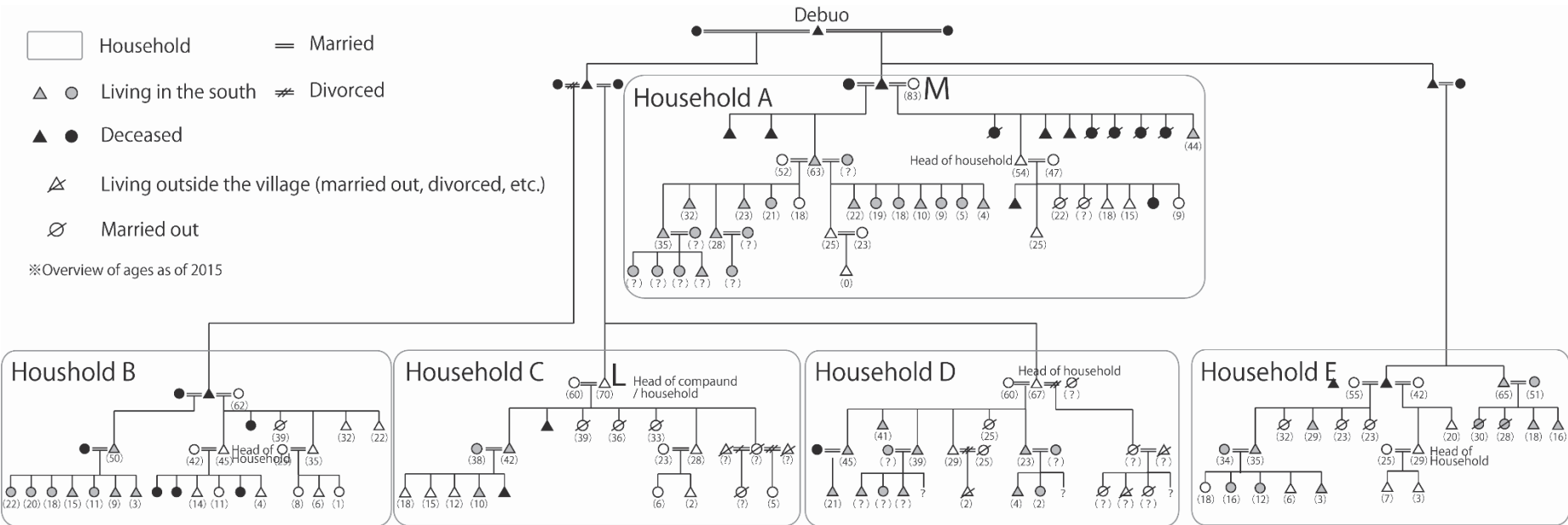


Figure 6. Compound structure (Debuo yiri)

Table 3. Number of cultivated land parcels and planted area by household crop for each compound surveyed

Compound	Household	Sorghum		Pearl Millet		Yams		Corn		Rice		Peanuts		Bambara groundnuts		Total cultivated land	
		mber of parc	Area (ha)	mber of parc	Area (ha)	mber of parc	Area (ha)	mber of parc	Area (ha)	mber of parc	Area (ha)	mber of parc	Area (ha)	mber of parc	Area (ha)	mber of parc	Area (ha)
Debuo <i>yiri</i>	Db1	3	0.63	5	1.03	1	0.03	1	0.32	1	0.11	9	1.28	2	0.54	21	3.83
	Db2	1	0.03	3	0.68	2	0.05	0	0.00	2	0.07	1	0.42	2	0.44	11	1.68
	Db3	3	0.18	2	0.31	4	0.07	2	0.37	1	0.05	6	0.32	2	0.37	19	1.62
	Db4	6	0.95	1	0.20	2	0.05	0	0.00	0	0.00	7	1.54	0	0.00	16	2.75
	Db5	5	0.68	1	0.44	3	0.05	1	0.17	0	0.00	5	1.27	2	0.61	17	3.23
Total		18	2.48	12	2.66	12	0.26	4	0.86	4	0.23	28	4.82	8	1.96	84	13.11
Fili <i>yiri</i>	Fl1	3	0.52	2	0.75	3	0.07	2	0.03	0	0.00	8	1.65	0	0.00	18	3.02
	Fl2	1	0.20	1	0.12	1	0.06	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	0.65	0	0.00	7	1.03
	Fl3	1	0.07	1	0.07	1	0.01	1	0.13	0	0.00	2	0.30	0	0.00	5	0.51
	Total	5	0.79	4	0.95	5	0.14	3	0.15	0	0.00	14	2.59	0	0.00	30	4.55
Garó <i>yiri</i>	Gr1	8	1.46	2	0.32	2	0.07	0	0.00	0	0.00	8	1.11	0	0.00	20	2.95
	Gr2	5	0.42	2	0.34	1	0.04	2	0.19	0	0.00	7	0.86	0	0.00	15	1.66
	Total	13	1.88	4	0.66	3	0.11	2	0.19	0	0.00	15	1.97	0	0.00	35	4.61
Doro <i>yiri</i>	Dr1	5	0.90	4	0.53	1	0.02	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	0.59	1	0.10	15	2.14
	Dr2	5	0.65	1	0.02	2	0.06	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	0.57	1	0.27	11	1.55
	Dr3	5	1.02	3	0.70	1	0.03	1	0.25	0	0.00	3	0.92	0	0.00	9	2.36
	Total	15	2.57	8	1.25	4	0.11	1	0.25	0	0.00	10	2.08	2	0.37	35	6.06

All crops (except peanuts) are cultivated by creating mounds and ridges. The mounds are called *potor*s, the border ridges that surround the cultivated land are called *beguras*, and the other ridges are called *rairai*. Yams, pearl millet, sorghum, and bambara groundnuts are planted or sown at the top of the mound. Vegetables such as corn, capsicum, and tomatoes are cultivated on ridges. Cowpeas, okra, and roselle are mixed with corn and sorghum, and rice is sown under mounds on irrigated arable land. Peanuts are cultivated every other year, at which point the previously created mounds are knocked down and flattened.

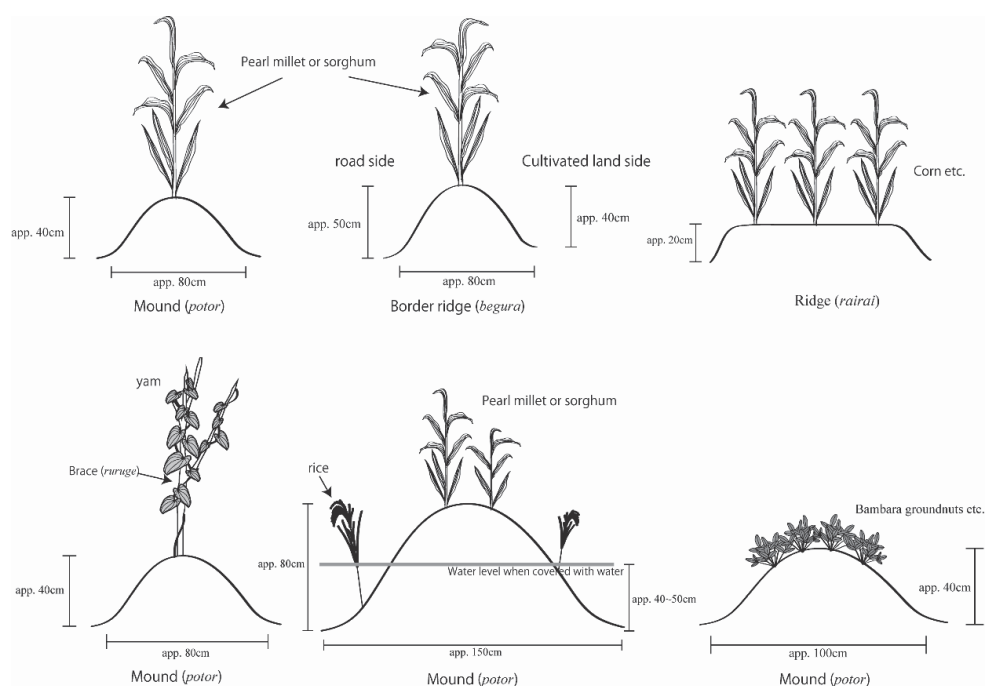


Figure 7. Crop cultivation methods



Figure 8. Cultivated land with mounds and ridges

## 4. Movement of people in Village K

### 4.1. Need for seasonal labour outside the village

Environmental restrictions have a substantial impact on farming, which comprises people's livelihood in the region. Van der Geest (2011) conducted an interview with the Dagaaba people from the Upper West Region of Ghana to investigate the reasons for their migration. Many studies have reported that soil oligotrophication is cited as the main reason for migration. While few people cite events such as drought and floods due to fluctuations in precipitation as reasons for migration, many have said that the main problem is the difficulty of securing food due to the volatile climate and low soil productivity.

The iron pan widely distributed around Village K was formed when the iron buried in the soil emerged onto the surface. The iron pan covers the ground and helps protect the soil from wind erosion and hydraulic action. On the other hand, the iron pan becomes an impermeable layer, and precipitation cannot penetrate the ground. Because the soil deposited on the iron pan is washed away by surface currents, the accumulated soil on the cultivated land is thin, and a sufficient crop layer cannot be obtained.

Land without an iron pan is suitable for cultivation, but such land is limited in Village K. Around 70%–80% of Village K is iron pan area. Villagers divide the iron pan-free land into agricultural land for each compound; however, the acreage per person tends to be limited due to the increase in the number of compounds and in the overall population.

Yams are considered an important staple food for the Dagaaba people (Lobnibe 2010). However, in recent years, the proportion of corn-cultivated land has tended to be higher than that of yams, and this tendency intensifies as the total cultivated land area declines (see Table 3). According to interviews, yam cultivation is decreasing, as it requires a thick crop layer, but corn can be cultivated even if the crop layer is thin. Thus, this crop tends to expand to land with an iron pan. However, corn requires more nutrients to grow and tends to cause soil deterioration.

Precipitation in Village K fluctuates greatly from year to year (see Table 4). Some years, it exceeds 1,300 mm, as in 2006, whereas it falls below 680 mm in other years, as in 2012. Fluctuations in precipitation have a significant impact on crop yields in rainwater-dependent farming among the Dagaaba. This does not mean that a large amount of precipitation is beneficial. If the amount of precipitation is too high, surface currents are likely to occur, and the runoff of surface soil causes damage, such as the uprooting of crops. This may also create barriers to the growth of certain crops. The Dagaaba people say that continuous heavy rain causes crop roots to come up to the surface. In particular, strong precipitation when crops do not grow sufficiently removes soil and greatly impacts crop growth.

According to the interviews, 2012 saw a poor harvest due to light rainfall of less than 700 mm. By contrast, the rainfall in 2014 totalled 965 mm, which was insufficient but was an average level; thus, crop yield was also average. When total precipitation reaches 1,200 mm or more, as in 2006, yams become susceptible to disease, and the yield of pearl millet, which has low moisture resistance, decreases.

Table 4. Changes in annual rainfall in Lawra from 2004 to 2014

Year	Annual rainfall (mm)
2005	1,198
2006	1,321
2007	680
2008	—
2009	—
2010	—
2011	—
2012	678
2013	—
2014	965
Average	969

— : Lost year

Source: Ghana Meteorological Agency observation data.

Note: Purchased data from Ghana Meteorological Agency.

In poor harvest years, many village households cannot secure a sufficient amount of food. Therefore, men from each household must leave the village for work or seasonal labour. As mentioned, fertile soil is distributed in the area around Techiman, and this area experiences precipitation throughout the year. The population is relatively sparse; therefore, there is a surplus of land. These ecological characteristics are a pull factor for immigrants from the Upper West Region (Van der Geest 2011). In fact, there is a high share of people from the Upper West Region among the population of Brong Ahafo, especially in the Techiman and Wenchi districts. People in Village K said, ‘Even here [the Upper West Region], you cannot do anything in the dry season. Farming, business opportunities, and cash to survive the year are all in southern Ghana’. They discussed how important it is to find a job in the south away from the village to make a living.

#### 4.2. Types of migration for people in Village K

The Debuo *yiri* is used as an example here to illustrate how migration to southern Ghana takes place. The Debuo *yiri*, one of the compounds surveyed, consisted of five households (households A to E), as shown in Figure 6, and comprised 106 members in 2015. They are one of the oldest compounds in Village K and are relatively large. They are led by the eldest son of the founder, Debuo (L in Figure 6).

Of the 106 members of Debuo *yiri*, about half (54) lived in southern Ghana. In many households, the eldest son of the head of the household as well as his wife and children live in southern Ghana, and the second and subsequent siblings, their wives, and their children remain in Village K to assist the household head. The eldest son generally engages in agricultural production in southern Ghana and returns to Village K only once a year. The second son works to produce subsistence crops with the head

of the household during the rainy season, but, during the dry season, he stays with the eldest son and other family members (members of the same compound and other households) and engages in seasonal labour there as a labour base. In seasonal labour, many choose work in the agricultural sector, but some choose other work, such as in commerce or as mechanics. Households within the same compound often have different labour bases in southern Ghana. While household C has a labour base in a rural area near Techiman, other households have a base in a rural area in the suburbs of Wenchi. Furthermore, even in these suburbs, the rural areas of labour bases differ between households.

In Household C, L, who is also the head of the household and of the compound, went to Techiman in the late 1980s with the help of an acquaintance. There, he negotiated with the Akan ethnic group and signed a contract to rent land for housing and fields nearby. After that, he lived in a house near Techiman for about 15 years and worked in agricultural production while paying land rent. His eldest son got married, so he left his eldest son and his wife behind and returned to the village. The eldest son now works in agricultural production while paying land rent. He returns to Village K once a year, but he brings back corn to supplement the food that tends to be in short supply. The eldest son said, ‘My son will soon be a man and will get married in a few years. Then, I will go back to Village K’, indicating that he would soon leave his residence and land in the south to his children.

Interviews with other compounds and people in other villages make it clear that the method of building a base used by the Debuo *yiri* is universal in Dagaaba society and that many Dagaaba people, as in the case of L, travelled to southern Ghana in the late 1980s to create such bases. It is also clear that, even if they live in southern Ghana for several years, few people spend their lives there; they tend to return to their villages when in their 50s or 60s.

## 5. Changes in movement patterns

### 5.1. Start of seasonal labour in southern Ghana

This study examines the current state of Village K. In this section, I refer to the interviews and literature to clarify the establishment of Dagaaba migration patterns. According to the interview findings, the people of Village K earned cash in the 1960s after Ghana’s independence by engaging in road construction and the school/hospital construction projects of state-owned enterprises. While some construction projects were located near Lawra, several interviewees stated that they travelled to Accra or Kumasi to engage in construction projects there. In addition, the villagers were sometimes employed by Christian churches for the construction of schools and in afforestation activities led by Christian schools<sup>8</sup>. L, a Debuo *yiri*, stated that he also worked at schools and road construction sites before moving

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<sup>8</sup> According to interviews with Village K residents and the Forestry Commission Lawra Station, and as cited in Nanang (1998). Afforestation activities have since continued, being conducted each year since the early 2000s (Forestry Commission Lawra Station 2014).

to southern Ghana.

Subsequently, the 1970s and the 1980s witnessed a turning point in Ghana's cacao production. Until this period, though Ghana had enjoyed the highest cacao production in the world, production began to decline, and the Ghanaian economy stagnated due to multiple factors, such as 1) large-scale illegal exports to neighbouring countries; 2) inadequate cacao farm maintenance due to a lack of inputs; 3) the aging of cacao trees and cacao producers; and 4) a large-scale forest fire (Posnansky 1980, Bulir 2002, Kolavalli and Vigneri 2011). This decline in the Ghanaian economy prompted the acceptance of IMF and World Bank structural adjustment policies after 1983, leading to a decline in illegal exports and improvements in cacao farm maintenance. As a result, cacao production recovered (Kolavalli and Vigneri 2011).

In 1982, just before the introduction of the structural adjustment policies, a large-scale forest fire broke out, altering people's lives completely. The forest fire burned down cacao trees as well as perennial crops such as plantains and bananas, which had been the staple food of the Akan ethnic group in southern Ghana. The Akan began to grow yams, an annual crop; this change necessitated the recruitment of many labourers to produce cacao and yams (Lobnibe 2010). Figure 9, which shows the changes in the planted area of yams in Ghana, reveals that it increased rapidly in 1984. This rapid increase is believed to have been caused by the switch to yam cultivation following the forest fire.

Ghana's structural adjustment policies led to budget cuts in the agricultural, educational, medical, and other public sectors, the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, and reductions in the number of civil servants. This resulted in the loss of employment for many people in the savannah region. In search of work, the newly unemployed Dagaaba people moved to cacao-producing areas, which had been in need of a labour force, and to the vicinity of Techiman, which had a large surplus of land. This gave them a greater opportunity to enter the agricultural sector. The Akan ethnic group, who lacked the skill to produce annual crops, likely regarded the Dagaaba people and their high level of agricultural expertise as important labour factors.

The infrastructural development of the 1980s is another reason why the Dagaaba people started to work in seasonal labour. The construction of the bridge over the Black Volta River in 1981 had the greatest impact on the people of Dagaaba. Until then, a boat had been used to cross the river; therefore, large numbers of people and heavy luggage could not be transported in one trip. The construction of the bridge made migration to the south more feasible (Lobnibe 2010).

The complex intertwining of such factors accelerated the movement of the Dagaaba people to southern Ghana in the 1980s. The Dagaaba people, who are praised within Ghana for their great skills in agriculture, sought jobs in the agricultural sector in their new destinations. Due to year-round crop production, people sent compound members to southern Ghana to secure a residential base and agricultural lands so that they could engage in agriculture at any time. Since then, the Dagaaba people

have established a mobile style of living, staying with family members in southern Ghana while performing seasonal labour.

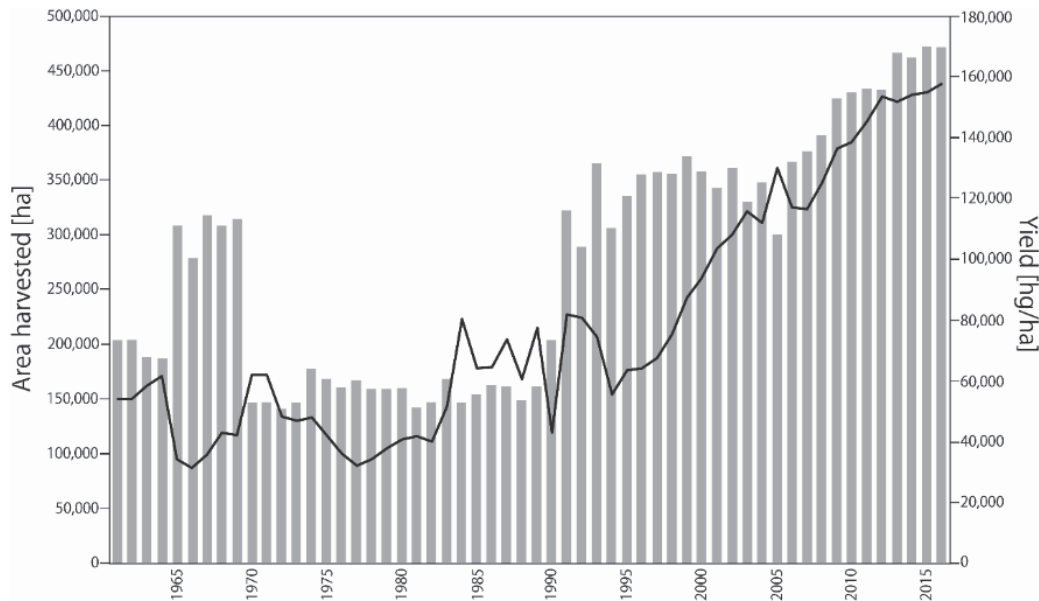


Figure 9. Changes in the planted area and yield per hectare of yam in Ghana

Source: FAOSTAT data<sup>9</sup>.

## 5.2. Relationship between agricultural technology and migration of the Dagaaba people

Following the increases in cacao prices after 1984, ethnic groups of the savannah region moved to cacao-producing areas and their environs and entered into the production of cacao and other crops. A sharecropping system was employed in cacao production in southern Ghana, in which tenant farmers gave a share of the produced crop to the landowner. This sharecropping system, which allowed tenant farmers to start farming without a large amount of cash, brought many ethnic groups in the savannah region into cacao production (Kolavalli and Vigneri 2011).

