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Localising anxieties: Ghanaian and Malawian immigrants, rising xenophobia, and social capital in Botswana

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Localising Anxieties

*Ghanaian and Malawian immigrants,
Rising Xenophobia, and Social Capital
in Botswana*

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Contents

GENERAL INTRODUCTION 7

1 THE GHANAIAN NICHE: PENTECOSTAL STYLE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL

ENDEAVOUR 11

Introduction 11

Objectives 12

Insights gained 16

Ghanaian nationals facing localisation policies 16

The Ghanaian Pentecostal churches 21

Pentecostal hairdressing ? 26

Conclusions 28

2 SHRINKING PUBLIC SPACE AND THE MALAWIAN IMAGINATION 31

Introduction 31

Objectives 32

Insights gained 36

Malawian burial in a vampire state 36

Experiencing the urban public realm 40

Malawian powers in the urban domain 45

3 CONCLUSION: A BRIEF COMPARISON OF THE TWO CASES 55

Appendix 60

References 62

General Introduction

This report covers some of the findings from two exploratory trips that I made to Gaborone, Botswana, in March and November 2001. The main purpose of these exploratory trips was to contact two particular immigrant communities in the capital of Botswana and to gain a first impression of the kind of diaspora culture these groups may have developed over the last decade or so. More specifically, the trips were a first attempt to unravel on an exploratory basis some of the features of the relationship between migration and religion. As such, this research interest forms a continuation of my earlier research project on the relationship between Pentecostalism and the migration of Ghanaians to the Netherlands (Van Dijk 2001) and the relationship between Pentecostalism and urbanisation in Malawi (Van Dijk 1992a +b). The two communities therefore that have been the focus of my short stints of fieldwork in Gaborone are those of Ghanaian and Malawian migrants. Over the last two decades Botswana has been a focus of their migration across the African continent and many have found a place to work in one of Botswana's booming economic sectors. In recent years this African expat immigration has been followed, as has been the case elsewhere, by the introduction of a kind of charismatic and highly popular form of Christianity known as Pentecostalism. Most of the new Pentecostal churches in Gaborone have been established by foreigners, Nigerians and Ghanaians in particular. Also in other aspects these migrant groups have been able to occupy specific positions in the Gaboronian economy and urban culture. The position of both groups has been debated in the public media, very much in the context of the wider public discussions in Botswana that concern the presence of foreigners in Botswana society. Over the last year, these debates have hardened in tone and have become more aggressive than ever before. Increasingly, a xenophobic dimension to both public debate and government policy is transpiring whereby it appears as if Botswana is becoming hostile to the presence of foreigners and to the contribution foreign labour is making to its economy. The Botswana *Guardian* reported of the Botswana Parliamentary discussions of February 2001, among others the following:

“On Tuesday (13/2/2001), Parliament underlined Botswana’s hardening attitudes against foreigners with Francistown West MP Tshelang Masisi calling for a campaign to cleanse Botswana of undesirable expatriates. This has set off alarm bells among the expatriate community who feel the line between citizen empowerment and xenophobia has been blurred.” (*Botswana Guardian*, 16/2/2001, “Aliens Bashed: Parliament Attacks Foreigners”).

The article goes on to present in detail all the measures that the Botswana government is taking against foreigners, against the privileges some may have had in the past, and the way in which foreigners must make place for ‘locals’ to take their positions. This so-called ‘localisation policy’ dates from the early 1970s when the principles were discussed in parliament about how to deal with the much needed, qualified foreign labour in the country and the longterm perspective of how ‘locals’ were going to take over. At that time both parliament and government took a more nuanced position:

“Localisation is a long-term goal, but the positive assistance provided by non-Batswana is recognised as essential to achieving national goals.increased participation by Batswana, in all aspects of the country’s economic development is desirable....., but there continues to be a role for non-citizens. Localisation provides career opportunities for citizens, enables more decisions concerning Botswana and its development to be made by local officers and in that there is liable to be greater familiarity with Botswana specific situations.” (First Presidential Commission on Localisation and Training in the Botswana Public Service, report 1972, pp. 2).