In the early 1980s, the Dagaaba people began travelling to the forests of the South to work as seasonal labourers in cacao production. However, in the late 1980s, the Akan ethnic group switched from the cultivation of yams to that of plantains and bananas, which meant that the Dagaaba people could no longer grow yams, their specialty. The Dagaaba people are said to have left the forest area as a result, and moved their labour base to the Brong Ahafo Region, where various crops could be cultivated (Lobnibe 2010). As Figure 9 shows, the planted area of yams decreased between 1990 and the late 1990s, but has increased ever since. In addition, the yield per unit area of yams has steadily increased since the late 1980s, when the Dagaaba people moved their labour base to the Brong-Ahafo region, reflecting the

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QCL>

higher productivity of this new region.

The Dagaaba people state, ‘The Akan people in southern Ghana do not know how to prepare mounds or grow yams. The Dagaaba people will make mounds on the land of the Akan ethnic group and teach people how to make yams.’ The Dagaaba people, with their strong agricultural skills, are now an indispensable labour force for Ghanaian agricultural production and contribute greatly to domestic and international food production.

## 6. Modern population movement and *zongo* settlements

### 6.1. Access to southern Ghana through *zongo*

There are many cultural, religious, and customary differences between the ethnic groups of the savannah region and the Akan ethnic group, whose ethnic territory is in moist southern Ghana. In addition, the ethnic people of the savannah region have been treated as a fringe group of the Akan since their independence, and many feel they have been removed from the centre of politics. On the other hand, the Akan fear that the influx of ethnic groups from the savannah region will deprive them of their land and resources (Ametewee 2007). For these reasons, various problems arise when the people of the savannah region try to mix with and live among the Akan ethnic group. Despite the high proportion of Christians among them, the Dagaaba people have a strong sense of belonging to the savannah region, which is predominantly Muslim, and they are psychologically detached from the Akan ethnic people, who are Christians.

The *zongo* settlement, made up of migrant communities, is important in helping the people of the savannah region establish a living base in Akan lands. The people of the savannah region, such as the Dagaaba people, rely on networks of relatives and hometown groups when moving to the Akan ethnic lands. They maintain these relationships while living at their destinations. Many already have relatives and hometown groups in various *zongo* settlements; therefore, it is said that even first-time visitors will have no problems at their destination if they depend on *zongo* during their migration.

*Zongo* settlements are made up of ethnic groups deeply associated with commerce, such as the Hausa and Kusasi people, but they are also open to others. *Zongo* settlements have emerged across Ghana, and various ethnic groups live together in each *zongo* community, such as the Kusasi and Dagaaba people from northern Ghana; the Mossi, Yanga, and Busansi from Burkina Faso; and the Hausa people, who laid the foundations for *zongo* settlements. The following has been said about ethnic relations within the *Zongo* community:

[Interview 1: Unity among ethnic groups in the savannah region]

\*() indicates the author’s notes.

When the Kusasi people worked as servants for the Asante [before Ghana's independence

in 1957; exact date unknown], they observed that Dagaaba people enthusiastically engaged in agriculture. The Kusasi love hard workers; therefore, they soon became close with the Dagaaba people. The Dagaaba and Kusasi became relatives by marrying their daughters into each other's families.

Since then, when the Dagaaba people wish to come to Asante land, they would first be invited to the *zongo* settlement and introduced to the Asante (by the Kusasi) as their relatives. The Asante people sometimes reject and kill people from the north. Therefore, the Kusasi people have introduced to the Asante people various ethnic groups (not only the Dagaaba people) as their relatives, and the ethnic groups of northern Ghana (savannah region) have protected each other by moving together.

People from northern Ghana always moved or did things in pairs. The Asante people thought that all of the ethnic groups introduced by the Kusasi were also Kusasi people, and they called us 'twins' for always acting in pairs.

(February 6, 2015; Kusasi man, I)

As [Interview 1] shows, ethnic groups of the savannah region protected and helped each other by living side by side in *zongo* communities. In particular, there is strong unity between the Dagaaba and Kusasi ethnic groups of northern Ghana. The *zongo* settlement, which had been established as a trading hub, is now the headquarters not only of merchants but also of a wider set of ethnic groups from the savannah region.

## 6.2. Acceptance into the *zongo* and relationship maintenance with the Akan ethnic group

The modern *zongo* settlement is described as being open not only to merchants but also to all people. However, in reality, there are conditions for entering into the *zongo* settlement, and one must receive permission from the *megida*, the proprietor:

[Interview 2: Acceptance of the *zongo* settlement on Akan ethnic land]

\*( ) indicates the author's notes.

Prospective residents of the *zongo* settlement must be introduced to the *megida* with a 'friend' (*nzua*) as his host (sponsor/guarantor)<sup>10</sup>. Anyone is eligible to live in the *zongo* settlement with consent from the *megida*. One can find a *nzua* even after arriving here (Akan ethnic lands). It might even be easier if one has a connection with the kola nut business (kola trade).

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<sup>10</sup> The sponsor/guarantor is referred to as *nzua*, a word that means 'friend' in the Kusasi language (Kusaal).

(January 26, 2015; Kusasi woman, A)

*Zongo* settlements were established and flourished amid the kola trade, and they followed its customs in many ways. New entrants into the kola trade are required to go through an intermediary. The responsible party listens to the intermediary's input, verifies the person's reputation through the trading network, and decides whether to admit him (Kirikoshi 2021). [Interview 2] described the requirement by which newcomers must have a host when entering the *zongo* settlement. This is a strong remnant of the practices that ruled the kola trade.

Scholars argue that the norms by which new entrants were admitted into the kola trade were established for the security of the merchants based in various regions and to maintain relationships with the host society (Lovejoy 1980). In other words, the kola traders removed untrustworthy individuals to prevent trouble, thereby maintaining a good relationship with the host society and protecting the merchants. The customs adopted around *zongo* acceptance are also a way to restrict the disorderly influx of immigrants and maintain a safe environment for residents of the Akan ethnic group.

In addition, the statement in [Interview 2] that 'It might be even easier if one has a connection with the kola trade' indicates that membership in the kola trade is the mark of a credible person and that things will go smoothly when one is introduced by such a person. Therefore, one might call on an acquaintance who is a kola merchant to arrange an introduction if he has no relatives or hometown group members at the destination.

## 7. Conclusion

The people of the savannah region have long maintained their livelihood by utilising differences in the region and the main source of livelihood to exchange products and solve the problem of unstable crop production. For this reason, people have emphasised seasonal labour and interactions with other ethnic groups and have conducted such practices across wide areas bridging the savannah region and forest, the rural area, and the city (Rain 1999). In recent years, the effects of climate change, land degradation due to rapid population growth, and increased terrorist activities by Islamic militants since 2010 have underscored the importance of migration. As a result, population migration has accelerated from the savannah region to moist/wet areas.

As mentioned, rapid migration can cause friction between migrants and the host society. In Côte d'Ivoire, which neighbours Ghana, people rapidly flowed into the cacao industry with government encouragement and settled without fully understanding the host societies. As a result, tensions deepened between migrants and host societies, causing conflicts.

By contrast, in Ghana, no visible conflicts have broken out between migrants (the people of the savannah region) and the host society (Akan ethnic group). It goes without saying that the differences

between the Ghanaian government's policies and those of the Côte d'Ivoire government have played a major role in this contrast. However, a considerable role was also played by the framework designed to curb rapid population influx and pre-empt conflict structured around the customs and relationships that the Ghanaian people have built over time (Kirikoshi 2019).

This study's analysis of the migration patterns of the Dagaaba people show that three factors help maintain the balance between migrants and the host society. The first is that, despite having some family members in southern Ghana, the people of the savannah region recognise it as their home base. The interviews indicate that many ethnic groups, including the Dagaaba people, consider southern Ghana a temporary place of work needed to sustain their livelihoods rather than a permanent home. The migrant population in southern Ghana does not grow rapidly, as people return to their hometowns to live out the rest of their lives after they have arranged for successors.

The second factor is that a crisis in the Akan ethnic group's subsistence agriculture induced the people of the savannah region to start conducting seasonal labour. The Akan ethnic group understands that they received help from the people of the savannah region, albeit temporarily. With regard to current food production, they stated, 'It would not be possible to maintain production without the people of the savannah region'. Thus, the Akan people cannot unconditionally criticise the influx of migrants.

The third factor is the well-established link between the migrant community and host society. The kola trade contributed significantly to the formation of this link by connecting the Asante Empire and the savannah region. Coastal kingdoms such as the Asante Empire and the Kingdom of Dahomey in present-day Benin accumulated wealth through the sale of slaves to Europe, but the abolition of the slave trade stripped many realms of their national strength. The Asante Empire also suffered heavy damage but maintained its economy by strengthening the kola trade to the savannah region (Lovejoy 1980). Thus, the Asante Empire has stronger ties to the savannah region than other coastal kingdoms, and the relationship between the two regions is maintained through the kola trade and the *zongo*.

However, the Akan ethnic group is threatened by an increase in migrants. Currently, population movement is restricted by the spread of COVID-19, but the balance may be disrupted if the migration of people from the savannah region accelerates rapidly after the restrictions end. It will be necessary to carefully monitor future changes in the environment, trends among Islamic terrorist groups, and responses from the Akan ethnic group.

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# People and Dogs in Rainforests: Multispecies Relationships Under the Rising Pressure of Conservation Policy in Southeastern Cameroon

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## Abstract

This paper describes and analyses how forest dwellers, especially the Baka hunter-gatherers of southeastern Cameroon, perceive and interact with dogs in daily life. I will also discuss the social and ecological contexts of how dogs are involved in the politics and economics of their host societies (*i.e.* hunter-gatherers and their neighbours). The relation of the Baka to dogs seems dichotomous between the forest and village environments, whereas people treat dogs as hunting and gathering partners in the forest, but tend to treat them maliciously, as ‘food thieves’, at their settlement. Sedentarisation and agriculturalization have continued for decades among the Baka. In addition, the recent increase in the pressure of conservation has facilitated this trend. Changes in the subsistence activities of human societies are reflected in the diet of dogs and their marginalisation at human settlements. Analysis of the causes of canine death suggested a heavy impact of human activities on dog mortality. In tropical forest environments, the survival of dogs independent of humans seems difficult; consequently, their lifespan, health, and population dynamics are related to the ecology of their human host population.

**Keywords:** human-animal relations, farmer and hunter-gatherer relationships, local livelihoods, hunter-gatherers, conservation

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. African hunter-gatherer societies and dogs

The dog was the first animal to be domesticated by humans and has been more widely ‘useful’ to people than any other domestic animal (Lupo 2011). Their many ‘uses’ include their contribution to subsistence (*e.g.* hunting and transport), their role as guard dogs to protect people from potential predators, evil spirits, and other dangers, and their support as social companions for people, keeping them warm on cold nights and watching over children and elders. Dogs in hunter-gatherer societies have been studied from an evolutionary perspective because their domestication dates back to the time when all humans were hunter-gatherers. While many studies have focused on dogs’ contribution to hunting activities, less attention has been given to the socio-economic aspects of hunting dogs (Ikeya 1994) and to the social and cultural relationship between people and dogs outside of hunting situations (Meehan *et al.* 1999, Kohn 2007, Musharbash 2017).

Because dogs are kept in most of the world's hunter-gatherer societies, it can be easily assumed that they may play an important role in hunting activities to ensure hunting success. However, recent studies comparing the hunting role of dogs in small-scale societies in different parts of the world indicate that the use of dogs does not always increase hunting efficiency (Lupo 2017). Lupo (2011) quantified the contribution of dogs to hunting success in the Central African Republic by examining how hunting results differed with and without the participation of dogs in net and spear hunting practiced among the Aka, with results varying according to prey size and hunting type. Koster (2009) used the theory of optimal foraging strategies to examine the effects of hunting among hunters in Nicaragua, Central America, and found that the use of dogs had a reverse effect on hunting efficiency. These studies demonstrate that it cannot be assumed that dogs consistently contribute to hunting in terms of catch weight.

From an economic point of view, as Ikeya (1994) indicates, owning a dog is not a small cost for hunter-gatherer households. An historical examination of dog hunting among the San of the Kalahari Desert indicates that hunting with dogs has not always been popular, but that the onset of food distribution by the Botswana government to San communities has triggered a rapid increase of dog breeds consuming the surplus of rationed foods and dogs being used for hunting (Ikeya 1994). The San hunters give their surplus human food to dogs for their auxiliary role in bow-and-arrow hunting. According to Ikeya (1994), the lifespan of dogs used by the San for hunting is quite short (less than a few years). Sugawara (2019) mentions the harshness of the San's treatment of dogs.

Concerning the African tropical forest regions, the use of dogs is often described in the collective hunting methods of spear, bow-and-arrow, and net among the various hunting and gathering societies, including both the Pygmy hunter-gatherers and Bantu-speaking farmers (*e.g.* Sato 1983, Terashima 1983). In previous studies, dogs were documented as playing a role in hunting techniques. Apart from

Terashima's (1983) study of bow-and-arrow hunting among the Mbuti and Lupo's (2011) study of the Aka hunting with dogs, only fragmentary accounts exist in ethnographies of the Pygmy peoples. However, as Colin Turnbull notes in his classic ethnography *The Forest People*, the Mbuti use dogs 'without rest from the day they are born to the day they die' (Turnbull 1961/2015: 100), and dogs tend to be portrayed as objects to be used solely for labour.

This paper focuses on the social aspects of the relationship between dogs and the Baka, hunter-gatherers living in the tropical forest region of Cameroon. I will demonstrate how the ecological interdependence between humans and dogs, which has been cultivated through the joint practice of hunting, has extended to social and cultural spheres.

Reports that dogs are often treated harshly in Africa are not limited to hunter-gatherer societies. Compared to the West, where issues of animal welfare are becoming institutionalised at national and regional levels, the modern concept of animal welfare is rare in African countries, similar to various regions of Asia. However, forms of animal care differ among cultures. In this paper, I aim to compare the relationship between the Baka and dogs with the relationship between dogs and agriculturalists and urban dwellers, such as the Bakwele, who live in the same ecological environment as the Baka.

As portions of the data used in this paper were published in the form of a book chapter in Japanese (Oishi 2019) before the COVID-19 pandemic, citations have been added throughout the subsequent text where appropriate.

## 1.2. The Baka hunter-gatherers

Congo basin hunter-gatherers, who are traditionally referred to as African Pygmies, are estimated to number around 900,000 in Central Africa (Olivero *et al.* 2016). Most of these people have already become partly or fully agricultural and sedentary, and should therefore be described more accurately as former hunter-gatherers. The Baka comprise one of the largest hunter-gatherer groups in the Congo Basin, with a population estimated at 35,000–40,000 (Njounan Tegomo *et al.* 2012). Their language is Baka, a Ubangian language. The Baka have established relationships with more than 18 different farming groups in Cameroon, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo (Bahuchet 2017). The relationship between the Pygmies and neighbouring farmers entails a mixture of confrontational and appeasement aspects and ambivalent feelings toward each other (Takeuchi 2017).

Among the Baka of southeastern Cameroon, a major change in settlement patterns, from a nomadic lifestyle to farming and settlement, occurred in the 1950s (Althabe 1965). A diversification of subsistence activities was observed, from hunting and gathering to participation in subsistence farming, wage labour, and cultivation of cash crops (Kitanishi 2003, Oishi 2012; 2016). The focus of hunting activities has also transitioned from collective spear hunting to individual snare trap hunting (Hayashi 2008).

In recent years, as sedentarisation processes, most hunting activities have evolved into day trapping and gun hunting based on settled villages (Hayashi 2008). The Baka sometimes participate in extended hunting and gathering camps, called *molongo*, lasting several months every few years.

The Baka are especially excited about *molongo*, which are attended by most members of the community, including women and children. The main reason is because they can consume forest food such as wild yams, game, and freshwater fish. The frequency of these camps, however, has decreased considerably depending on various socioeconomic factors, especially due to the regulatory conditions introduced by conservation policies.

The Baka also go on small-group hunting trips called *sendo* and *maka*, both of which require dogs to accompany them to camp. Around the study area, dogs were not tied up or caged, but were allowed to roam freely. However, there are no wild dogs (feral dogs) that are completely isolated from humans. Dogs do not form large packs of more than a few individuals and do not bark in groups.

### 1.3. The rising pressure of conservation policies on local livelihoods in international border zones

The Cameroon Forest Law of 1994 established the zoning of forest space into areas designated for specific land use, including national parks. Subsequently, regulations on local people's use of the forest, including hunting and fishing activities, soon began. Control over game animals depends on their categorization by endangered species, created by the Cameroon Forest Law of 1994: A (integrally protected), B (partially protected), and C (other species). The implementation of these regulations became increasingly stricter. For example, while abundant game meat could have been observed in morning local markets until the mid-2000s, it became rare or minimal in the 2010s.

In addition, elephant poaching has increased significantly in international border zones between Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and the Republic of the Congo. The ivory trade was banned by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1989. However, illegal trade continues. Specifically, in the late 2000s, large-scale poaching of elephants was reported to have become more prominent. One of the technical aspects that facilitates large-scale elephant poaching is military weapons, such as Kalashnikov automatic rifles supplied by civil wars and other armed conflicts.

Unfortunately, the reputation of forest knowledge of the Baka has caused some of them to be recruited, equipped, and sent to the forest for poaching. Elephant tusks are brought outside of the forest for international black markets. While the arrest of local actors has often been reported, identifying actors at higher levels of this hierarchy is extremely complex (Kamgaing *et al.* 2016). In response to the crisis, conservation in these bordering forests has become very rigorous and often militarized using national armies. When wildlife crimes are reported, an immediate series of operation '*coups de poing*' is conducted in targeted hotspots of poaching. It has been reported that these operations have rapidly

reduced poaching (Dongmo 2011).

Accompanied by soldiers, ecoguards visit forest camps, threatening local people and resulting in a significant decrease in forest use. At the research site, the following observations were made: (1) a sudden decrease in the local population and the collapse of sedentary village settlements following military operations, (2) the evident reduction and cessation of daily activities in the forest by local people, (3) physical and mental trauma among the local people involved in violent military operations, (4) the rise of social tension between local people due to suspected betrayals, and (5) a spatial shift of hunting sites instead of a reduction in hunting practices (Oishi *et al.* 2015). In conservation contexts, there is less concern that the restriction of forest access due to conservation may have a significant impact on human communities (Remis and Robinson 2020). Local people, especially the Baka, remain the principal victims of anti-poaching activities, yet also occupy the key position to successfully tackle poaching at the local level in the context of conservation (Kamgaing *et al.* 2016).

Another growing concern related to wildlife conservation and hunting activities is zoonotic risk (Dounias and Froment 2011). Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, dogs have primarily been studied as a carrier of pathogens (*e.g.* rabies and echinococcus) from the viewpoint of public health and hygiene since the colonial period. In vitro transmission cases of retroviruses from wild animals to hunters in central African forests have been reported (Wolfe *et al.* 2004). As dogs occupy an intermediate position between wildlife and human communities in rural areas, it is possible to hypothesise that zoonotic diseases can also be mediated by dogs, *e.g.* in the case of hunting practices. However, little is known about how the frequency and pattern of human-animal contact relates to the socioeconomic and cultural conditions in which the forest population is located. Although this paper does not directly address the issue, it is meant to provide data on actual relationships between humans and dogs at the local level.

## 2. Research area and methodology

This study is based on intensive fieldwork conducted in March 2015, September 2016, September 2017, and August 2018, mainly in the villages of Ndongo, Moloundou District, Boumba-Ngoko Province, Eastern Region of the Republic of Cameroon (Figure 1). In addition, short-term fieldwork was conducted in the nearby provincial cities of Bertoua, Yokadouma, and Moloundou to enable comparison with city dwelling communities. The study site is surrounded by a humid environment of tropical rainforest dominantly consisting of semi-deciduous tree species with an annual rainfall of approximately 1,500 mm.