In recent years, that realistic position has been under pressure and issues of citizenship and belonging have become part of how both the government and the general public feel the economy should be managed. For a long time Botswana had been much dependent on foreign qualified labour, simply because the country did not have the resources to form and train a local class of professionals, teachers, businessmen etc. The revenues from the mining of diamonds in particular have led to a booming economy whereby qualified positions became available in all sorts of new

companies at a speed higher than the educational institutions could deliver. Botswana recruiting teams therefore went to such places as Ghana and Malawi to seek that labour (teachers, managers etc.) and were able to offer jobs with all sorts of fringe benefits attached. However, in a sense the success of the economy became too much for society to cope with as labour migrants from all corners of Africa were beginning to try their luck in what appeared to be one of the rare places in Africa where real wealth and prosperity were being created. Over the last two years, in addition, a massive and largely illegal influx of mostly unskilled labour has followed from neighbouring Zimbabwe, due to local circumstances in that country. Although unemployment rates have been dropping consistently (from 19.6 % in 1998 to 16 % in 2001) and the economy blossoming as never before, minority issues, issues concerning citizenship, immigration and illegality have come to dominate much of the public agenda (see Nyamnjoh 2001). This provides for a situation whereby even the predominance of Ghanaian ownership of hair salons in the city becomes a matter for parliament to debate (*Mmegi Reporter*, June 2000).

The question not only is how and why in such situations of relative wealth and prosperity xenophobia emerge, but also how immigrant groups respond to it. What does that mean for the formation of social capital (cf. Putnam 1993) within these groups and how do such elements as trust, reciprocity, voluntary associations and religion come into play in their interaction with what they perceive as an increasingly xenophobic public domain ?

In this report I will look specifically at the ideological, i.e. religious, dimensions of the Ghanaian and Malawian predicament in this tense context. The report will not give definite answers and will not jump to conclusions on the basis of a number of weeks of fieldwork, but will try to create a context for further research.

On the basis of the first impressions gained, further research questions will be formulated which will function as a basis for the development of follow-up research in the near future. For that research, collaboration is sought with the Sociology Dept. of the University of Botswana where research on rising xenophobia in Botswana has a longer record. Through

this research I hope to be able contribute to a further understanding of some of the ideological cum religious refractions of a phenomenon which appears to be on the increase not only in Botswana, but in other parts of Africa as well. It therefore relates to the emerging social science debates on Africa which centre around such issues of social capital, citizenship and belonging, but will approach this terrain from the angle of an anthropology of religion.

The Ghanaian Niche: Pentecostal Style and Entrepreneurial Endeavour

Introduction

This section aims to present a concise overview of the results of a three-week exploratory visit to Gaborone, Botswana, which took place in February and March of 2001. This visit was inspired by the information that had reached me half a year earlier from my friend and colleague Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh, Dept. of Sociology of the University of Botswana, concerning the activities of Nigerian, Ghanaian and Malawian Pentecostal leaders and revival preachers in Gaborone. Over the past two years or so, their activities had given rise not only to a number of newly established charismatic Pentecostal churches and other organisations in the city, but also to concerns by members of the autochthon population, explicitly voiced in the public media. According to this information, this concern related to the foreign basis and origin of the activities of these churches, to the fact that so much 'money-making' was apparently involved in these Pentecostal activities and to the fear that Botswana's well-established missionary churches would now begin to face increased 'competition' for

always wants something back from you and will keep you in bondage endlessly". Another expressed his surprise concerning the high level of suicides he noticed in Botswana and the ignorance concerning the evil spirits that instil such forms of behaviour in a society. Deliverance in other words represents a domain of superiority, a domain where the Ghanaians possess advanced knowledge and experience of such matters, a knowledge and experience, furthermore, which must be in great demand in view of such problems.

Pentecostal hairdressing ?