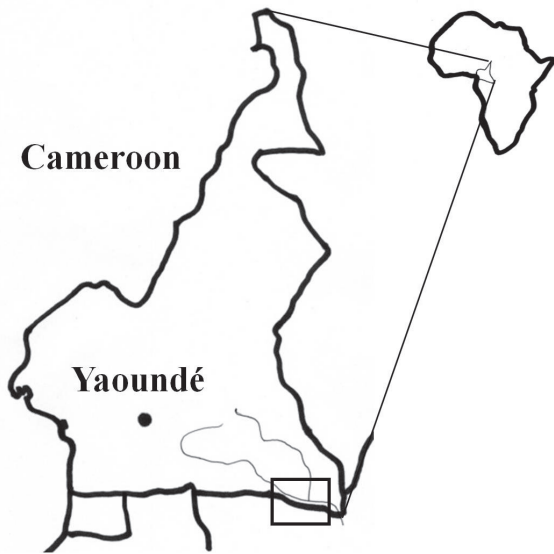


Figure 1. Location of the study area

Source: Prepared by the author.

The village of Ndongo has a population of approximately 600 people, about half of whom are Baka (approximately 60 households), while the Bakwele (approximately 25 households/250 people), Hausa, and other inhabitants (approximately 50 people) live adjacent to the village. Ecological anthropological research on the Baka has been conducted by Japanese researchers around Ndongo village since 1994. The author has been involved in the research since 2002, and has examined the relationship between farmers, hunter-gatherers, and merchants (Oishi 2012; 2016).

Ethnozoological data collection on dogs has been undertaken, aiming first to understand the actual situation of dog recognition and management by local people, especially among the Baka and the Bakwele. As preparation for implementing the individual identification method, I identified as many dogs as possible at the settlements and camps, then observed individual dogs and interviewed their owners. In rural areas, it is difficult to identify all dogs as they move between forest camps and settlements with their owners. Therefore, I attempted to document as many dogs as possible in the study area by repeating the surveys. Interviews were conducted with the dog owners. Forty-three Baka adults (41 males, 2 females) and 14 farmers and urban dwellers (10 males, 4 females) were interviewed about 112 dogs (63 males, 47 females, 2 of unknown sex) regarding their names, mode of acquisition, use, character, and whether and what they were fed. For the 45 dogs that had already died, we inquired about the cause of death. Hereafter, I use pseudonyms in place of the personal names of local people to whom I refer. Ethnic or local terms are italicised.

### 3. Ethnozoology of dogs among the Baka

#### 3.1. Baka perception and uses of dogs

The origin of indigenous African dogs is unknown. However, genetic analysis using mitochondrial DNA suggests that dogs that originated in Northern Europe spread to North and West Africa between 12,000 and 14,000 years ago, indicating genetic adaptation to tropical humid environments, including resistance to malaria (Adeola *et al.* 2017, Liu *et al.* 2017). Lupo (2017: 143) hypothesises that dogs were introduced 500 years ago with the extensive expansion of Bantu speakers, as no dogs of older age have been located in sites in the tropical forest regions of Central Africa. Of course, dogs were brought to Africa more recently during the colonial period. Today, modern dog breeds can be found in urban areas. However, in the rural areas of tropical forests, most dogs are medium-sized hybrids closely resembling the well-known ‘basenji’, the native dog breed of the Congo Basin.

In the Baka language, a dog is called *mbolo*. The Baka consume more than 60 species of forest wild mammals for food—referred to as ‘meat animals’—however, dogs are clearly distinguished from wild animals and are not eaten or expected to be eaten. Therefore, dogs are not subject to the same taboos of food avoidance as are wild animals. Thus, the position of the dog in the folk classification is unique and different from that of humans or other animals.

The dogs were identified and given individual names. In addition to dogs, the Baka also keep chickens as domestic animals, and occasionally, young wild animals obtained from hunting; however, they do not give them individual names. Only one name is given to an individual dog, and the name given is shared, not only by the owner, but at least within the camp.

Examples of the names of the seventy-eight dogs named by the Baka are provided in Table 1-1. The languages used in the naming of the dogs include Baka (28), French (28), Bakwele (5), Lingala (2), onomatopoeic and mimetic (2), and unknown (13). Naming patterns varied widely, but included names that described attributes or characteristics of the dog, such as eating habits or the dog's behaviour and attitude in the forest when hunting, names derived from commands given to the dog, anecdotal monologues unrelated to the dog's characteristics, and names borrowed from other cultures as a result of cultural contact. No dog inherited its name from a parent or previous owner, and anecdotal naming was prominent.

Table1-1. Examples of names given to dogs by the Baka (name, language, meaning)

#### Food and food habits

<i>Kimot</i>	Baka	A dish made by steaming plantain bananas
<i>Bubul</i>	French	<i>Boule boule</i> (ball ball): many round chunks of kneaded cassava porridge
<i>Njumuye</i>	Baka	It's cooked.
<i>Akwelbil</i>	Bakwele	It does not like rotten food.

Behaviour in the forest

<i>Meshan</i>	French	Aggressive
<i>Wose nyanga</i>	Baka	Fashionable woman
<i>Bokenga</i>	Baka	Many hills
<i>Otondo</i>	Baka	Aggressive
<i>Kaiman</i>	French	Large crocodile
<i>Bombulu</i>	Baka	Cowardly

Health and hygiene conditions

<i>Mokoumgendja</i>	Baka	Has hernia
<i>Mosunge</i>	Baka	Ticks

Social relationship and role

<i>Nabimo</i>	Baka	Your friend
<i>Kado</i>	French	Present
<i>Gaadien</i>	French	Guardian
<i>Nanga</i>	Lingala	Mine

Commands

<i>Kelelunde</i>	Baka	Let us go
<i>Ession</i>	French	Let us try
<i>Siaye</i>	Baka	Look up
<i>Yaye</i>	Bakwele	How about your condition?

Anecdotal monologue type names

<i>Nde wole</i>	Baka	I do not have a wife
<i>Andemaniyo</i>	Baka	If I knew that
<i>Abeya</i>	Baka	Do not look at your faults
<i>Qui me dit</i>	French	Who talks to me
<i>Yato</i>	Bakwele	I am going
<i>Malungu</i>	Baka	I know things
<i>Delaanyo</i>	Bakwele	The village is not good
<i>Jealous</i>	French	Jealousy

Cultural contact

<i>Medoh</i>	Bakwele	Female name
<i>CEFFIC</i>	French	Logging company
<i>Blek</i>	French	Character of a comic
<i>Mapouka</i>	Unknown	Music genre from Ivory Coast <sup>1</sup>
<i>Dakar</i>	land name	Capital of Senegal
<i>Lulu</i>	Unknown	Trade name of whisky in plastic bags

Source: Oishi (2019: 177).

Explanations for the example names within the different categories include:

(A) Names associated with food or eating habits. *Kimot* and *Bubul* are named after the dog's favourite foods (steamed and pounded plantain bananas) or appetite for food (number of bowls of cassava porridge

<sup>1</sup> The music is pops and used for dance in groups with sexy choreography.

eaten). The name *Njumuye* derives from the fact that the dog does not eat the prey it kills when hunting, but waits for its owner to arrive.

(B) The name refers to the dog's behaviour and attitude in hunting scenes. The name *Bokenga*, meaning 'many hills', refers to the strength of the dog's legs, *Kaiman* to the ferocity with which it bites its prey, *Bombulu* to its timid nature, and *Wose nyanga* to its utter uselessness, as in 'a woman who is always dressed up'. *Wose nyanga* represents the attitude of a useless dog who does not work at all.

(C) The name refers to the relationship between the owner and the dog and the dog's role. *Nabimo* is the name of a female, meaning 'your friend' in Baka, but refers to the fact that the dog mated randomly with various males 'without regard'. The Baka do not take any direct part in or attempt to control the sexual activities or breeding of dogs. Incidentally, according to the male owner of this dog, the name is meant to advise people not to assume that one's wife will only mate with her husband. The various names based on the attributes and characteristics of dogs reflect how hunters grasp the individuality of various dogs (Ikeya 2002: Chapter 4, Okuno 2018: Chapter 14), which cannot be summarised merely as 'hounds'.

(D) Anecdotal monologue-type names. The name *Jealoux* was given when jealousy between a man and a woman led to a quarrel (*likombe*), while *Delaanyo* was given when relations with the villagers deteriorated. This pattern is similar to what Kimura (1996) called the 'record' type of naming, in that the name itself is a record of an event or incident in a nearby society.

(E) Names borrowed from other cultures. There was only one instance of overlap with a person's name, that of a peasant woman called 'Medoh'. Other dog names include the corporate names of timber harvesting companies, the trade names of luxury goods, and the names of places in exotic capitals in faraway West Africa.

When I compare these Baka dog names with those of neighbouring farmers and urban dwellers, there are some similarities as well as differences. Table 1-2 presents examples from the 30 names given to dogs by dog owners of farming populations, including city dwellers.

Table 1-2. Examples of names given to dogs by farmers and urban dwellers (name, language, meaning)

Appearance		
<i>Black</i>	English	Black
<i>Guinness</i>	English	Guinness beer
<i>Schäfer</i>	Proper noun	First name of the former coach of the Cameroon national football team (Winfried Schäfer)
Behavior in the forest		
<i>Ottondo</i>	Lingala	Attacker

## Social relationship and role

<i>Essenyelam</i>	Bakwele	Part of my body
<i>Zediassam</i>	Bakwele	Who does not hurt me
<i>Guardien</i>	French	Guardian
<i>Mɔnil</i>	Bakwele	Orphan

## Anecdotal monologue type names

<i>Abeya</i>	Bakwele	Don't look at your faults
<i>Moyaanyo</i>	Bimo	Human beings are bad
<i>Kuɛl-djaako</i>	Bakwele	Love to <i>Djako</i>
<i>Berger</i>	French	Who builds a house

## Cultural contact

<i>Dakar</i>	French	Dakar (capital of Senegal)
<i>Jerico</i>	English	Movie Character
<i>Angola</i>	Proper noun	Country name of Angola
<i>Nounousou</i>	French	Name of a doll
<i>Mapouka</i>	Unknown	Music genre from Ivory Coast

## Common name for a dog

<i>Roki</i>	Proper noun
<i>Dragon</i>	Proper noun
<i>Lex</i>	Proper noun
<i>Blek</i>	Proper noun
<i>Flek</i>	Proper noun

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Source: Oishi (2019: 179).

In addition to the same naming patterns used by the Baka, such as dog characteristics, anecdotal monologues, and words borrowed from other cultures, there are also examples of people naming their dogs with common dog names or repeating the name of a dog they had previously. Names associated with the dog's characteristics were also common, such as *Black*, *Guinness* (both descriptive and metaphorical for the black colour of the body), and *Schäfer* (a metaphor for the hair), while names associated with the dog's diet and health or behaviour in the forest were rare. Anecdotal monologues related to the owner's desires and feelings that have nothing to do with the dog, such as *Kuɛl-djaako* ('love to *Djako*': *Djako* is a local group identity of the Bakwele ethnicity), are common among the Baka and neighbouring farmers<sup>2</sup>. Alternately, the fact that many names are related to the life and ecology of the dog is likely to be a characteristic of Baka dog names.

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<sup>2</sup> This type of dog naming can occur more extensively. There are few descriptions or data regarding dog naming in Cameroon. I could only find a fragmental reference in a linguistic paper treating personal names in northern Cameroon (Ajello 2011: 28-29). The Gizey name dogs the same way that they name people. Ajello noted that dog names function to transmit messages between people among the Gizey.

### 3.2. Social relations in dog ownership

Next, let us examine dog ownership. Among the Baka, dogs are considered to be owned by individuals, but when they are used for hunting or other purposes, they are not necessarily occupied solely by their owners, and their use is open to relatives, friends, and neighbours. There is a large gender difference in dog ownership in the study area, with 5% of adult females owning a dog compared to 43% of adult males (Section 2). The average number of dogs owned by a person was 1.58 (1–6, standard deviation 1.1).

Of the 74 dogs owned by the Baka, 57 of the 74 dogs for which the method of acquisition was known were gifts from relatives or visitors. This was followed by 10 self-breeding dogs (born to other owners), six purchased dogs, and one inherited dog (Table 2 (a)). It can be said that most of the dogs in Baka society were acquired through gifts. The gift and exchange of dogs among the Baka seems to be a prerequisite for them to be able to breed their own dogs in sufficient numbers.

Table 2. Comparison of dog acquisition by the Baka, farmers, and urban dwellers

(a) Baka		(b) Farmers/City dwellers	
	N (%)		N (%)
Gift	57 (77.0)	Purchase	12 (41.3)
Home reproduction	10 (13.5)	Gift	10 (34.5)
Purchase	6 (8.1)	Home reproduction	5 (17.2)
Inheritance	1 (1.3)	Found at crop field	2 (7.0)
	74 (100)		29 (100)

Source: Oishi (2019: 181).

Conversely, in the case of hunters among the Bakwele, a farming community living in the same study area, nearly half of the 29 dogs they owned (12 dogs), were purchased from nearby cities (Table 2 (b)). The price of a dog in the settlements of the study area is 2,000 CFA Francs<sup>3</sup> (3.08 euros) per individual dog, while in the capital Yaoundé it is more than 10,000 CFA Francs (15.4 euros). Thus, farmers and urban dwellers tend to buy dogs more actively than the Baka, among whom there is little or no dog trade.

Thus, who gives dogs to who, among the Baka? In 30 of the 57 cases, I confirmed the relationship between the giver and the receiver of the dog. More than half (17 cases) were from the family in-law, such as the wife's uncle, father-in-law, brother-in-law's wife, son-in-law, and husband; six were from the owner's brothers and other relatives; three each from friends and farmers; and one from the stranger to the village. In this case, the gift was given to a man by a visitor to a camp who came to work as a contractor for a logging project in the newly established 'community forest' near the village (Table 3).

<sup>3</sup> CFA Francs (or FCFA) is currency used in central African countries, including Cameroon. FCFA is an abbreviation for Franc de la Coopération Financière en Afrique centrale (Franc of the Financial Cooperation in central Africa), for which the value is guaranteed by the French treasury. The exchange rate is fixed at 656 FCFA per 1 euro.

Table 3. The relationship between the sender and receiver of a Baka dog gift

The relationship with the donor as percieved by the recipient	N (%)
Family-in-law	17 (56.7)
Own family	6 (20.0)
Friend	3 (10.0)
Farmer(Bakwele)	3 (10.0)
Visitor from town	1 (3.3)
	30 (100)

Source: Oishi (2019: 181).

In Baka society, dogs are not regarded as property of bridewealth, and there is no ritual significance attached to the giving and receiving of dogs. However, it can be said that dogs tend to be given and received between members of a married family. These interview results suggest that in Baka society, dogs are exchanged between groups and settlements through social relationships such as marriage and visits.

However, when dogs are given as gifts, this does not mean that dogs are given and received regardless of their individual characteristics. Different hunters have different preferences and requirements for dogs. For example, some hunters prefer males, while others prefer females. Those who preferred males reported that females were not good for hunting because they became pregnant and could not go hunting. Those who are looking for a dog may negotiate by observing the behaviour of the owner's dog daily. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to say that dogs are given as a result of a request rather than as a simple gift or sharing.

The gift and ownership of dogs can have social implications. For example, a male dog named *Andemaniyo* was given to Michael by an ex-wife of his brother-in-law, Linda, after their divorce. *Andemaniyo*, which means 'if I knew that' in Baka, originally belonged to Linda's ex-husband Colin, but it became more attached to Linda than to Colin and followed her when they divorced. Michael remained with *Andemaniyo* for five years until its death and recalled how faithful the dog had been to him.

Michael hinted to the author that there was a special relationship between he and Linda, which explained why Linda gave him the dog, and Michael named it *Andemaniyo*. In this way, a person can form a strong attachment to a dog because of the relationship between the people behind the gift. For Michael, *Andemaniyo* is a 'meaningful other' (Haraway 2007), who will not be forgotten even after its death.

### 3.3. Cooperation between humans and dogs in hunting activities

In this section, I document the relationship between the Baka and dogs during hunting activities. In the

central African rainforest area, collective hunting methods such as spear, net, and bow-and-arrow have been widely employed. Although the hunting methods of the Pygmy hunter-gatherers vary and change with time and region, dogs often participate in the practice of collective hunting, such as bow-and-arrow and net hunting, during which a certain area of forest is enclosed and the dogs play an important role in chasing out prey animals (Terashima 1983). The Baka have used dogs to practice spear-hunting for African red river hogs (*Potamochoerus porcus*), but as they became more settled, the importance of gun-hunting on behalf of farmers has increased (Sato 1999). As one older Baka hunter put it, ‘the dog used to be the best gun for us the Baka’.

Dogs play a variety of roles in hunting activities. The most common hunting methods currently used by Baka include gun and snare traps. When dogs are used for hunting, they are released to follow the prey. A wooden bell, called a *jangali*, is attached to the dog's neck to determine its position and speed of movement in the forest. The dogs bark at or fight with the animals they catch, and the hunters who track them from behind kill the prey with spears or guns. Here, dogs were used to stop the movement of prey animals in the forest. Some hunters removed half of the dog's tail to make it braver in close combat. Conversely, dogs are not used in so-called stealth hunting, in which the hunter walks alone through the forest looking for his prey and shoots it with a gun. Dogs are also not used when hunting monkeys (ex. *Cercopithecus* spp.) with guns in trees because their prey may escape. Thus, dogs are not involved in some types of hunting in which guns are used.

Dogs are often taken on forest visits to patrol snare traps. Snare traps are used for small roaming animals such as porcupines (*Atherurus africanus*), medium to large antilopes such as blue duikers (*Cephalophus monticola*), Peter's duikers (*Cephalophus callipygus*), and large animals such as African red river hogs. Trapped animals often break free from the snare cables and escape before the patrols begin. When this happens, dogs are used to track them down, locate them, and, if possible, kill them. When hunting large animals, such as the African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*), which is the hunter's biggest prey, dogs are not used. They say that dogs are useless because they are too small for elephants and can easily be torn apart and killed.

After a successful hunting, the dogs were given meat. Jerome Lewis, who studied the Bendjele, another Pygmy group living adjacent to the Baka, describes the practice of ‘distributing’ the lungs of the prey to the dogs after a successful hunt (Lewis 2008). Bendjele's reason for sharing meat among the dogs is as follows: ‘Hunting dogs, like people, have an *ekila*. When they attack a prey like a wild boar, they swing their hind legs so hard that they dislocate their hip joints and render the animal immobile. Then, the dogs bark and call for people. The dog killed the animal. They keep their *ekila* alive by eating the lungs of their prey’ (Lewis 2008: 313. Note 7).

*Ekila* is a core concept of complex norms relating to food avoidance, disease, and misfortune, and the success or failure of hunting, commonly held among the Pygmy hunter-gatherer societies of the

northwestern Congo Basin, such as the Baka and the Benjele. Dogs, as well as humans, have *ekila*, which is maintained by feeding them meat from specific parts of the game (e.g. lungs).

Among the Baka, hunters feed meat to their dogs before and after hunting. However, in the study area, the meat was not from a specific part of the animal, but from various parts, such as the thigh, arm, side of the buttocks, lower abdomen, and internal organs (intestines). Often, the meat is cooked with starches such as plantain bananas. In such cases, many hunters mixed a ‘dog medicine’, called *ma bolo*, with the meat when it was cooked. Just like giving medicine to a person, giving medicine (*ma*) to a dog will change its behaviour and internal character and make it ‘aggressive’. Specifically, the dog becomes more aggressive in its pursuit of wildlife and is more successful in hunting. The Baka word *njele* and ‘méchant’ in French are used to describe this state of the dog. Aggressive dogs are particularly favoured when hunting large animals, such as African red river hogs and gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*). In this way, hunters and dogs work together in forests.

As for important, but expensive hunting equipment, such as guns, Baka hunters are sometimes entrusted with hunting equipment by neighbouring farmers (Hayashi 2008). In such cases, the prey does not belong to the hunter, but to the owner of the hunting gear, who has the greatest right to share the prey. However, we could not find any examples of Baka hunters borrowing dogs from neighbouring farmers. Given the limited number of farmers who own dogs, it is likely that the maintenance of hunting dogs in the study area has been the responsibility of the Baka themselves. Hunters use dogs belonging to themselves, their families, or those with whom they share their hunting camps.

### 3.4. Relationships between people and dogs at settlement

In the forest, I observed a relatively cooperative and interdependent relationship between people and dogs, which is centred on hunting activities. Here, I describe the relationship established between people and dogs in the settlement village, which is another major living space for both. I will focus on aspects of the relationship that are different from those found in the forest, such as the differentiation of people and dogs through violence and, conversely, the care given to dogs by people.

Violence between people and dogs occurs on a daily and sudden basis. In everyday food preparation, even if dogs are present during cooking, eating, and sharing meals, they are not given a share of the food. If they eat the meal or meat without permission, they are treated as ‘thieves’ and are subject to violent sanctions by people. These include beating, kicking, throwing firewood at the dogs, and hitting them with the belly of a machete. As a result, in settled communities, dogs are often placed in a more marginalised position.

Baka dogs may be expected to function as watchdogs, as evidenced by the presence of a dog named *Guardian*. As a result, a misunderstood dog may bite a person on rare occasions. If a person is intentionally bitten, the dog can be killed immediately. People respond to bites in different ways, and

there are two main treatments. Wounds are treated with pounded maize flour or shavings of the bark of the *sombolo* (*Penianthus longifolius*, Menispermaceae) tree. Some Baka reported that if they were bitten accidentally by their own dog, they would let the dog lick the wound to heal it.

The difficult position dogs occupy in their coexistence with humans is well illustrated by the causes of their deaths. Descending order of frequency, the causes of death in dogs (35 cases) include: killing by human error, slashing, poisoning, being eaten (10 cases), sickness (8 cases), being injured by wild animals such as wild boars and porcupines (7 cases), being bitten by snakes (6 cases), being caught in snare traps, and being eaten by crocodiles when crossing rivers (1 case) (Table 4).

Table 4. Causes of death of dogs kept by the Baka in the study area

Cause	N (%)
Killing by humans	10 (28.6)
Sickness	8 (22.9)
Killing by wild animals during hunting	7 (20.0)
Snake bites	6 (17.1)
Fall in snare trap	3 (8.5)
Predation by crocodile	1 (2.9)
	35 (100)

Source: Oishi (2019: 186).

The fact that the leading cause of death is killing by humans illustrates the marginal position in which dogs are placed. In addition to unintentional accidents such as being mistaken for prey while hunting and being shot or cut with a machete, there are also many cases of dogs being killed by their owners after they have eaten the entire store of meat during the night, as well as deliberate killings by neighbouring farmers. Dogs killed due to getting caught in the snare traps of their owners or other hunters is another indirect form of human-inflicted death.

As mentioned above, none of the Baka eat dogs, however, some Bantu farmers are in the habit of eating them and often steal dogs from the Baka. In addition, when social relations deteriorate between certain farmers and Baka individuals, Baka dogs are sometimes killed. A common example of issues that arise is when a Baka dog goes to a farmer's house to steal food; even if the dog is not killed, the farmer will blame the owner of the dog. Usually, the Baka do not bury the bodies of their dogs, but leave them in the nearby vegetation. However, in cases where their dogs have been killed by farmers, the owners sometimes dig a hole for their deceased dog in the same way that they bury people, and cover it with a little earth. Hunters often remember their dead dogs just as much, or more, than they do their living dogs. This was especially the case with dogs that died during hunting.

While some dogs were treated harshly, others were treated as if they were pets in settled communities.

One of the dogs that made a strong impression on me was a male dog called *Zazo*, kept by a Baka woman named Babbie. *Zazo* accompanied Babbie everywhere she went, not only to the forest, but also to the fields and to a nearby camp, where it was well fed, well fattened, and well groomed. Babbie had been married and divorced several times, partly because she was unable to have children. Babbie sometimes lived alone for several years, but *Zazo* had always been with her until its death.

Sometimes, people take care of old dogs. Shiho Hattori, an anthropologist who has lived 100 km from the research site, writes in an essay about an elderly woman who cares for her old dog in her hut:

I went to the house of an old woman called *Abenyon*. As I was about to enter the house, I heard movement from behind the fire. I looked and saw a big old black dog lying on the floor. *Abenyon* told me that she was giving the dog food and water because he was too old to work. She also said gently, with a respectful look. "It was a very good hound when it was young and led *Liangkom* (*Abenyon*'s husband) on many successful hunts. He once took an antelope (duiker) and a wild boar himself, and even drove a gorilla into the ground". From *Abenyon*'s behaviour, I learned that the Baka also have an appreciation and respect for dogs (Hattori 2008).

These ethnographic data demonstrate that there is room for a relationship between the Baka and the dogs, not just as an order maintained by human violence, but what Haraway (2007) refers to as a 'significant other'.

## 4. Conclusion and Reflections for Further Studies

### 4.1. Dichotomous human-dog relationship between forest and village

Through hunting practices, sometimes people and dogs experience a physical as well as a spiritual connection, form attachments, and become 'significant others' (Haraway 2007). Some hunters are even so traumatised by the unfortunate death of a dog during hunting that they find it difficult to recover. Conversely, it is also true that the Baka are heavily involved in the life and death of dogs by forcing them into an overwhelmingly inferior position. Because dogs cannot survive on their own in tropical forest environments, they must rely on people for their survival. The fact that people are directly or indirectly responsible for more than a third of all dog deaths demonstrates how much control people have over the lives of dogs. Particularly in settlements, dogs are often violently punished as food thieves. Dogs that 'do not listen' are punished mercilessly. Thus, there is a double standard for the position of dogs in Baka society. In the forest, they are treated as hunting companions, but in the villages, they are often treated with violence and subjugated. The ecological background for this ambivalence might be that dogs can contribute to the livelihood of hunting, but their maintenance as domestic animals is costly.

In the forest, dogs are more likely to have access to meat by participating in hunting, but in the villages, they are more likely to be fed cooked farm products. Combining this with the general good health of dogs in the study area, the position of dogs, at least in the study area of Ndongo village, must be considered within the context of the changing livelihoods of the Baka, who are undertaking a greater proportion of farming and wage labour in the settlements (Oishi 2016). What do the numbers and health status of dogs owned by hunter-gatherers tell us about their relationship with their human hosts? This question can be addressed by examining dogs in settlements and camps of different socioeconomic status.

#### **4.2. Examining conservation in a multispecies world**

In the eastern region of Cameroon, the conflict between conservation and human rights protection has become acute following the partial militarisation of conservation enforcement (for example, see the 5 January 2017 *The Guardian* article (Barkham 2017) and WWF Cameroon's statement on 21 December 2016 (WWF 2016)). The debate between indigenous rights and nature conservation, both rooted in modern Western dualism, has become a sterile proxy war.

At the same time, there is growing recognition of the Western dualistic view of humans and nature that should be reconsidered. For example, multispecies ethnography aims to reconsider human-animal (plant) relations beyond dichotomous approaches to nature and culture (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010). Increasing attention is being paid to understanding shared, or mutual, ecologies between species, including humans, involving different disciplines, including both biological sciences and ethnography (Remis and Hardin 2009). All these emphasise the relational nature of human-engaged biodiversity and the interrelatedness between species.

As this case study on the Baka and dogs demonstrates, nature conservation has a major impact not only on human life, but also on the other species with which human populations interact. Spatial restrictions on local people, including the Baka, and species-specific hunting regulations are the cornerstones of current conservation policy, but these measures fail to consider the interconnectedness among people, plants, and animals. These inter- and intra-species relations, 'multispecies assemblages' (Aisher *et al.* 2016), involve more than just material exchange. Such complex consequences should be explored and considered when applying conservation policies. As Remis and Robinson (2020) suggested, field anthropologists working with local populations who interact closely with their natural environment may contribute by exploring collaboration across existing hierarchies of knowledge production about humans and nature.

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# **Implications of Transboundary Natural Resource Management: Analysis of the Cover Change of Mangroves and Surrounding Inland Atlantic Forests in the Bakassi Peninsula of Cameroon**

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## **Abstract**

The Bakassi Peninsula has experienced a twenty-five-year-long border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria since the 1980s, a crisis that has affected its environment and natural resource assets. Currently, it is threatened by deforestation and degradation; however, information on the magnitude and pace of this degradation is lacking. This study assessed land cover dynamics over the past decades using semi-structured interviews and remote sensing analysis. The main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation were identified, and the implications for transboundary natural resource management in this area were ascertained. The annual mangrove deforestation rate was 0.40% (an annual loss of 1014.5 ha), which is twice the global average. The main drivers of forest degradation in the area include population structure and attitude towards mangrove conservation, abusive and illegal wood exploitation, mining activities, commercial farming, poor natural resource governance, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts, insufficient financial and human resources, and poor collaboration between the Nigerian and Cameroonian governments in addressing transboundary issues concerning natural resource management. The situation is exacerbated by the ongoing 'Anglophone crisis', which has put all regional efforts towards sustainable development in jeopardy. The authors advocate for strong political will and concrete on-the-ground activities.

**Keywords:** Bakassi peninsula, Cameroon, conflict, mangrove, land cover dynamics, transboundary natural resource management

## 1. Introduction

The Bakassi Peninsula is located at the extreme western end of the Gulf of Guinea and spans latitudes 4°25'–5°10' N and longitudes 8°20'–9°08' E. It is watered by the mouths of the Akwayafe, Ndian, Lokete, and Meme rivers, which together form the Rio del Rey estuary.

The region is a biodiversity hotspot of global significance and supports a high diversity of animal and plant species present in large numbers within restricted ranges, many of which are threatened. Of the 28,946 water birds of 59 species found in the Cameroon Coastal Wetlands, 23,353 (80%) birds of 29 species are found in Rio del Rey, making it the richest site (Ajonina 2008). The area harbours mangrove and coastal forest ecosystems. The mangrove forest ecosystem in Cameroon covers 200,000 ha, representing 30% of the total coastal area. These forests are the most important in Central Africa and the 6<sup>th</sup> most important in Africa (UNEP 2007, Ajonina 2008). Rio del Rey accounts for 100,000 ha of the 200,000 ha. According to current taxonomic knowledge, seven species constitute the floristic composition of the Rio del Rey mangrove ecosystem. These include *Rhizophora racemosa*, *Rhizophora harrisonii*, *Rhizophora mangle* (Rhizophoraceae), *Avicennia germinans* (Avicenniaceae), *Laguncularia racemosa*, *Conocarpus erecrus* (Combretaceae), and the exotic palm *Nypa fruticans* (Arecaceae). The ecosystem is recognised as an important reproduction area and hiding environment for both migratory and resident birds. Seventy species of birds visit the mangroves and coastal zones (Ajonina *et al.* 2003).

Starting in 1993, Bakassi experienced a twenty-five-year-long border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria, a crisis with its roots fundamentally in an ill-defined border following colonisation, and the discovery of possibility of oil exploitation in the region (Baye 2010). Lessons learned from the vast majority of armed conflicts that occurred in the last sixty years in developing countries show that post-conflict societies are likely to suffer from serious environmental problems including destruction of infrastructure, decrease in forest area, lack of effective laws and policies, and loss of human and technical resources (Miyazawa 2013, Bruch *et al.* 2012). The past three decades have seen the destruction and overuse of mangrove wetlands and forests in the Bakassi Peninsula (Din *et al.* 2008). Unfortunately, information regarding the magnitude and pace of this degradation is lacking. In this study, we aimed to assess the land cover dynamics in the peninsula over the last decades in order to improve our understanding of the extent of mangrove forest degradation, discuss the main drivers of forest degradation, and ascertain implications for transboundary natural resource management in the area.

## 2. Study site

### 2.1. Biophysical context

The Rio del Rey estuary is located in the southwest region of Cameroon, downstream of the forest areas of the Cross River, Korup, and Takamanda. The Bakassi Peninsula is composed of five main islands (Isangele, Kombo Abedimo, Idabato, Bamuso, and Kombo Itindi). The peninsula is bordered to the west

by the Akwa Yafe river, to the east by the Bamouso subdivision, and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean. The peninsula is crossed by a network of creeks and streams of varying size and navigability. Transportation on the peninsula occurs mainly through the sea.

The total area of the peninsula and its surroundings is approximately 3,400 km<sup>2</sup>. The natural vegetation of this area was classified by Letouzey (1968) as Atlantic biao forests. Thomas (1996) modified this classification and described the coastal forest of southern Korup and the southwestern part of Mount Cameroon as *Oubanguia alata* forest, a vegetation type dominated by this species where the annual rainfall exceeds 4,000 mm. This vegetation consists of three main types of ecosystems: mangroves, swamp forests, and Atlantic forests, which form the Korup rainforests. This site is unique because it is rich in biodiversity and represents the centre of floristic endemism.

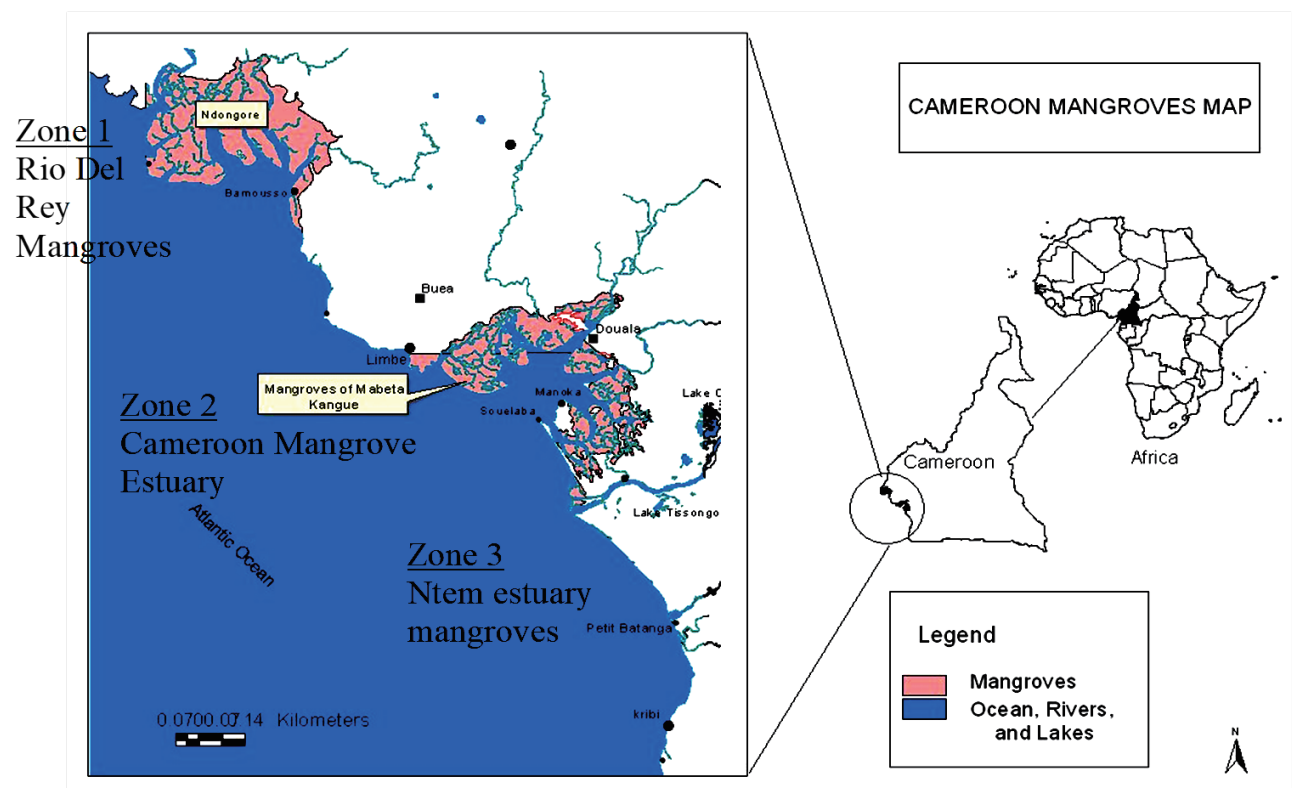


Figure 1. Location of mangroves in Cameroon showing the Rio Del Rey mangroves (Ajonina *et al.* 2013)

This area has an equatorial climate consisting of two main seasons: dry and wet. The dry season is usually very short and runs from November to February, whereas the wet season is long and is between March and October. The mean monthly temperature ranges from 23–30 °C (Akoachere *et al.* 2019).

## 2.2. Population

The population census conducted as part of the framework for the elaboration of council development

plans revealed that Bamuso and Idabato are the most populated councils of the peninsula (Table 1).

Table 1. Population size of Bakassi Peninsula

<b>Council</b>	<b>Population size</b>
Idabato	42,680
Isangele	3,476
Kombo Abedimo	5,160
Kombo Itindi	4,782
Bamuso	95, 674
<b>Total</b>	<b>151,772</b>

Source: Council development plans (PNDP 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d; 2011e).

The main activities of the population are fishing, agriculture, fish smoking, and trade of wood and non-wood forest products. The main markets are the neighbouring Nigerian towns, Ekondo Titi, and, to some extent, Mundemba in Cameroon.

### 2.3. Historical and geopolitical background on Bakassi peninsula

The Bakassi Peninsula is geographically located in the Gulf of Guinea and is an oil hotspot of global significance. In past decades, the peninsula was the theatre of an armed conflict between Cameroon and Nigeria. According to de Konings and Mbagha (2007), the genesis of this conflict is often traced back to the First World War when the so-called German protectorate, Kamerun was shared between England and France in 1916 after the withdrawal of Germany. Bakassi became a part of the British-ruled Southern Cameroons attached to the eastern provinces of Nigeria until 1954. Southern Cameroons then obtained limited autonomy and, finally, full regional status in 1958 (Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997). However, contrary to all expectations, upon independence in 1961, 70% of the population of southern Cameroon voted to be attached to French-speaking Cameroon, rather than being integrated into Nigeria. This referendum made it complex to administer the position of Bakassi. Its population considered itself Nigerian, and the Nigerian authorities exercised effective control since the 1930s, but the territory suddenly became a part of Cameroon officially.

Aware of the successful exploration for petroleum in the Niger Delta, the former President of Cameroon, His Excellency Ahmadou Ahidjo, asked Nigeria to recognise Cameroon's sovereignty over Bakassi in 1964, but the Nigerian civil war (1967–1970) and the oil crisis of the Niger Delta suspended negotiations. Ahmadou Ahidjo was quite supportive of Nigeria during this war with the Biafra separatists. At the end of the war, he kept trying to convince Nigeria for a boundary demarcation that would place the Bakassi Peninsula firmly on the side of Cameroon. The Yaounde II declaration established a joint boundary commission in 1971 and a maritime border was delineated between Cameroon and Nigeria in 1975 (Ogunnoiki 2020).

Oil revenues reached the historic record in 1981, and with the discovery of large oil reserves, the situation in Bakassi became challenging. A clash between Nigerian and Cameroonian armed forces over the Bakassi Peninsula led to a military confrontation; however, the situation remained stable until the early 1990s when Cameroon tried to take control of the region. In 1993, Nigerian troops occupied the Bakassi Peninsula, and serious incidents of border incursions provoked shooting and deaths on both the Nigerian and Cameroonian sides. In 1994, Cameroon submitted the border-related dispute with Nigeria to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for adjudication. After examining the case for over eight years, the ICJ delivered a judgment on 10 October 2002 deciding in part that sovereignty over the peninsula lies with Cameroon. Following intensive diplomatic activities, on 12 June 2006 an agreement called the “Green Tree Accord” was signed between Cameroon and Nigeria, under the mediation of the United Nations. On 11 August 2006 the first phase of Nigerian demilitarisation was conducted, and on 14 August 2008 Bakassi was formally transferred to the Cameroonian government.

According to Kimengsi and Lambi (2015), the Bakassi Peninsula exhibits all aspects of a natural resource controversy, and rigorous government intervention is required to reverse the paradox.

### **3. Research methods**

The method used in this research comprised semi-structured interviews with relevant government agencies, NGOs, and household members; and remote sensing analysis.

#### **3.1. Stakeholder interviews**

We requested interviews with local government representatives from the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife; Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development; and Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Regional Development. Stakeholder perspectives were gained by discussing topics related to mangrove conservation in the area, including the main drivers of mangrove degradation, current initiatives to mitigate negative effects, and the perceived future of mangrove forests.

Interviews with household members in fishing camps in the study area were designed to obtain qualitative and quantitative information on the extractive activities carried out by the resident population in mangrove forests, the main threats faced by mangroves, and perceptions of mangrove conservation policies.

#### **3.2. Remote sensing analysis**

The annual evolution of forest degradation in the peninsula was mapped between 1973 and 2018 based on historical Landsat imagery. Digital image processing (remote sensing, GIS) and statistical tools were used for image classification and determination of the annual mangrove deforestation rate. The annual net deforestation rate was calculated according to the FAO (1995) formula:

$$Q = (A_2 / A_1) (1 / (t_2 - t_1)) - 1$$

where  $Q$  = Annual rate of deforestation (% per year),  $A$  = forest area at time  $t$ , and  $t_2 - t_1$  = time interval between the observation dates of the clearings (in years).