In terms of their socio-economic position it is clear that the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches are more related to the Ghanaian business community in the city than to the Ghanaian intellectual elite involved in teaching at the Univ. of Botswana for instance. Whereas with regard to this last group a tense and mutually critical relationship exists, this picture changes with regard to Ghanaian business in the city. Ghanaians are known to be very active in private enterprise, to the extent that they have initiated and subsequently monopolised entire sectors. This applies most specifically to the sector of hairdressing and beauty salons, the import of fabrics, cloth and clothes, and the retailing of fashionable West African styled clothing. The Ghanaian owners of the many hairdressing salons are all said to be 'Christians' and many of them are members of one of the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches. Within the Pentecostal churches style, beauty, clothing and hairdos are considered of tremendous importance and their membership thus forms a considerable source of clientele for these salons. Some of these salons put up pictures of the leaders of the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches in town, thus strengthening once more this particular and intimate cultural relationship between faith and commerce. Tina Allotey, the flamboyant leader of the Prevailing Christian Ministries, is considered by many a trend-setter as her clothing and hair styles are indeed out-of-the-ordinary and she seems to be a kind of role model for younger women. As my assistants confirmed time and again, many of the younger generation look up to her and find her an inspiring personality.

Other Pentecostal leaders have been involved in 'consecrating' (*n-teho*) the hair salons so as to protect them from the influence of evil spirits. The

hair salons operate on the morally dangerous borderlines of hair, beauty, sexuality and the body, and as such not only deal with the dangers of consumerism and style, but also with certain spiritual forces. These forces can possess a body and can be transferred from one person to the other by dealing with such things as hair (the symbolic referent to what is inside the head, i.e. one's thoughts and desires) and to the sacrifices somebody is prepared to make for beauty, success and appeal. The use of water in hair-styling links up with the danger of *Mami Wata* as there is no border that can prevent this marine spirit from being present whenever water is flowing. Forces may also relate to witchcraft (*obayie*), as jealousy and envy easily arise between rivals competing in this relatively small market.

The consecration of the business or the shop can take place through prayers and fasting: prayers from the resident Ghanaian Pentecostal pastors and fasting from the side of the owner. In addition, some of these Pentecostal churches also provide for the sprinkling of the business or the shop with consecrated oil. Both of these practices are meant to cast out evil spirits that may reside in these places (known as *pam obonsam* = casting out of spirits). Shop owners also travel to Ghana on a regular basis for visits to one of the wellknown Pentecostal prayer camps in the country where additional spiritual strengthening can be obtained (³).

An additional factor that draws both orbits of hairdressing and Pentecostalism closer is that informed sources at the university told me that there is a form of illegal immigration from Ghana into the country specifically of girls and young women. This illegal immigration is said to be focused on these hairdressing and beauty salons as the girls are employed in those shops for a particular reason. The West-African beauty styles are very fashionable in Botswana, whereas the techniques and skills for fabricating the special hairdos (with 'extensions' and the like) and clothes are not commonly found. The girls from Ghana therefore bring skills and techniques which are in short supply and for which there is great demand from the side of salon owners. The same sources also implied that there is an element of prostitution attached to it, whereby the

³ In earlier publications I have dealt extensively with the existence, meaning and significance of these prayer camps and their location in Ghanaian transnational circuits.

salons allegedly operate as 'out-stations' so that girls can be put in contact with potential male clients for sexual services. I was however not able to establish anything concrete and substantial about this rumour and have my doubts with regard to the substance of this as such rumouring is part of the rising xenophobic dimensions of urban society. In any case the specific skills, styles and techniques these girls possess do form a major part of the Pentecostal public demonstration of their 'presence', of the way in which members can show off their success and vanguard position in religious innovation. This aspect of ostentation is attractive to many, particularly younger people in the urban environment, who are fascinated by such colourful displays. Many of the young Ghanaian girls attend church, as I witnessed at a number of church meetings, and thus receive all the spiritual blessings that the Pentecostal leaders command. Much more research is needed to understand the position of these girls, the entire relationship with immigration and minority issues and the results of the policies of localisation. Questions have been asked about the hair salons in the Botswana Parliament, questions which specifically related to the fact that they are foreign-owned and thus need to be made the subject of localisation policies as well. The Minister of Commerce and Industry answered these questions by stating that legislative measures were in preparation to make ownership of small-scale enterprises like hair salons exclusively reserved for Botswana in the near future.

In this context the Pentecostal churches may also serve as the kind of places where frustrations about the socio-economic implications of localisation policies can be addressed.

Conclusions

A study of the immigrant communities of Malawians and Ghanaians in Botswana must take place against the backdrop of the increasing localisation policies of the government. Whereas up till now minority issues in Botswana have mainly revolved around the position of its 'internal' strangers, i.e. the minorities who have been termed minorities in the pre- and post-Independence struggle and as such have formed part and

parcel of the Botswana national project, these minorities in fact concern 'external' strangers; i.e. persons who have a different nationality and therefore have never belonged to the nationalist project from the onset. Tensions around other nationalities are rising in the country, presently because of the substantial influx of Zimbabweans in the northern parts of Botswana who are fleeing from violence. In the Botswana national project, policies of localisation have taken a dominant place since the 1970s, but their real implementation waited another 20 years or so and they seem to have become more prominent in recent years. The national educational system, the employment sector and the development of local industries and other investments appear to be producing the conditions under which the presence of other (well-trained) nationals is considered no longer necessary. In the Ghanaian case, however, the 'escape' into private-sector businesses, such as represented by the hair salons, provides no solution. Increasingly, the Botswana government has begun targeting specific sectors of the economy in view of its localisation policies; sectors in which, such as in the case of hair-salons, other than Botswana nationals appear to have been successful. Very soon therefore the Ghanaian minority, and particularly its business community of 'madams' will have to look for new opportunities for their enterprises other than hairdressing.

On the Malawian side, rumour indicated that they had become particularly successful as illegal tailors in the many tailoring shops that can be found in and around the city. Another rumour indicated that Malawian traditional healers (*asing'anga*) would be very successful and widely known in and around Gaborone. During the first visit a niche of Malawian activity could not be found, and I was not able to establish whether Ghanaians had any specific relationship with, or interest for the kind of activities or sectors in the economy that could be perceived as dominated by Malawians (in other words, whether Malawian tailors, for instance, would have Ghanaian customers or would be interested in copying West-African clothing styles for their own business). When I contacted a small number of tailoring shops in town I met a great deal of apprehension and outright fear for talking to me. Through my assistant I later heard that these shops had been particularly targeted by immigration officials searching for illegal labourers. This means that a further

explorative study of the Malawian immigrant community must be conducted before further details about their position in society can be known and further lines of inquiry can be laid out.

All in all, there are many indications that the Botswana government is seriously executing a type of localisation policy that focuses on these nationalities. This leads to a situation, that is becoming increasingly xenophobic and one where tensions within these communities are rising. Unfortunately, the rise of the foreign-based Pentecostal churches appears to have stirred xenophobic feelings once more, and from an outward perspective has not really helped to improve the situation. Within these communities the Pentecostal churches play a significant, although not uncontested, role in the spiritual, moral and social life of the Ghanaian community. Further research must deal with the question to what extent this form of transnational and even global religion helps to mitigate and mediate localisation anxieties. What role does it play in the formation of social capital in terms of trust, reciprocity and security for the members of the community ?

2

Shrinking Public Space and the Malawian Imagination

Introduction

This section of the report covers the second visit to Gaborone, Botswana, which took place from 16 October to 1 November 2001. The overall purpose of this visit was to expand on the first exploratory trip that took place in February and March in the same year. That trip had as its explicit purpose the establishment of working relationships with the Sociology Department of the University of Botswana, and a first reconnaissance with Ghanaian and Malawian migrant communities in the city of Gaborone. The new and foreign-introduced Pentecostal churches that have sprung up particularly among the Ghanaian community was one specific focus for that reconnaissance, but soon it was discovered that the Ghanaian migrant community had created its own niche in the urban economy and its socio-cultural features: namely hairdressing. As mentioned in the first chapter, little time was left during that trip to

explore the Malawian migrant community in more depth, and so a comparative perspective was still missing.