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Mangrove cover change

The state of mangroves (extent and condition) generally declined across the peninsula, however, with significant variation depending on the location (Figures 2 and 3).

Remote sensing analysis revealed that approximately 33,350.8 ha of mangroves were lost between 1974 and 2018, representing 21.5 % of the total mangroves in 1974. This corresponds to an annual loss of 0.48 %. According to the results, the annual mangrove deforestation rate was lower during the period 1974–2000 (0.3 %).

The total surface area of natural vegetation stands (Atlantic Forest and mangrove) decreased from 250,195.83 ha in 1973 to 204,540.02 ha in 2018, equivalent to an annual deforestation rate of 0.40 %, representing an annual loss of 1014.5 ha (Table 2).

Table 2. Evolution of surface area of different land use types and net change value in 45 years

Land use type	Surface area 1973	Surface in area 2000	Surface in area 2018	Net change		Net annual change	
				[ha]	[%]	[ha]	[%]
Built environment and empty lands	2,984.8	3,846.3	4,522.6	1,537.8	51.5	34.2	1.1
Atlantic forest	94,794.3	90,271.7	82,489.3	-1,2305.0	-13.0	-273.4	-0.3
Degraded mangrove	12,712.2	25,308.7	32,760.7	20,048.5	157.7	445.5	3.5
Intact mangrove	142,689.2	118,138.8	89,289.9	-53,399.3	-37.4	-1,186.7	-0.8
Hydrography	85,803.2	87,809.6	87,346.3	1,543.1	1.8	34.3	0.04
Agricultural fields	8,763.6	18,253.8	28,494.7	325.1	633.2	7.2	28,494.7
Total	347,747.5	343,629.0	343,666.2				

Overall, there were significant changes in the trend of land cover change in agricultural fields (mainly dominated by vast plantations owned by agroindustries), mangroves, and Atlantic forests (Figures 2 and 3). Between 1974 and 2000, corresponding to the border crisis period in the landscape, there were significant positive changes in hydrography, agricultural fields, and degraded mangroves. This change was negative for the intact mangroves and Atlantic forests. Intact mangrove is the land use category that experienced the highest cover change across the peninsula.

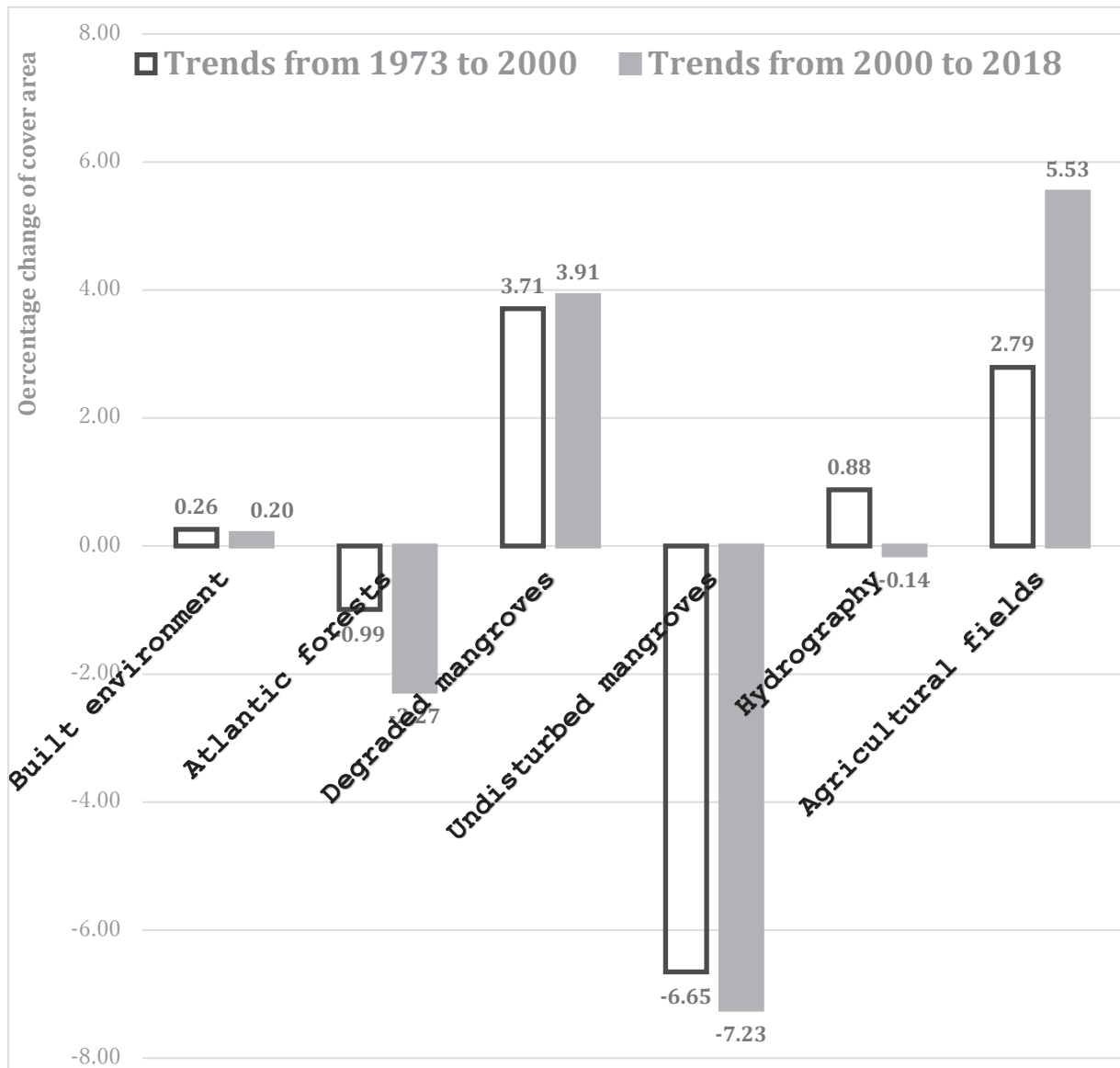


Figure 2. Percentage change in land use in the Bakassi Peninsula between 1973 and 2018

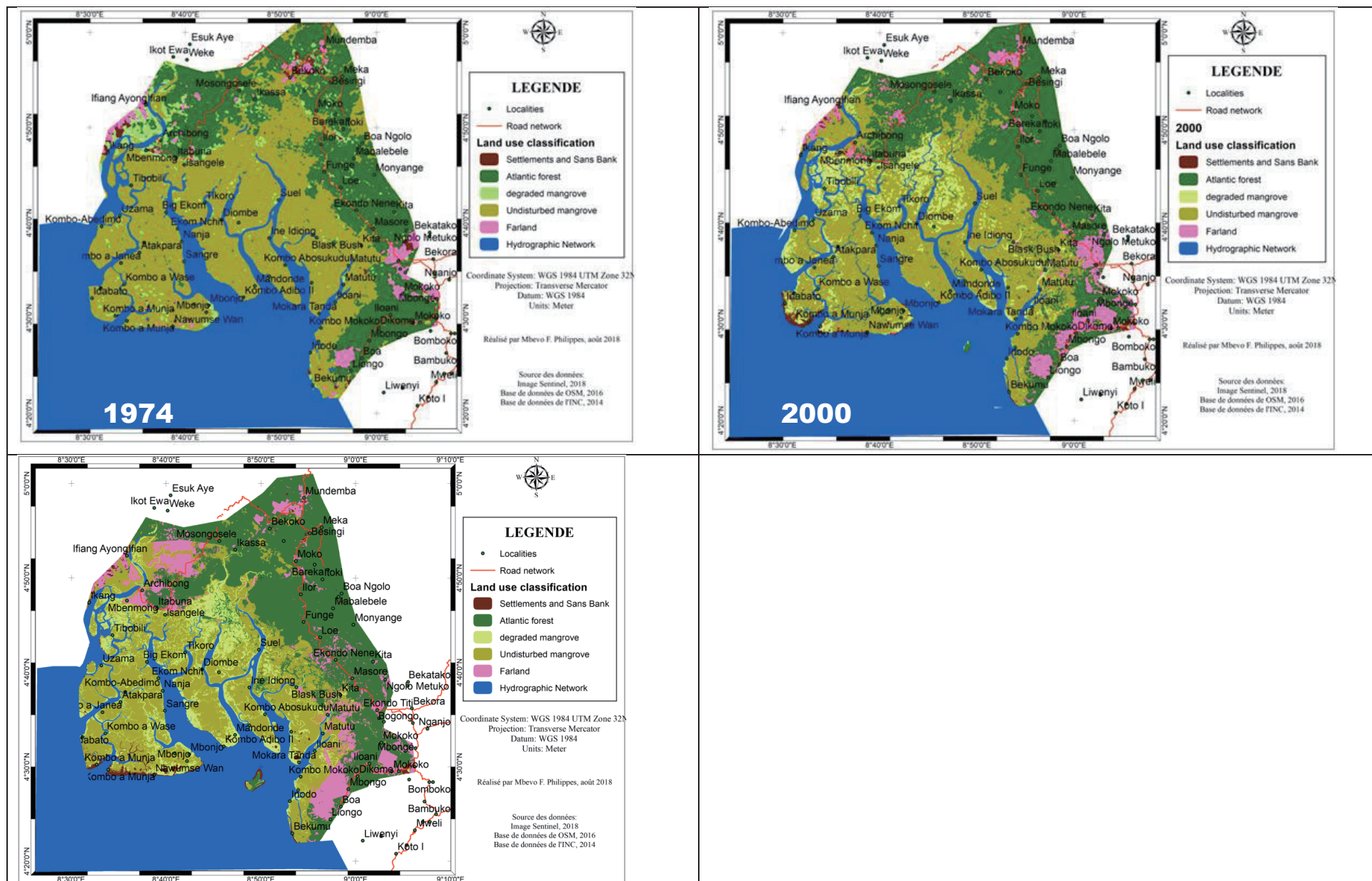


Figure 3. Mangrove cover change in the Bakassi Peninsula

The results show that the net annual change in intact mangroves in the Bakassi Peninsula is far above the global average. Recent reports indicate a global average annual loss rate of 0.21% from 1996 to 2016 (IUCN 2016), corresponding to a global total loss of 9,736 km<sup>2</sup> during this period. This number is higher than the average tropical and subtropical forest losses (Keenan *et al.* 2015), but lower than that of other mangroves in Cameroon, where a deforestation rate of 1.04% has been reported, especially in the Cameroon Estuary (Ajonina *et al.* 2013).

## **4.2. Main drivers of land cover change**

### **4.2.1. Population structure**

Population growth is the primary contributor to mangrove deforestation worldwide. Although Bakassi has experienced a significant reduction in population as a result of a security crisis and population migration during the last decades, anthropogenic pressure on mangrove stands remains significant due to extractive industries and high market demand for fish products and mangrove wood in neighbouring Nigerian cities. In the mangrove resource exploitation sector, the overexploitation of natural resources is exacerbated by the high dominance of foreigners (field interviews revealed that approximately 90% of Bakassi residents are Nigerians), majority of whom are reluctant to comply with Cameroon laws. With limited law enforcement, management plans for natural resources are virtually ineffective in general.

This predominance of Nigerian nationals indicates that many Nigerian-origin inhabitants of the peninsula opted to stay after the Green Tree Agreement. Nyuymengka Ngalim (2019) hypothesised that some intervening variables might have influenced the choice of these inhabitants to remain rather than relocate from the Peninsula. Some of these variables include Cameroonian nationality, indefinite stay on the Peninsula (by implication, level of disarticulation and disconnection from Nigeria), access to work, and uncertainty of resettlement, among others.

### **4.2.2. Abusive mangrove wood exploitation**

Bakassi is currently under high pressure from increasing anthropogenic activities, especially fuelwood collection, illegal logging for sawn timber, bush clearing for periwinkle harvesting, and construction of houses (Figure 4).

From a survey conducted in fishermen camps, the total annual fish landing on the peninsula was estimated to be 109,440 tonnes. Considering that an average of 0.165 m<sup>3</sup> of wood is required to dry 30 kg of fish (ENSET-CAMECO 2020), a total of 547,420 m<sup>3</sup> of wood is harvested annually.

In general, fish smoking is artisanal. Artisanal fish dryers consume large amounts of wood. Intense deforestation in the Bakassi area began with the Bakassi dispute and heightened when the peninsula was handed over to Cameroon. Exploiters with no permits infiltrated the peninsula and cut down the trees.

The total annual flow of mangrove wood from Bakassi to Nigeria is estimated to be 60,000 m<sup>3</sup> (CAFER 2015). This resulted in an average total annual wood extraction of 607,420 m<sup>3</sup>.



Figure 4. Deforestation activities in Kombo Itindi: A= Mangrove wood cuts for fish drying, B= Mangrove wood cut for construction, C= Area of recent wood cutting, and D= Old degraded area now colonized by the invasive *Nypa* palm

Healthy mangroves are a prerequisite for all aspects of coastal protection (Mazda *et al.* 1997). Conversely, pollution, subsidence (owing to deep groundwater/oil extraction or oxidation upon conversion), and unsustainable use jeopardise mangrove sustainability.

Among the coastal areas of Cameroon, Bakassi is reported to be among the most vulnerable to sea level rise because of its lower elevation, ranging from 3–10 m (Figure 10). People who live in low-elevation coastal zones less than 10 m above sea level have been described as being at significant risk to the effects of sea level rise (McGranahan *et al.* 2007).

Exploring the coastal areas of Cameroon, Fonteh *et al.* (2009) indicated that 112 km<sup>2</sup> and 1,216 km<sup>2</sup> of the coastal area will be lost from 2 m and 10 m sea level rise, equivalent to a low scenario by 2050 and high scenario by 2100, respectively. Approximately, 0.3% and 6.3 % of ecosystems could be at risk of flooding by 2050 and 2100, respectively.

#### 4.2.3. Mining activities and commercial farming

Six mining companies are actively exploring oil in the peninsula: ADDAX Petroleum, DANA Petroleum, GLENCORE, KOSMOS, NEW AGE Petroleum, and PERENCO. Therefore, the Bakassi

area is prone to oil spills, either from oil exploitation in Cameroonian territory or Nigerian territory (Figure 5). In addition, there are approximately 606 oil fields in the Niger Delta, of which 360 are on-shore and 246 offshore. Reports indicate that between 1997 and 2001, Nigeria recorded a total of 2,097 oil spill incidents that caused severe damage to the coastal environment (Oseni 2017). Masumbe (2018) raised concerns about community lands being eroded by the activities of multinational oil companies, making the traditional occupations of the inhabitants, such as fishing and farming, no longer viable.

The Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and palm oil company PAMOL are the two main agroindustries in the area. Their estate extends and encroaches on mangrove ecosystems (Figure 5).

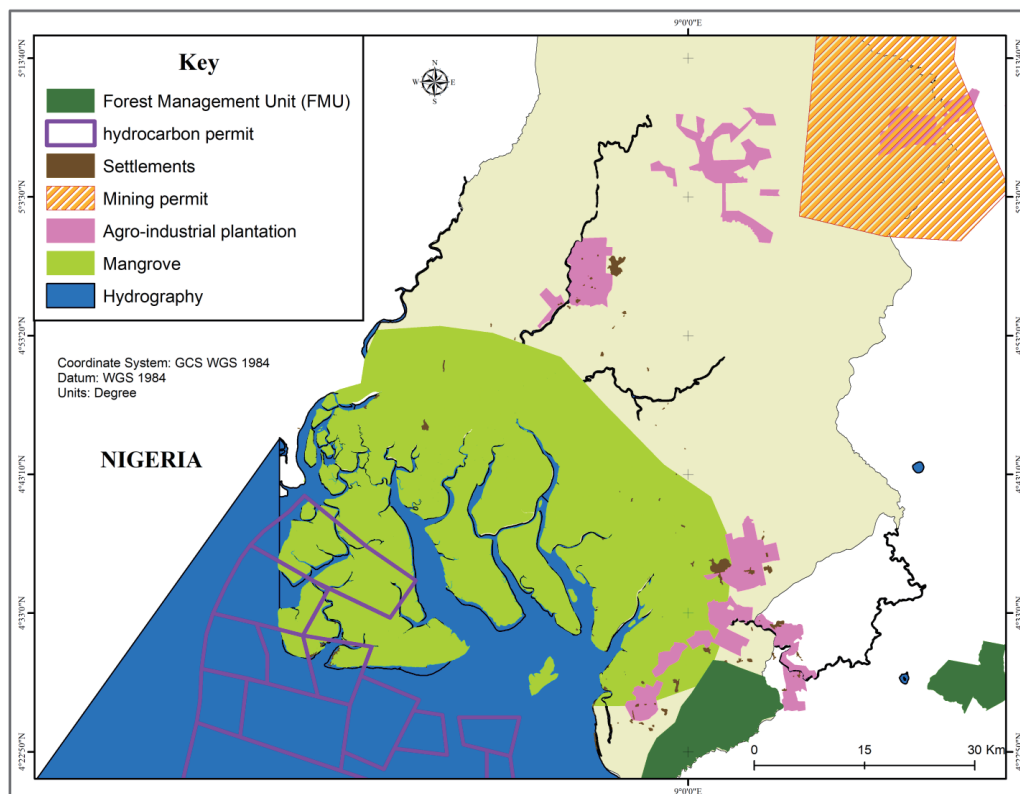


Figure 5. Mining permits and agroindustry estates in the mangrove-dominated area of Bakassi

#### 4.3. Environmental geopolitics of the Bakassi Peninsula: rethinking transboundary natural resource management

In coastal areas, mangroves play a key role as essential habitats for several migratory animal species; as nursery grounds for many commercially important fish and shellfish species; and in providing important indirect services such as coastal tourism, coastal water quality, and shoreline stability.

The value of Cameroon's littoral mangrove resources was estimated to be approximately USD 383,482.662/ha/year. Aware of its great potential, the mangrove-dominated estuary of Rio del Rey was identified in the forestry Zoning Plan as in need of protection and was recommended to be demarcated as a wildlife sanctuary in 2003 and later as the proposed Ndongore marine protected area in 2005.

However, the development in the formalisation of the gazettement of this protected area is hampered, as the Bakassi crisis did not allow any fieldwork in the area during the past decades.

The Cameroon government has recently developed a national master plan for the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems and has received funding from the Global Environment Facility of UN-Environment to implement a project on ‘Participative Integrated Ecosystems Service Management Plan for Bakassi Post Conflict Ecosystem (PINESMAP-BPCE)’. This project is expected to contribute towards improving efficiency in the management of protected area systems; integrating biodiversity conservation in various land-use options, including agriculture, mining, forestry, and production; and promoting an integrated approach to management at the landscape level through the development and implementation of an interactive land use plan. This project is also expected to help develop and strengthen a supportive policy in the environment and knowledge creation for the implementation of an interactive land use plan and to manage changes in ecosystems that could result from immediate and ultimate causes.

By decree n°2017/8819/PM on 21 August 2017 (Republic of Cameroon, 2017), the Cameroon Government also launched the Bakassi Peninsula Development Programme, whose main missions were, among others, facilitating access to the area by land and sea, establishment of a permanent security system and administrative supervision of the populations, development of the fishery sector, and provision of basic socio-economic facilities (reliable water supply, electricity, fishing infrastructure, health infrastructures, schools, and telecommunication system).

Significant achievements have been made thus far. However, as argued by Roca *et al.* (1996), conservation efforts in areas like Bakassi need to transcend geopolitical boundaries to protect entire landscapes and ecosystems. In this context, the Bakassi Peninsula is part of the Korup-Cross River trans-boundary landscape, a continuous moist forest block which extends from the southeastern edge of Nigeria to southwestern Cameroon. The area contains the Cross River National Park in Nigeria (3,640 km<sup>2</sup>) created in 1991, the Korup National Park in Cameroon (1,260 km<sup>2</sup>) created in 1986, and the Takamanda National Park (696 km<sup>2</sup>), recently created on the Cameroon side of the block. This forest block, totalling approximately 5,000 km<sup>2</sup>, represents more than 50% of Nigeria's remaining tropical high forest and is considered one of Africa's most important biotic reserves (Schoneveld 2013). It is renowned for its emblematic and highly endemic species. It is home to primates, such as the critically endangered Cross River gorilla and Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee, as well as the forest elephant.

The findings from other cross-border initiatives in Africa show that operational trans-boundary forest management initiatives in West and Central Africa are associated with different types of management agreements, ranging from informal and unwritten local conventions to low-level collaboration agreements, such as between the national park administrations of trans-boundary conservation areas, and high-level bilateral agreements where heads of state meet to agree on management orientations

(MPRU-KWS 2015, Ngandje 2018).

Unfortunately, cooperation between Cameroon and Nigeria to fight against the illegal exploitation of cross-border natural resources remains poor. By the facilitation of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), workshops to strengthen transboundary conservation between Cameroon and Nigeria were organised, the most recent held in November 2013 in Calabar, Nigeria (Fongnzossie *et al.* 2014). The major orientations for this cross-border collaboration, which unfortunately do not specifically integrate the mangrove problem, remain at the stage of good intentions and are based on five main pillars: (1) protection and law enforcement; (2) research and monitoring; (3) community-based conservation, livelihoods, and conservation education; (4) the creation of a cross-border conservation trust fund; and (5) sustainable cross-border trade in timber and non-timber forest products. Landscape level meetings were held in 2016 on the possibility of instituting a trans-boundary landscape. The WCS recently reinforced its commitment to support the development of a transboundary conservation agreement between the Cameroonian and Nigerian authorities.

However, there have been no further developments, as the current *Anglophone crisis* (Agwanda *et al.* 2020) has hampered all efforts in this direction. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the Korup – Cross River trans-boundary landscape could play a critical role in ensuring the sustainable utilisation of mangrove resources. The legal formulation of such a collaboration will require strong political will in both countries and input by a multidisciplinary expert team experienced in national legal regimes and international law, as well as in peacebuilding approaches in post-conflict societies.

## 5. Conclusion

This study found that natural vegetation stands (Atlantic forest and mangrove) in the Bakassi Peninsula decreased from 250,195.83 ha in 1974 to 204,540.02 ha in 2018, equivalent to an annual deforestation rate of 0.4 % per year, representing an annual loss of 1,014.5 ha. This rate, although lower than that in other tropical forest stands, is, however, twice the global average rate of mangrove deforestation. The study pointed out the following as the main drivers of forest degradation in the area: population structure and attitude towards mangrove conservation, abusive and illegal mangrove wood exploitation, mining activities, commercial farming, weaknesses in natural resource governance, post-conflict peace building and reconstruction efforts, insufficient financial resources and staff, and poor collaboration between the Nigerian and Cameroonian governments in addressing transboundary issues in natural resource management. This situation is exacerbated by the ongoing Anglophone crisis, which jeopardises all efforts towards sustainable development in the area. Strong political will and concrete on-the-ground activities are needed to address all the highlighted issues.

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# **Affective Healing: Pentecostal Charismatic Churches and Religious Plurality in Benin**

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## **Abstract**

The growing popularity of Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (PCCs) in Africa has often been analysed in terms of their characteristics of rupture with traditional religions and kinship, rather than tolerance for other religions, and has been widely discussed in relation to contemporary economic and political dynamics. However, their healing practices, which have opened spaces for religious plurality, have not received sufficient analytical attention despite becoming people's immediate motivation to join the PCCs. PCCs' practices are characterised by strong bodily engagement and affectivity. Drawing on empirical cases from Benin, this paper aims to understand the popularity of PCCs and religious plurality from the perspective of healing and affectivity. First, I will explore the healing itineraries of PCCs' followers in Southern Benin to shed light on their complexity and the role of affects. Second, I will focus on how healing efficacy is felt through PCCs' religious practices and clarify their material and affective characteristics. Through this analysis, I will discuss how affective healing practices found in PCCs have influenced their growth, as well as the religious plurality of contemporary Africa.

**Keywords:** Pentecostal Charismatic Churches, religious pluralism, healing, affect, Benin

## 1. Introduction

Since the 1970s, many African countries have witnessed the growth of Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (PCCs). The social, economic, and political aspects of PCCs in Africa have been widely discussed in terms of their relationship to modernity (Meyer 1999, Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001, van Dijk 2001, Blunt 2004), in connection with globalisation and neo-liberalisation (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001) and with regards to their public and political role (Gifford 1998).

With respect to the practical features of PCCs, Piot (2010: 68-69) argues that ‘affect’ is an important term to analyse. According to him, PCCs in West Africa generate intensities and affects<sup>1</sup>, such as joy, confidence, empowerment, optimism, and hope. Such affects are generated not only through the emotional words of the pastor’s sermon but also through praying and singing. PCC’s practice can be considered as ‘affective practice’, which is ‘a figuration where body possibilities and routines become recruited or entangled together with meaning making and with other social and material figurations’ (Wetherell 2012: 19); however, compared to the economic and political aspects, the affective aspects of the PCCs in Africa are not well documented.

Another feature of the PCCs is their claim of ‘rupture’ from tradition. The demonisation of other churches and religions, especially indigenous religions and African Independent Churches (AICs), is a common tendency in most PCCs in Africa (Kalu 2008: 66), and many PCCs refuse indigenous religions, which largely relate to kinship as well as the obligation of the larger family. PCCs suggest breaking with kin, neighbours, and ancestors. Although these attempts do not always achieve their goal (Meyer 1999: 211-212), research has tended to highlight the PCCs’ aggression toward relational rupture, individualisation, and distancing from traditional religions. This aggression, which stems from demonising people outside their denominations, has led to physical conflicts (Smith 2001), and the broadcasting culture of PCCs tend to introduce intolerant attitudes toward other religions into the public sphere (Hackett 2012). Thus, in terms of religious plurality, which is generally ‘characterised by humility regarding the level of truth and effectiveness of one’s own religion, as well as which particularly goals of respectful dialogue and mutual understanding with other traditions’ (Norton n.d.), PCCs in Africa could be generally considered as a force that opposed, rather than encouraged.

However, Janson (2021) suggests that instead of the conceptional level, it is necessary to focus on the religious practices, which are characterised by ambivalence and contradiction, to understand the religious plurality in Africa. Healing is an important religious practice of PCCs; it is reported that in Latin American, Asian, and African countries where PCCs grew rapidly, as many as 80–90% of first-generation Christians attribute their conversion primarily to having received divine healing for

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<sup>1</sup> Affect, a concept strongly inspired by Deleuze and Spinoza, is considered as intensities that pass from body to body, in both humans and non-humans (Gregg and Seigworth 2010: 1). Thus, affect is something that goes beyond the boundaries of individual subjectivities that coincide with enclosed bodies. It is not something simply reducible to emotions, which are culturally categorized states, and it is inherently intertwined with practice.

themselves or a family member (Brown 2011: 3). In the context of Africa, Omenyo (2011) argues, focusing on the example of PCCs in Ghana, that Africans adapted and modified missionary Christianity along the lines of pneumatic and African traditional spiritualities that prioritise healing. It has also been pointed out that the healing practices in PCCs are sometimes less expensive than traditional healing practices, which has led the people to convert to the former (Pfeiffer 2006). Although healing practices are not the only characteristic that defines PCCs in Africa (Gifford 2011), they are at least one of the important aspects that should be explored further to comprehend the reason for the rapid growth of PCCs in contemporary Africa. However, although many studies mention the healing of PCCs, their actual therapeutic itinerary, and the way in which people feel healing efficacy in a particular setting, has not been well documented. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the healing practices and affective experiences of healing to clarify their actual itineraries and particularities, as well as the role of PCCs in the context of religious plurality in Africa.

## 2. Research setting and methods

This paper relies on data and examples gathered through ethnographic fieldwork in Benin, which has experienced a rapid expansion of PCCs since the 1980s. These churches include the denominational Pentecostal church based in Europe and the United States of America, as well as churches locally established under the influence of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. Benin is a relatively small country in Africa in terms of population and surface, yet it is religiously dynamic, with the influence of Islam, Christianity, and an indigenous religion called *vodun* in Fon<sup>2</sup>. In southern Benin, where both the economic and political capitals are situated, there are strong Christian influences, including Methodist and AICs such as the Celestial Church of Christ. However, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church is most prevalent. Pentecostal-Charismatic movements have become increasingly visible, especially in the South, and their rapid expansion has had a major impact on the country's contemporary religious landscape, particularly after its democratisation (Mayrarugue 2008).

This paper takes examples from the church called 'La Très Sainte Église de Jésus-Christ, Mission de Banamè' (hereafter, the 'Banamè Church'), which has rapidly gained popularity since its creation in 2009. According to the Church, after the exorcism of a teenage girl called Parfaite by an exorcist of the Roman Catholic Church called Matthias Vigan, the Holy Spirit came into the girl's body and started to speak as God<sup>3</sup>. The Banamè Church claims that God descended to this world devastated by demons to eradicate all the demons and witches, and it has attracted many followers with this assertion<sup>4</sup>. While the

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<sup>2</sup> The case studies examined in this article reflect the ethnic diversity of the Banamè Church such as Fon, Gun, and Yoruba, the ethnicities common in southern Benin. As masses are held in Fon, which is the common language of southern Benin, this article refers to terms in Fon.

<sup>3</sup> The Holy Spirit and God tend to be considered indifferently in the Banamè Church.

<sup>4</sup> The claimed nominal number is two million believers in 2014, according to the Banamè Church.

Church's claims about the founder as God make it different from other PCCs, its emphasis on fighting against witches through deliverance practices is an element that is common to other PCCs.

The idea of 'witch' (*azètó*), against which the Banamè Church strongly fights, is the same notion shared and widely feared among the general population in Benin, regardless of their religion. A witch is not considered to be an innate state of being but, rather, something that a person might unintentionally become as a result of having been given *azě* (witchcraft) by various means such as eating foods. The presence of a witch is generally perceived, especially, through misfortunate events. Whether misfortunes are caused by a supernatural power is conventionally determined by diviners called *bokɔnɔ*. When the root of misfortune is determined to be witchcraft-related, rituals including sacrifices are typically carried out at midnight.

### 3. Illness and healing itinerary

Healing is one of the most common motivations for converting to PCCs in Benin (De Surgy 2001), as well as to the Banamè Church. I asked 62 followers of the Banamè Church the immediate reason for joining it. Their reasons usually include several factors, but almost half of the followers mentioned recovery from illnesses in their or close relatives' cases as the main reason for conversion.

The symptoms, which were claimed to have improved, varied among followers. Some pointed out that they suffered from affliction in certain body parts, such as the feet, waist, throat, abdomen, some of these simultaneously, or the whole body. Others reported problems with reproduction, including repeated miscarriages. Descriptions of the pain level also varied: 'like a snake crawling through the whole body', or 'painful as if the body was stabbed'. In addition, people were experiencing varied chronic pain, including pain in the lower back, or the abdomen.

This wide range of symptoms is related to the process by which they visited the Banamè Church for treatment. Of those interviewed, 21 out of 26 told that they had been to hospitals before going to the Banamè Church. In other words, as they were not cured by the medical treatment in the hospitals, they judged that these were not 'simple diseases' but 'sent diseases'.

As in many places in West Africa, illnesses are classified into two categories: natural illness and provoked illness. Among the Fon, on the one hand, there are 'ordinary illnesses' (*azòn yàyá*) or 'white illnesses' (*yovó sín azòn*), which occur naturally without any intervention of bad intentions. On the other hand, 'sent illnesses' (*azòn sedo mɛ*), 'black illnesses' (*mewì sín azòn*) or 'witchcraft illnesses' (*azězòn*) are provoked or triggered by transcendental powers such as spirits, witches, magic, or deities. In Benin, hardly any case of illness is considered *a priori* as natural or provoked. The quality of illness is determined in the course of or after the therapeutic itinerary by observing whether the remedy was effective.

It should be noted, however, that biomedical doctors' decisions are not necessarily the final one, and

the Banamè Church was not necessarily the last step in the interviewees' illness episodes and healing processes. For example, Emilienne, a woman in her thirties who sold household goods from her home in a middle-sized town called Allada, was a moderate follower of the Roman Catholic Church and rarely went to the Church when I met her in 2013. Two years later, she became a follower of the Banamè Church and claimed that she had healed there. However, when I met her again in 2017, she had become a follower of another PCC. I asked her about her itinerary through religions which, at the time, coincided with her itinerary through healing practices. The description below is the beginning of her itinerary.

In 2014, Emilienne was returning to the town where she had moved from her husband's former village when she felt strange as if there were 'ants crawling up her anus'. Then, her head and throat started aching. She also started to spit a great quantity of white saliva and had to run to the toilet as soon as she ate. She could not sit up and felt dizzy. She could not sleep at night; her chest felt heavy, and she could not breathe well. She went with her husband to the local health centre.

The doctor suspected that she had haemorrhoids, but as no abnormalities were found in her blood tests, he advised her to look for religious treatment. Thus, on the way home, the couple went to a Catholic church and asked the priest to pray for her. However, it did not work. A week later, her husband's friend introduced them to a diviner (*bokono*) in a neighbouring town, who performed a ritual for her. However, that didn't work either, so they went to a priest of Christian Celeste, an independent church in Benin, who worked also as a diviner. The priest applied a potion to her muscles and she was able to move a little. However, they could not continue because she could not afford it. She, then, continued to go to another diviner and another Christian Celeste Church; then, to a PCC.

After praying did not help in the PCC, they were told to go to a hospital for tests and were referred to a doctor who was a member of the Church. A blood test showed that she had typhoid fever. Then the doctor referred her to a hospital near the capital, but no bacteria were found through examinations at that hospital. They were told that she should have an x-ray done, so she went to the central hospital and did an x-ray; however, they could not find anything wrong. She went back to the previous hospital to ask what she could do, but they dismissed her, saying there was nothing they could do. On her way home, she went to Christian Celeste church and participated in a ritual service.

Her treatment continued for a long time; in the middle of it, she spent some time at the Banamè Church. Emilienne's condition improved; subsequently, she stayed there with her husband for about six months. However, when her condition worsened again, they left the Banamè Church in search of other

healing practices. She continued to visit many diviners, churches, and hospitals but was finally healed in another PCC, of which she was a member when I interviewed her.

This is the common itinerary that many Beninese take when they are ill. People do not go only to PCCs when they fall ill. In their therapeutic itinerary, patients try churches, including PCCs, AICs, and indigenous religions, as well as biomedicine. This practice, sometimes indicated as ‘healer shopping’ (Kroeger 1983: 147), and given a rather negative connotation by studies, could be conversely understood as an enactment of religious plurality between PCCs, AICs, and indigenous religions. In front of healing efficacy, people tend to treat religions equally, despite the furious demonisation at a discursive level.

This case also indicates that the ‘healed’ state is a form of the process, rather than the final state. Just as ‘healed’ is fluid, ‘illness’ here is also fluid and does not remain fixed in one form or another. It was considered as ‘haemorrhoid’, or ‘typhoid fever’ at times, but failed to stabilise its form. Meanwhile, the ‘sent illness’ also did not stabilise, as Emilienne was told to go to the hospital by the religious healers. The ‘sent illness’, as well as ‘natural illness’, emerged in a certain form through the entangled results of examinations by and diagnoses of spiritual healers as well as medical workers. In the process, the ‘therapy managing group’ (Janzen 1978: 4), which consists of family members, friends, and acquaintances, also influences the healing itinerary. However, the feelings of the afflicted person are crucial for determining the illness. For example, it was the transformation of the sensation that made Emilienne determine her affliction as ‘sent illness’ at the Banamè Church and it was again the transformation of the sensation, the relapsing pain this time, which pushed her to seek others. The healing itinerary is, thus, the bodily, affective way of knowing and coping with an uncertain situation.

#### **4. Therapeutic particularity with the affect and materiality**

The relationship between the body and healing efficacy in a religious setting was discussed in a seminal study by Csordas (1994), which focused on the charismatics of North America. He describes the self as ‘an indeterminate capacity to engage or become oriented in the world, characterised by effort and reflexivity’ and claims that ‘the locus of efficacy is not symptoms, psychiatric disorders, symbolic meaning, or social relationships, but the self in which all of these are encompassed’ (ibid. 3). The centrality of the self is the body, and he showed that the therapeutic process in ritual healing produces an altered self in the transformation of somatic modes of attention, a capacity for orientation in the world (ibid. 67). In other words, those who are healed by PCCs may have altered their selves, or the somatic mode of attention, through the latter’s practices; but, how so? Each PCC has different strategies and ways of healing, but, to deeply understand the practice, I consider the specificity of healing practices in the Banamè Church as an example.

According to its followers, many of them had received treatment in other religions before arriving at the Banamè Church. Out of the 21 interviewees, 15 said that they arrived at the Banamè Church after

having tried treatment in other churches or by local healers. Table 1 shows the specific ways in which those who said that they were healed at the Banamè Church were perceived as meaningful in terms of efficacy. Most respondents said that they had visited the holy city of Banamè and participated in deliverance rituals. Many also said that applying the oil, salt, and water sold in the Banamè Church had a healing effect. The rest said that they prayed, met with Daagbo – the Holy Spirit in the body of Parfaite – in the Banamè Church, and listened to him.

Table 1. Practices mentioned for the healing efficacy

<b>Mentioned causes of healings</b>	<b>Number</b>
Went to the holy hill of Banamè	19
Participated in the ritual of Deliverance	10
Applied sacred oil, salt or water	8
Prayed	5
Had a meeting with God (Daagbo)	2
Heard a sermon of God (Daagbo)	1

The holy hill of Banamè is the most mentioned factor. Banamè, where the Banamè Church was created because it was where Parfaite was exorcised by the priest Mathias, is a secluded village that can be reached from the city by driving on an unpaved road. The hill of Banamè is considered holy and to have curative properties, especially when walking barefoot. Many devotees with illnesses move to live in the area around the hill for healing. When there are no meetings, the hill remains deserted compared to when large meetings are held; however, there are usually 10 to 20 sick people staying on it for healing. Banamè offers physical or bodily experiences to those who seek healing: moving from where they live, climbing up the hill, walking barefoot, praying and living.

Deliverance is the second-most mentioned reason for healing. Deliverance Masses in the Banamè Church are held as large congregations attended by thousands of people where prayers for Daagbo play an important role. They may also be held during regular Mass in district churches where the laying on of hands by the priests plays a major role. On both occasions, the practices physically engage the audience, for example, in singing, dancing, and shouting, and are largely affective. In the African context, deliverance, the practice of casting out demons and evil spirits, is performed not only against biblical evil entities but also against local divinities and spirits, notably witches (Gifford 2014, Onyinah 2002). Liberation from those evils spiritual entities brings not only health but also prosperity, social success, and good human relationships. During deliverance, which, in many PCCs, coincides with exorcism rituals, sometimes possessing entities, such as witches or other local spirits, manifest themselves through the possessed person (Meyer 1999, Newell 2007). The possessing demonic spirits embody the cause of the misfortunes that afflict the person and, during the ritual, these spirits sometimes actually confess in their own words how they possessed the person. Therefore, deliverance is a way of getting to know both

the causes of misfortunes and countermeasures. In this sense, deliverance encompasses the traditional roles of divination and rituals. The ways of knowing and coping with the spirits became more embodied and affective through the PCCs' practices.

Many objects for healing and protection against sorcery and witchcraft, including salt, oil, and water, which were particularly mentioned for their healing efficacy, are sold in Banamè churches. Salt and olive oil are also used in Roman Catholic churches, but those sold in Banamè churches are 'blessed by Daagbo', according to their followers. Water, salt, and olive oil are not only drunk, sipped, and applied to the body in times of illness but also used in a variety of ways in everyday life: sipped before going out, dissolved in bathing water, used in washing the body, added to food, and placed in the corners of the room to prevent witches from entering the house or evil spirits from entering the body. Thus, these items make the followers physically and bodily engage in daily practices.

Therefore, the things mentioned for the healing efficacy were largely connected to the practices that require bodily commitments. However, it is still necessary to clarify how they become integrated into the healing itinerary of the people.

## **5. From physical disorder to suspicion of witchcraft**

I will examine the healing itinerary of Odile, a woman who began with physical illness, experienced possession, and, then, recovered in the Banamè Church. Her healing process has something in common with the stories of many other followers, such as not being healed through biomedicine, the suspicion of witchcraft, dreams, photographs, and the holy hill. Therefore, by following her healing process, it will be possible to shed light on the overall characteristics of the healing process in the Banamè Church.