The second exploratory trip to Gaborone intended to correct that situation. During this visit an explicit attempt was made to locate and contact the Malawian migrant community and to become informed of at least a number of its specific features and characteristics. The presence of Malawians within the public space of Gaborone was noted to be less conspicuous than the Ghanaian and therefore an effort had to be made so as to see where and how a community of any sort could be contacted. This second chapter gives an overview of the contacts made and the insights gained from that effort. It was clear from the start that Pentecostalism plays a less significant role in the Malawian community as compared to the Ghanaian situation, and therefore the question was which other ideological or social formations could be indicated that might act as a context for identification for the Malawian migrant. Through this short exploration it became clear that the Malawian situation is marked by a specific interaction and engagement with the public sphere. This interaction is not only characterised by the creation of specific niches, similar to Ghanaian hairdressing, but is also marked by its gendered nature. In addition, 'Malawi' featured as a specific domain of imagination, not so much as a state, but rather as a fiction of kinship, family ties and spiritual bonding. Xenophobia appeared to be hitting the Malawi community hard and a clear longing for more 'breathing space', also in spiritual terms, transpired from the talks that I had. In this chapter the exploration of the Malawian community is highlighted, while in the third chapter some comparative conclusions will be drawn between the Malawian and the Ghanaian situation in Gaborone.

Objectives of the visit

The objective of the visit was to find an answer to the question whether and where a Malawian migrant community could be contacted in the city. This question relates to the overall objective of this exploratory research that looks at the position of minorities in Botswana society in a situation

marked by rigid governmental policies aimed at 'localisation' and nationwide feelings of xenophobia. This produces a range of questions relating to issues of strangerhood, to coping strategies of immigrants, to notions of belonging and citizenship and to the development of a nation-state and its control over the access to the public domain.

This visit to Gaborone was guided by the following objectives:

1. to revamp the contacts I had made with the Dept. of Sociology, the Dept. of Religious Studies and the Dept. of Populations Studies in view of a larger research project I would want to embark on at a later stage.
2. to establish contacts with and within the Malawian migrant community in Gaborone.
3. to revamp some of the contacts I had been making earlier with the Ghanaian community, as have been described in the first part of this report.
4. to check on written sources with regard to the localisation policy of the Botswana government and its recent developments

Brief summary of results

With reference to the above-mentioned, the following can be said:

Ref.1. The most important contact to be developed was with the Dept. of Sociology. A research-permit for future research will have to go through the department and good working relations with it are of crucial importance. In terms of thematic interest, the work of this department is of great interest to this report as it is building up expertise on the issue of xenophobia and citizenship. Research by Dr. F. Nyamnjoh is directly related to this theme and the possibilities of collaboration with him have been discussed and explored.

As has been the case with the Ghanaian community, it appeared that also in the Malawian case there is a group of Malawian lecturers and other employees at the University of Botswana who hold a specific position in the migrant community. It soon transpired by contacting some

of the Malawian university lecturers that in order to understand the Malawian migrant community in Gaborone, very different domains and corners of urban life have to be approached at the same time. These domains vary from university lecturers, to Malawian tailors, to Malawian traditional healers and illegal hairdressers and even includes a Malawian social soccer team. Of crucial importance for my understanding of the multi-faceted nature of the Malawian community and of the political frictions by which it has been characterised was through the work of Prof. Dr. Kaunda (lecturer at the Dept. of Political Science). Being a Malawian and a leader-founder of the Malawi Association himself, his understanding of developments proved crucial and opened the door to well-founded perception of this community.

Ref.2. It proved not very hard to establish a kind of snowballing contact with the Malawian community in Gaborone. Malawian presence in Botswana dates from colonial times (as their migration was focused on the South African mining towns), but the contacts that I established were basically limited to the group of Malawian migrants that have entered the country over the last decade or so. While the previous group has ceased to exist as a recognisable Malawian community, because of their full integration in local society, the second group is much more subject to the state-orchestrated localisation policies of postcolonial times. This group consists of a variety of different sub-groups, divided by class, status, gender and other characteristics, which each respond differently to the effects of the localisation policies and the rising xenophobia of Botswana society. The next section will give further insights into this. In terms of a kind of 'clustering' of Malawian presence in the city it was soon established that two churches in particular have a kind of pivotal position within this migrant community. These two churches have a substantial Malawian membership in Gaborone and cater to their needs: the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and the Dutch Reformed Church. Particularly the latter appeared to contain a well-organised segment of Malawi membership of tens of families for which specific English language church-services are held. Through them I was able to quickly establish a

range of contacts within the community with people from various walks of life.