Odile, a woman in her late 20s, lived near the economic capital with two children and her husband, who worked at the university as a clerk. Odile said that her bodily disorders began after her husband married another woman. Despite her status as the first wife, her husband chose to live with the second wife, so Odile was obliged to rent a room in the same city.

At first, she felt a pain that she had never felt before in her feet as if the 'bones were being eaten'. She visited a private hospital and started feeling better after medications were prescribed. However, after a while, her chest began to hurt, so she went to another private hospital and was diagnosed with typhoid fever. She took the prescribed medications, but she began to feel sick, so she stopped taking them. After that, she had a headache described as if 'the head was about to fall and leave the neck'.

Her symptoms emerged one after another in different body parts; thus, she began to suspect that her illness was a 'sent illness'. She reached out to many churches for treatment, but nothing helped. She did not go to the Banamè Church because of rumours claiming that

Parfaite, the girl who claims to be God, was Mami Wata (a water spirit). One day, her husband took one of his second wife's children to Odile's place and ordered her to take care of him for a week. The child did not behave at all: he defaecated in the room, climbed a chair, and scattered clothes on the table. When Odile hit the child, she 'felt as if I were hitting a tree' (*a zìn nù dǒ atín qǒhùn*). 'He had witchcraft', Odile said.

On the following day, Odile had a stomach ache and laid down after feeding her children. She vomited, and her neighbour took her to the hospital. Later, Odile's husband visited her. When Odile woke up, her husband said that she had murmured 'somebody, somebody, somebody' (*mɛlɛ mɛlɛ mɛlɛ*) while she was sleeping.

This was a typical illness itinerary in Benin, which includes bodily symptoms, the involvement of biomedicine, suspects of witch influence, and a dream that entangled to constitute a 'sent illness', where a spirit intervenes. The starting point of the itinerary was the sense of pain that Odile had never experienced. The abnormality of the pain level, its repetition in other body parts, and the lack of improvement after medical treatment suggested some kind of 'sent illness', which implies that its cause is external to one's own body. Odile reiterated the unusual sensation from touching the second wife's child, which can be seen as a consequence of an outward 'somatic mode of attention' (Csordas 1994: 67). Odile's narrative shifted from her internal pain and biomedical treatment to the abnormality of hitting the child, 'like hitting a tree', because her 'somatic mode of attention' was directed outward, toward the body of a particular other. Therefore, she could feel the invisible witchcraft concretely, which led her to assert that the child 'had witchcraft'.

The recognition of the existence of witchcraft often emerges in concrete contacts and correspondences with the environment. According to my interviews, other typical examples in which people perceive the presence of witchcraft involve encounters with whirling air on the street, the strange behaviour of animals, such as hearing unusual wails of cats at night, or meeting people in dreams as Odile implied. The commonality of such phenomena is that they move autonomously, and, unlike ordinary unmoving things in the environment, they can approach the bodies of people in unpredictable ways. This tangibility and abnormality allow such encounters to be structured as witchcraft. Through these experiences with these external agents, Odile's somatic afflictions were connected to a particular person in society.

## 6. Toward possession and healing

Up to this stage, 'illness sent by a witch' had emerged, but the element of healing efficacy was still absent. It came through possession in Odile's case. The occurrence of witch possession is not unusual in the Banamè Church, as well as in other PCCs in Benin, but it is not usual in the conventional

understanding of witches in Benin. Odile also said that she had never heard of a witch possessing people before, nor had she ever been possessed by anything before. How was she oriented toward witch possession? To investigate the specificities of the Banamè Church and PCCs, I will analyse how deliverance occurred in Odile's case.

On the day of the deliverance, Odile stayed at her aunt's house because she had a quarrel with her husband. The aunt was a member of the Banamè Church and had gone to the Mass that day, so Odile was alone in the house with her children. She was suffering from pain all over her body, so she had knelt and prayed to the picture of Daagbo hanging on the wall, although Odile 'did not believe in it'. Looking at the picture, she talked to it crying with anger: 'If you are really God, why don't you help me when I am struggling with such a pain?' Then, she sang a song to praise God to please him, because she thought that it would make God feel like helping her.

When Odile was lying down, Father Erick from the Banamè Church went to see her, having known about her through her aunt. She was glad that the priest was going to pray for her, as she was desperate for healing. After a short talk with the priest, he asked her if she had the salt and olive oil of Daagbo, so Odile gave him her aunt's stuff. The priest made Odile kneel in front of him, anointed her forehead with olive oil, and made her lick the salt. During the laying on of hands, she felt something leaving her body, and she lost consciousness.

As the priest prayed, the kneeling Odile began to shake a little and fell completely on the floor. She began to move like a snake, folded, and unfolded her upper and lower body. Seeing the sign of possession through such bodily movements, the priest approached the fallen Odile, held her head, and called out to her. He began to question the spirit and, after making sure it began to answer his call, he started an audio recording on his mobile phone, so that Odile could later hear it as evidence.

In the recording, he first asked who the spirit was, and it answered that it was Odile's co-spouse's mother. He asked if she was a witch, and the spirit answered yes. Then, the witch spirit started to confess that she was the one who made Odile ill for the benefit of her own daughter. The spirit recounted in retrospective detail how she worked to break up Odile and her husband's relationship and how she made Odile ill and distressed. It also confessed that she sent her grandson – the child in which Odile had sensed something unusual – who was also a witch, to make Odile ill. The conversation between the alleged spirit in Odile and the priest lasted nearly two and a half hours. The spirit's voice sounded muffled and low at first, hesitantly and passively responding to the priest's questions, but

over time it became more and more active.

On the day of the deliverance, Odile saw the ‘picture of Daagbo’ on display and talked to it while crying angrily; then, she prayed and sang for Daagbo. The photo stirred her feelings, and she carried out the ritual practice as though she was in front of somebody, asking for grace. In this way, she had already become oriented toward the practice of Banamè before the priest came, although she said that she did not believe in it. In the mood for a ritual with items such as salt and oil, and with the laying on of the hands of the priest, Odile fell down. However, falling itself does not condition the emergence of the witch’s spirit. It was through communication with the priest Erick that the particular spirit, the ‘co-spouse’s mother’, came out. It is Father Erick who, after Odile’s fall, created an assumed space in which that particular person could manifest herself by asking who the spirit was. Answering these questions, the subjectivity of the spirit emerged as a particular spirit form, a witch, and, more specifically, as the mother of the co-spouse. In other words, the subjectivity of the spirit emerged as a ‘capture’ of correspondences between the photograph of Daagbo, Odile’s affective response towards it, and Father Erick’s words and postures (*cf.* De Antoni 2017: 12). Then, because it emerged, it was possible to be delivered.

Possession is the ultimate bodily recruiting practice, which reorganises the experiences of the one possessed and its surroundings, as in the case of Odile. Her affliction was explained by the spirits, and her understanding of the illness experiences changed and was reorganised after the possession. She broke up with her husband and became a follower of the Banamè Church. She said that, after the possession, her symptoms gradually improved, but, according to her, it was only after she reached the hill of Banamè that she was completely healed. This story of healing through possession is also typical in other cultural settings.

The relationship between possession and illness is a well-discussed topic; for example, Lienhardt (1961), who discussed it by focusing on the relationship between the Dinka spirits or ‘power’ and humans. Noting that there is no word to indicate the opposite of ‘actions’ in English, Lienhardt used the Latin word *passiones* to mean both passiveness and suffering. The spirit, or ‘power’, is the image and source of human passivity. The diviner separates the image of *passiones* from the experience of the sufferer, either by possessing the diviner himself or by possessing the sufferer and his relatives through spirits. By separating the subject-self from the object-image, the Dinka people create a desired form of experience.

The healing efficacy of possession was also discussed in Kapferer’s work on exorcism in Sri Lanka (Kapferer 1979). He analysed possession by relying on G. H. Mead’s theory of the self, in which the self is constituted in an inner dialogue between the ‘I’ as the subject and the ‘me’ as the object, drawn from the social other through interaction. During possession, as in most cases, the individual loses

consciousness, the 'I' becomes absent, leaving only 'me'. The suffering caused by the devil is the denial or dissolution of the 'self' through the captivation of the 'me' by the devil. Exorcism is the ritual reconstruction of the 'self', and through these processes, the ritual achieves its primary goal, healing.

Therefore, Odile's possession can be understood through the ritual separating her and the 'witch' which is the image of *passions*, and that made possible to reorganise her experience. Simultaneously, in the confession of the witch during deliverance, Odile, the subject 'She', became 'her', the object. Odile as 'her' was captivated by the witch, but, in the end, 'her' was released by the priest's prayer. This process can be understood as the reconstruction of a new 'self', letting Odile recover from her suffering.

Subsequently, looking at the case from the beginning, Odile was oriented towards possession by the practices and materials of the Banamè Church, making her 'possess-able'. Through these transformations of feeling, her illness was ultimately healed. Thus, the practices of the Banamè Church, by bodily and affectively engaging Odile, oriented her toward a 'healed' state. Therefore, the affective materials and practices, which entangle people, are the specificity of healing in the Banamè Church and the possible source of the healing efficacy.

## 7. Conclusion

As stated above, ruptures with conventional religions and relationships, as well as intolerant aspects, were usually highlighted by studies as features of PCCs in Africa. However, the reason for joining PCCs is often related to their healing efficacy, and, as I showed, personal itineraries of therapy and healing ensure religious plurality. This study explored therapeutic itineraries among PCCs and the particularities in their healing practices, focusing especially on their affective quality.

Through analysing the cases, I clarify that 'sent illness', which indicates spirit intervention, was not a stable concept, but it emerged in the process of correspondence between bodily feelings, biomedical practices, and religious healers. The suspicion of spirit intervention oriented the bodily attention towards the outside, which facilitated entanglements with non-humans in the environment. Through these encounters, the spirits became more concrete. In the case of Odile, this process occurred through bodily contact with the child of the co-spouse. At that time, Odile encountered ritual practices in the Banamè Church. Consequently, possession, the ultimate form of bodily engagement, occurred.

Certainly, there are specificities of the Banamè Church that elicited Odile's possession and healing. Healing in the Banamè Church occurred through relationships between physical things such as holy salt, oil, and photos, as well as through correspondences with environments through affective practices and techniques such as climbing the holy hill in Banamè, or the laying on of hands. The Church sells goods, which may look like mere commodification and consumerism. However, the cases suggest that these objects contribute to orient newcomers and believers toward the novel reality of the Banamè Church bodily and affectively.

As the case of Emilienne indicates, not only the Banamè Church but also other churches and religious practices provide healing efficacy. Healing is central to the growth of PCCs in Africa, and most churches have different ways of healing that emphasise different aspects. Odile was healed in the Banamè Church; however, in the case of Emilienne, the symptoms only temporarily improved in the Banamè Church but worsened afterwards, and healing eventually occurred in other PCCs. Thus, healing may occur as a result of entanglements of bodies, symptoms, discourses, and things in the environment, but it is not always achieved. Symptoms, personal histories, the timing of supplicants' arrival at a certain healing practice, and the bodily reactions during the practices are all different. The trajectories of supplicants seeking healing point at the search for therapy that works for them. Therefore, trying many therapeutic practices is a way to enhance the possibility of a cure.

The affective quality of PCCs may be related to these healing itineraries. As Piot (2010) argued, PCCs generate affective experiences in the people, and this affective quality may recruit the sufferers toward certain orientations, especially when their bodily feelings play an important role, and their somatic modes of attention are oriented outward. Affects have been described as something 'sticky', which become attached to certain cultural or political products (Ahmed 2004), and I argue that affects generated and elicited by practices of PCCs are particularly sticky to those who are seeking to heal. These practices sometimes lead to radical bodily engagements, such as possession, which often open up possibilities for healing. This suggests that the affective and bodily engaged practices of the PCCs provide the opportunity to orient people towards being healed.

Therefore, even though PCCs tend to be discussed from an economic and political perspective and rupture is considered as one of their characteristics, a focus on healing practices can shed light on more practical strategies employed by people. On the one hand, from a discursive perspective, the aggressive attitude of PCCs towards other religions may sometimes cause conflict. On the other hand, PCCs allow people to enhance the possibility of healing through itineraries that suggest practical attitudes toward religious pluralism. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on PCCs as a whole, including their practices and the healing itineraries that they allow and create, rather than exclusively discussing their discursive aspects.

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# Where Muslim Spirits Possess Christian Mediums: The *Hadra* Meeting in Boset, Ethiopia

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## Abstract

Christians are in the majority in the religious composition of Ethiopia, but the number of Muslims has been increasing in recent years. Historically, Christianity (Ethiopian Orthodox) has been the major religion of the highlanders in the north, the political centre of the country. Islam has expanded mainly among the Oromo, living in the lowlands. However, while this dichotomy illustrates the contrasting situation from a broad perspective, religious practices, which are an integral part of people's lives, are not clearly divided into Islam and Christianity. For instance, many Christians participate in the *hadra* meeting, originally derived from Islam, which is prevalent in the Oromo communities of the East Showa region. They chant the name of Allah and praise Muslim saints during the ritual. This study focuses on the religious complexity of the ritual and how it relates to ethnicity and local history.

**Keywords:** Christianity, Islam, spirit cults, Oromo, Ethiopia

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Possession cults

In a study, Boddy (1994: 407) defined spirit possession as follows: ‘spirit possession commonly refers to the hold exerted over a human being by external spiritual forces or entities more powerful than she. ...possession is a broad term referring to an integration of spirit and matter, force or power and corporeal reality, in a cosmos where the boundaries between an individual and her environment are acknowledged to be permeable, flexibly drawn, or at least negotiable’.

Possession cults are widespread in Africa and *zar* is one of the better-known forms of spirit possession found throughout the Horn of Africa. In the *zar* cult, a person, usually a woman, joins the cult when she is chosen by a *zar* spirit as a medium. This usually begins with the onset of illness, which is diagnosed by a *balā-zar*, a person who has a formidable *zar* spirit. In the course of being possessed, the initiate makes rapid movements which indicates the nature of the *zar*. The *zar* medium then performs a traditional praise song in which a *zar* spirit reveals his name and demands. Unlike in other spirit possession, *zar* spirits are not exorcised, rather a long-term relationship between the medium is cultivated. Once a member has been successfully initiated into the cult, she participates in group meetings (*wādaḡa*) while being possessed. On these occasions, she assumes the character, dress and behaviour of her *zar* spirit.

While scholars generally agree that women are particularly prominent in the *zar* cult, there is no consensus as to why it is so. Some suggest a bio-medical explanation of the initial onset of *zar* possession, if not the cultural articulation of the cult, may be related to symptoms of malnutrition, particularly calcium deficiency (Kehoe and Giletti 1991). They support this argument by studying the dietary patterns of poor Ethiopians, particularly women and children. From this perspective, the feasting and feeding of the *zar* are not merely metaphorical, but also a response to the physiological needs of their devotees. Others tend to stress psychological factors such as stress, anxiety and highly structured inequality in social relations. Messing (1957) compares the *zar* cult to group therapy and suggests that the afflicted person, whether a woman or a man benefits from participation in the cult by uplift his/her status and receiving attention. Young (1975) emphasised the role of disease and cathartic hearing in the *zar* cult. Other scholars follow Lewis (1966), who encompasses shamanism and possession and distinguishes between main or central morality cults and peripheral ones, such as *zar*. Viewing the *zar* as an example of a deprivation cult, the religion of the oppressed in which weak members of society who cannot legitimately demand better treatment allow their *zar* to extort gifts and better treatment on their behalf. In response to Lewis’s deprivation theory, based on her research in Northern Sudan, Boddy (1989) extends the scope of possession to conclude that *zar* had a symbolic meaning beyond that. She pointed out that the *zar* began to appear historically in Sudan in the 1820s and argued that it was related to the Turkish and Egyptian invasions and occupations. She said that the *zar* symbolised resistance to

external forces and official Islamic penetration, as well as women's resistance to men.

The fundamental apprehension of these studies has been characterised by reductive, naturalising, or rationalising approaches. Studies constructed along the way were rendered in Western common sense or natural scientific terms and they suspend contextualising the enquiry of those terms. Csordas (1987) tracks the rationalising tendency by charting a progressive medicalisation of possession in Anglo-American literature. He suggests that the religious, aesthetic and quotidian significances of possession were repeatedly eschewed in deference to its function as group therapy, even when informants described their experience as religious (Boddy 1994: 414).

There have been many studies on spirit possession, including *zar*. Particularly in rural African societies, the practice of possession in Islamic societies has been discussed in terms of resistance, deprivation, and symbolism, as mentioned above. This argument is accepted by most people, but it leaves the unexplored aspects of the relationship between some religions, such as Christianity and Islam, and rituals regarding spirit possession, especially in the condition of the increasing diversification of people's religious lives in many parts of rural society in today's Africa.

This study regards the phenomenon as the daily experience in the local context and grasps it as the multiple refractions of religion, morality, and their social history.

## 1.2. *Wuqabi* cult in Ethiopia

Although the rituals and beliefs on the *zar* cult vary from place to place, they are often regarded as variations on a continuum spectrum, rather than representing an independent form. The *wuqabi* cult, also a common possession cult in some areas in Ethiopia, rests on this spectrum.

*Wuqabi* is individual or family spirit that possesses a medium and treats other people through her. The specialists who deal with these spirits are mostly mediums (*balä-wuqabi*) who appease them through sacrifice or gift. Similar to *zar*, the *wuqabi* spirits are a possible source of solving a wide variety of problems in the extent and nature of some communities in Ethiopia. As problem-solvers, possessing spirits may be viewed as benign, or at least potentially beneficial to the possessed person if he or she learns how to appease and treat the spirit when they are possessed.

*Wuqabi* spirits are believed to exist in the abstract, sometimes expressed metaphorically as the sky or the wind. They are thought of as having dominion or power over the world and to be able to possess or otherwise influence any human being, regardless of race, gender or religion. There are spirits for many different statuses and roles. Some are warriors, others are judges, rich farmers and priests. Similarly, there are Christian and Muslim *wuqabi*, whose lifestyles are thought to resemble those of their terrestrial counterparts. For instance, the *wuqabi* named *Taqwal* is well-known as a Christian Amhara, while *Adal* is a rich Oromo judge and merchant (Morton 1973).

The question of taming and training in the context of possession is multifaceted. It is not only a question of taming a *wuqabi* spirit, but also of the *wuqabi* taming the ‘horse’ which it ‘rides’, namely the possessed person. The process of accommodating a possessing *wuqabi*, which is initiated when a *wuqabi* first comes to possess a human being is designed to discipline both the ‘rider’ and the ‘mount’. *Wuqabi* are spirits that generally protect human beings from evil spirits and build a long-time relationship between a *wuqabi* spirit and the medium. The sacrifice of her/his *wuqabi* spirit is essential for the relationship to protect her/him (Figure 1).

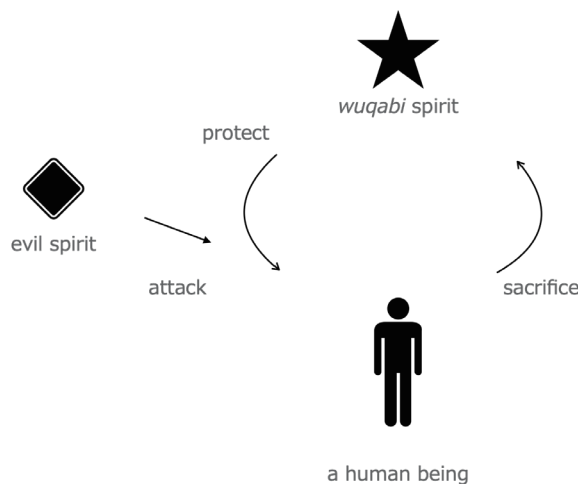


Figure 1. Relationship between a human being and a *wuqabi*

If the *wuqabi* spirit does not receive enough gifts, it becomes frustrated and the relationship with the person deteriorates. Then, the protection becomes weak or is cancelled, and evil spirits can come closer and attack the person. The result of the attacks can be visualised in any form of suffering in the person’s real life, such as illness, infertility, poverty, a poor crop, animal disease and so on (Figure 2). In this narrative, any suffering is understood as the expression of the insufficiency or inadequateness of the gifts for the *wuqabi*. What the narrative offers is that any suffering can be solved by a good relationship between the person and her/his *wuqabi*. This narrative opens the hope that the suffering could be resolved without reducing it to the individual.

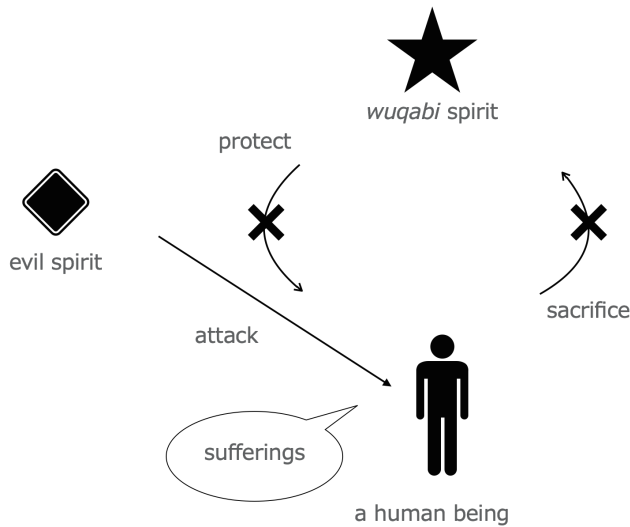


Figure 2. Deterioration of relationship between a human being and a *wuqabi*

## 2. *Hadra* meeting

In this section, *hadra* meeting, seen in some societies in rural Ethiopia is described based on my fieldwork conducted to understand the religious life of the people in the Boset area in the Oromia region. It was conducted over 13 non-contiguous months, from August 2007 to November, September 2008 to February 2009, November 2009 to March 2010, December 2011 to March 2012, and February to March 2014. During the fieldwork, I conducted research using the Amharic language.

Kalani Ambäsay (d.2011), widely known as one of the eminent mediums in the Boset area, was born to the priest family of an Ethiopian Orthodox Church in a village at the foot of Boset Mountain. When young, Kalani became aware that she was a spirit medium in a dream. She left her father's home and came to Bori village following the instructions of the *wuqabi*.

The administrative officer around Boset was a Christian Amhara from Wällo in northeastern Ethiopia, named Wäldä Gabriel, dispatched from Addis Abeba. With his permission, Kalani took up residence on the outskirts of the village. When Wäldä Gabriel heard of Kalani's reputation for powerful spiritual ability, he attended Kalani's meetings frequently to ask her to pray for him. The more her reputation grew, the more those who admired her, including Wäldä Gabriel's relatives, came to reside around her dwelling. They built a *hadra bet*, a hut for the *hadra* meeting, in the centre of their dwellings.

People from places around Boset began to visit her to participate in the *hadra* meetings after hearing about the reputation of the ritual. At its peak, the *hadra* hosted by Kalani was attended by nearly 100 people. The ritual space was separated from the residential space so spirits could come to the *hadra bet*. Everyone who entered the ritual space had to be clean. Some taboo states, such as having attended a funeral, had sexual intercourse or menstruating, precluded entrance to the space.

The ritual was usually held from dusk until dawn. On the days of the meeting, Kalani's relatives prepared the necessities of the meeting, such as *khat*, coffee, sugar, frankincense resin and perfume.

These items were shared by participants during rituals. While the rituals were held several times a week, and the spirits which possessed Kalani varied depending on the day, every ritual had almost the same procedures *viz.*, chanting prayers, the descent of the spirits, and dialogue between the spirit and participants. In the next section, I give an example of how the rituals proceeded based on my field notes for the *hadra* meeting in Boset, which I attended in October 2007.

### 2.1. The procedure of the meeting

The evening of Friday of the first month of the Ethiopian calendar, when I went to the bet, was cool compared to the extreme heat felt in the day. It was the ceremonial time for the *wuqabi* spirit. I followed people in white clothes into the *hadra bet* at about 8 pm. The flame of a small gas lantern at the entrance was insufficient to illuminate the entire room. In the dim room, participants could not clearly identify each other. The hut was circular. A large crimson curtain used as a partition created a tiny space on the side opposite the entrance. Participants sat facing the curtain.

The medium's daughter-in-law, Abbäb, moved in and out of the hut. She put frankincense resins on the burning charcoal in the brazier placed next to the pillar in the centre of the hut. The room was filled with white smoke. It smelt clean. A man sitting by the curtain repeated the phrase '*Bi-ism Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim*' in a slow tempo. Abbäb, holding bamboo baskets, walked among people. Some put a 1-birr note in the basket, while others put some in plastic bags with a handful of sugar or coffee.

One of the women by the curtain started chanting a religious prayer. The rest listened while swaying their bodies sideways. The religious chant continued until approximately 11:30 p.m. The curtain was lifted slightly from behind and hands holding a bundle of *khat* (*Catha edulis*)<sup>1</sup> were thrust out. An old man took the bundle, untied the strings holding it together, carefully separated the branches and handed them to the participants. The branches were passed from hand to hand to all participants. They chewed the *khat*. There was little conversation. The entrance had been closed for some time.

While the *khat* were distributed, Abbäb prepared to serve coffee. She washed the raw coffee beans, roasted and ground them finely. She put the coffee powder into a *gäbäna*, a black pot for preparing coffee, and brought it to a boil. The smell of coffee filled the hut. Dozens of small cups were filled. The participants turned their heads and chewed their *khat* silently. Abbäb handed out coffee cups. As in the *khat* distribution, participants passed them on. They used their right hands only and the cups were never placed on the ground. Participants drank quickly and silently. Empty cups were sent forward from the back. Abbäb repeated the coffee brewing three times.

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<sup>1</sup> Evergreen shrub native to East Africa and southern Arabia, more specifically around Yemen, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and so on. The leaves and young shoots are chewed fresh to permit absorption of its soluble ingredients, which are known to produce pleasurable, stimulating, and euphoric effects. In the context of some Muslim societies in Ethiopia, it has always played an important role in their prayer meeting (Ezekiel 2004).

A pair of wooden drums covered with animal skin was brought into the hut. The woman who led the chant had a scratchy voice indicative of a heavy smoker. Both of her cheeks were puffed with *khat* leaves. As the man next to her beat the drums, the people stood and clapped their hands while shaking their bodies vertically. The air in the room was thick with excitement. It was almost 1 a.m.

People in the hut clapped their hands, shook their bodies and chanted loudly. The inside of the hut became even hotter. The lens of my camera fogged up repeatedly. Suddenly, a loud shout echoed through the hut. The voice came from behind the crimson curtain. The drums and chanting ended. People kissed the ground and shouted ‘*Iririri...*’ to show that they celebrated the descent of the long-awaited guest, the *wuqabi* spirit, on the medium, Kalani.

‘*As-salaam alaikum*’<sup>2</sup>, came from behind the curtain. The voice was different from Kalani’s usual voice. The people replied, ‘*Walaikum asalam*’, placed their foreheads on the ground to show their respect and exchanged the words below:

*wuqabi: As-salaam alaikum.*

participants: *Walaikum asalam.*

*wuqabi: I am here to convey the message of Allah.*

participants: *Amen*<sup>3</sup>.

*wuqabi: I am here as the messenger of Ayyo Momina*<sup>4</sup>.

participants: *Amen.*

*wuqabi: The way of human beings leads to a deep dark valley.*

participants: *Amen.*

*wuqabi: People desire to go to the valley.*

participants: *Amen.*

*wuqabi: If you are going to the valley, may Allah stop you.*

participants: *Amen.*

*wuqabi: May Allah give wealth to the poor.*

participants: *Amen.*

*wuqabi: May Allah give health to the sick.*

participants: *Amen.*

*wuqabi: I am here to convey the messages from Ayyo Momina.*

participants: *Amen.*

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<sup>2</sup> Meaning ‘peace be upon you’ used as the most basic greetings between Muslims.

<sup>3</sup> Generally used not only between Christians but also Muslims in many societies in Ethiopia, as a concluding word, or as a response to a prayer.

<sup>4</sup> The name of a well-known Muslim saint in the region. For her life history, see Ishihara (2013).

*wuqabi*: If you are facing some problems, speak out it.

After a while, a man stood and shared his problems. The participants in the hut looked down and appeared to listen his story carefully. The dialogue between the man and the spirit continued for several tens of minutes. As soon as the spirit concluded his advice and the conversation was over, the people around him said a short prayer for him. Then, another participant stood up and began to tell the spirit of his problems. In this way, people's problems were presented to the spirits one after another. It was past 6 a.m. when the dialogue between the spirits and the last participant was over.

## 2.2. The dialogues

The *hadra* meeting consisted of three sessions: chanting prayers, a spirit descent on the medium, and dialogue between the spirits and people. It is probably the last session that motivates many people to participate. In my fieldwork, I found that almost all the participants came to the ritual with some problem they hoped to solve. Analysing the aspect of healing or dealing with trouble through the involvement with spirits is important; however, my purpose is not only to explore this.

More noteworthy here is the ritual appearance in its own way. The purpose of this paper is not to shed light on the functional aspects of the ritual, but to provide some explanation for the area in which Islamic elements are represented, even though the (human) participants are Christian. To understand the complex relationship between the two religions in the ritual, it is necessary to grasp the local context that is also reflected. In this section, I explain how ethnicity is involved in the advice given in the *hadra*, using a specific conversation between a participant who wants to solve a problem and the medium Kalani.

Kalani, a Christian medium, was well known to the local people for having several *wuqabi*, the highest-ranking of which was a Muslim male *wuqabi* named Mälqat. Due to her problem-solving abilities and his erudition beyond human comprehension, he was regarded as a jurist by the people. Mälqat held Kalani *hadra* meetings on Wednesdays and Fridays only.

Participants talked to Mälqat about many problems such as illness to the person or their family, infertility, poverty, death of livestock and deteriorating family relationships. Some of the ways in which these issues are discussed are as follows.

Participant A: I got married a few years ago, and we have not been able to have children so far. I serve the *wuqabi* every week without fail.

Mälqat: Is there a *chälle* in your house?

Participant A: Yes, it is. I keep it in a proper place.

Mälqat: Did you inherit it from your husband's parents?

Participant A: No, I got it from my sister-in-law.

Mälqat: Why? That's the wrong way. What is it?

Participant A: That is, in my house, it used to belong to my sister-in-law. I brought it to my house after her death.

Mälqat: No. What you do is not correct. Give it to your sister-in-law's son immediately. It will be better for you and the child.

A *Chälle* (Figure 3) is a traditional necklace of fine blue, white, and red beads threaded on a string. These necklaces are worn mainly by Oromo women and are said to show the honour of a spiritual being in the traditional belief for *waaqa* which is the name of the supreme being in the Oromo language. They are worn on various ritual occasions. Some women wear it almost every day. They are kept in a safe place and passed down from a parent to a child. In the above dialogue, the *wuqabi* accused the woman of not inheriting the *chälle* in the customary way. It was likely the cause of her suffering. A *Chälle* is worn by a woman, but it should be inherited by the male descendants. Therefore, there should be no such thing as passing on a *chälle* between sisters. In this case, the genie pointed out that Participant A had violated this and should pass it on to her nephew (Figure 4).



Figure 3. A Boset woman wears *chälles*

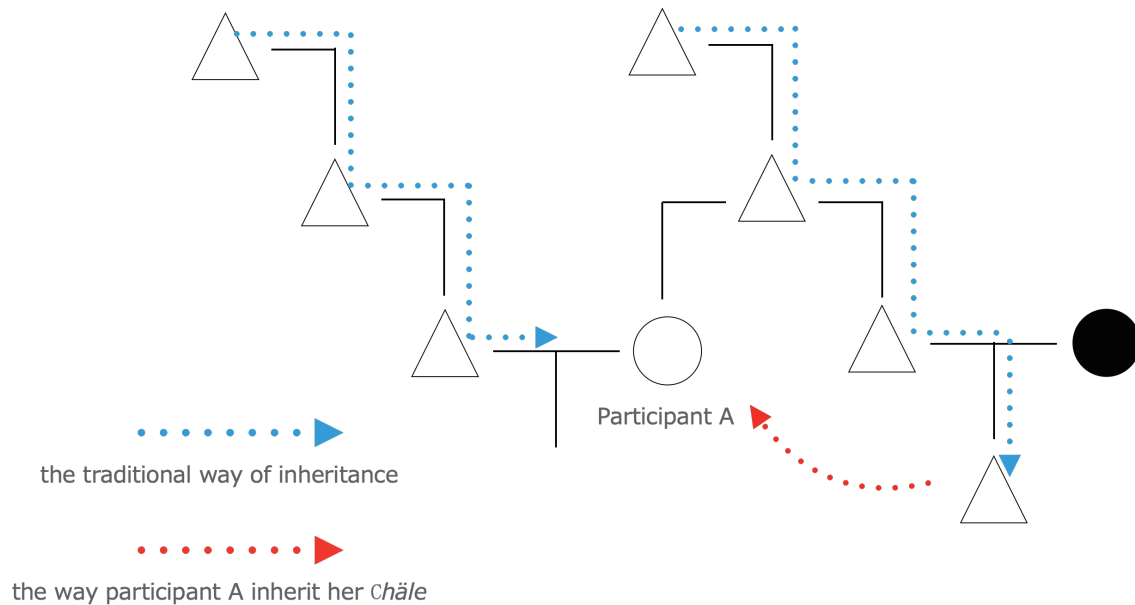


Figure 4. The way to inherit a *chälle*

Like *chälle*, *irreccha* is a practice associated with Oromo societies and conducting *irreccha* is often encouraged through dialogue by *wuqabi* at the *hadra* meeting. *Irreccha* is dedicated to prayers for peace, well-being and fertility, as well as to the fulfilment of vows and to express thankfulness toward spiritual beings. It is a common practice among Oromo communities. Sometimes it is held on a large scale with the involvement of the state government and other times in secret by only a few relatives. In the latter case, people go to a nearby river or lake, float a bunch of grass on the surface of the water and show their gratitude to the spiritual beings by placing the water on the surface of the grass on their forehead. In the *hadra* meeting in Boset, the *wuqabi* sometimes instructed participants to perform *irreccha*, as in the following two examples.

Participant B: My daughter is a student who has been sick for a long time.

Mälqat: Let her go to school.

Participant B: She has a very sick eye.

Mälqat: Learn what your old fathers and mothers did and serve the spirits, as you did in the past. First, take a bundle of grass and teach her how to conduct *irreccha*. When your daughter learns it, she will be cured soon. Learn it from the old and wise people around you.

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Participant C: I was sick and am now better. However, as soon as I was healed, my son became sick. My husband just sits there and does nothing.

Mälqat: Did you conduct *irreccha* for the son?

Participant C: I did it a long time ago, 40 days after his birth.

Mälqat: Haven't you done it since then? How about after you got sick?

Participant C: I haven't.

Mälqat: That's enough. Do the *irreccha* for the son.

As the above dialogue shows, many participants were advised to encourage practices related to their ethnicity, such as inheritance and management of *chälle* and implementation of *irreccha* through dialogue with *wuqabi* in the *hadra* meeting.

### 3. Religion, ethnicity, and local history in the *hadra* meeting

As mentioned in the previous section, Kalani was Christian and her *wuqabi* was Muslim. She conducted Ramadan fasting as a gift for her Muslim *wuqabi* Mälqat. Followers participated in the meeting regardless of their religious identities, and they paid respect and welcomed the Muslim spirit in a Muslim manner even if they were non-Muslims. Mälqat gives his diagnosis as a return of their gift or respect, and it is mainly based on the knowledge of their ethnicity.

It is clear that the actors and practices, based on Islam, Christianity and ethnicity, are patch-worked in the single frame of the *hadra* meeting of the *wuqabi* cult (Figure 5).

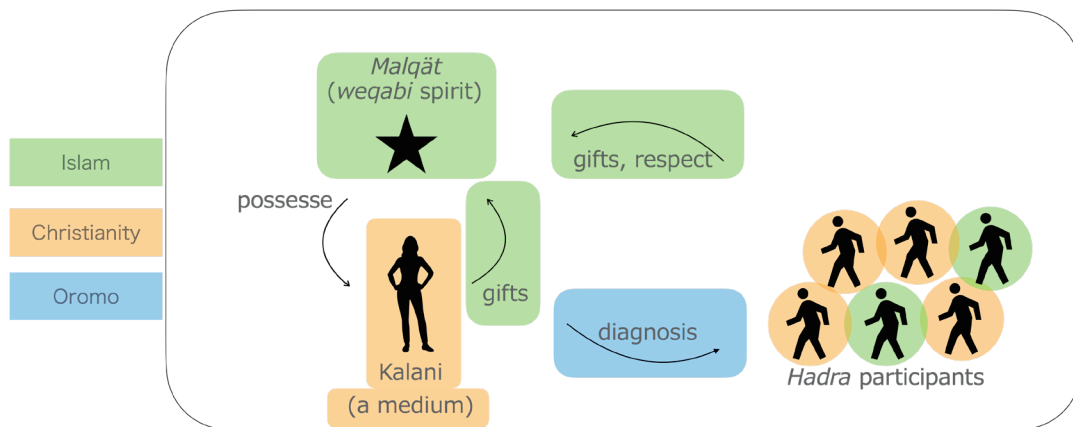


Figure 5. Islam, Christianity and ethnicity in the *hadra* meeting

At the end of the 19th century, during the era of Emperor Yohannes IV, hard-line measures were taken against non-Christians in Ethiopia. A proclamation was issued that forbade non-Christians from participating in the government unless they converted. Muslims were given three months to become Christian. Many Muslims converted to Christianity, but those who refused emigrated or were killed (Ahmed 2001). Ahmed (as cited in Pankhurst 1968) stated that in the Wallo area, however, even when they did convert to Christianity, many did so only ostensibly and led a double life as 'Christians by day and Muslims by night' (ibid. 182).

The above discussion of Wallo in Pankhurst's study is common to the narratives heard in the Boset area. According to my informants, Muslims in the Eastern Shore region were also forced to convert and those who refused had their limbs amputated or were banished. Faced with this difficulty, Muslims pretended to convert to Christianity. They lived as 'Christians' during the day in society and held *hadra* meetings as Muslims at night. This local history is probably one of the reasons why the *hadra* meeting, mostly attended by Christians, starts with the chanting of '*bi-ism Allah*' and the name of Allah is recited in the chanting.

The *wuqabi* cult forms a different layer from world religions such as Christianity and Islam. Therefore, the people of Boset have been able to use it as a foothold to share the ritual place where both Christians and Muslims pray together without treating each other as exclusive.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper, we discussed the religious complexity of a ritual held in the Boset, Oromia region and how the complexity relates to ethnicity and local history. Many Christians participate in the *hadra* meeting, originally derived from Islam, which is prevalent in the Oromo communities of the East Showa region. This study focused on the religious complexity of this ritual and how it relates to ethnicity and local history.

In the first section, previous studies of mainly anthropological research on spirit possession, especially the *zar* cult, were reviewed. It was argued that the practice of possession in Islamic societies in rural Africa has been discussed in terms of resistance, deprivation and symbolism, which omits the unexplored aspects of the relationship between some world religions, such as Christianity and Islam, and rituals with spirit possession.

Then, I introduced a local spirit cult, the *wuqabi* cult in Ethiopia and illustrated a practice based on my fieldwork. In the *hadra* meeting, participants chanted the name of Allah and praised Muslim saints during the ritual. The meeting had three sessions: chanting prayers, a spirit descending on the medium, and dialogues between the spirits and people. It would not be wrong to say the third session most motivates people to participate. We examined some conversations between participants and the medium to understand the interactions in the dialogue. It was observed that ethnicity is involved in the advice given in the *hadra*.

Followers participated in the meeting regardless of their religious identities, and they paid respect and welcomed the Muslim spirit in a Muslim manner even if they were non-Muslim. The spirit gave his diagnosis as a return for their gift or respect. This was mainly based on the knowledge of their ethnicity. It is clear that the actors and practices, related to Islam, Christianity and ethnicity, are patch-worked in the single frame of the *hadra* meeting of the *wuqabi* cult.

In the religious composition in Ethiopia Christians are the majority. Muslim numbers have been rising in recent years. Historically, Christianity (Ethiopian Orthodox) was the major religion of the highlanders in the north, the political centre of the country. Islam has expanded mostly among the Oromo, living in the lowlands. However, while this dichotomy illustrates the contrasting situation from a broad perspective, religious practices, which are an integral part of people's lives, are not clearly divided into Islam and Christianity.

The *wuqabi* cult forms a different layer from world religions such as Christianity and Islam. Therefore, the people of Boset have been able to use it as a foothold to share a ritual place where both Christians and Muslims pray together, without treating each other as exclusive.

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