Ref.3. The follow-up of contacts with the Ghanaian community necessarily remained limited this time. An important meeting took place, however, of the Ghanaian Association at which its role was discussed vis-a-vis the so-called 'Homecoming Summit' organised in Accra by the new Ghana government in July of this year. My presence at this meeting of the Association helped to strengthen my ties with a number of its prominent members. In addition a small number of the leaders of the Pentecostal churches were also contacted.

Ref.4. Both communities face the effects of the ongoing localisation policy of the Botswana government. These effects were exacerbated by the rising conflict between two major ethnic groups in the country, the Ngwato and the Kalanga, concerning the issue of strangerhood. The Tswana claim their predominance in the country against 'foreigners', and by applying that term in political debate create a hostile atmosphere towards the group which they consider dominant foreigners in the first place: the Kalanga. During the time of this visit, public and political debates on the issue of 'autochthony' ran high leading to increasing hostile proclamations in the media against foreign influence in the country. In a sense, the Kalanga are considered from the perspective of the Ngwato as the internal strangers in society, a discussion which in the public media tends to obscure the issue of the external strangers: the presence of other nationalities. Many newspapers reported on the ongoing conflict over 'true' citizenship and this became part of the collection of written sources to which a limited amount of time was devoted.

Further details on the research methodology, time input and contacts with the various Departments of the University Botswana during this first fieldtrip to Gaborone are presented in the Appendix.

Insights gained

Malawian burial in a vampire state

The massive labour migration of Malawians, the 'nyasas', to the South African mining areas was greatly reduced after the WENELA contracts expired in the mid 1970s. The decades of migration from Malawi, starting in the years before World War 2 up to the 1960s, had produced particularly in and around Francistown a sizeable Malawian community who had aspired to return home by rail, but never made it any further. This group of stranded migrants had become well-integrated in local society through intermarriage and did not create a specific or recognisable migrant community. Later WENELA contract labourers returned to Malawi not by rail, but by road and by air and therefore ran less risk of getting stuck halfway in Botswana (⁴).

The migration wave of the 1980s and early 1990s from Malawi to South Africa and its neighbouring countries therefore created a new situation. This migration did not exclusively consist of bluecollar workers, but came to comprise a much more mixed group of people which included whitecollar workers, professionals, academics, entrepreneurs and so forth. The ones that found access to Botswana society and economy felt a much greater need to create a niche, a community, than their illustrious but largely 'invisible' predecessors had done. This need was to a large extent not only informed by their educational level, the specific positions they came to occupy in Botswana society and the specific features of family life they brought along (instead of inter-marrying with locals), but was also inspired by conditions back home. Towards the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s the first cracks in the Banda political machinery surfaced and the regime reacted, if not overreacted, by putting in place even tougher measures and policies than the previous 25 years of dictatorship had seen. One of these measures was the revamping of ethnic-regional policies which were meant to favour the region from which Banda himself originated, to the

⁴ Nevertheless, a plane crashed near the airfield of Francistown in 1974, killing all returning WENELA Malawian labourers it carried (personal communication J.B. Gewalt).

disadvantage of the northern region in particular. Teachers, academics and other professionals - originally from the North but working in the South - were forced to leave their jobs and 'return' to the North. Their vacant positions were supposed to be taken by southerners, a process which completely failed as northerners had always formed the majority in higher qualified jobs. These policies incited a kind of brain-drain migration of Malawians, northerners in particular, to other countries in the region where chances of a secure career were much greater. In addition, in the early 1990s more and more Botswana companies became active on the Malawian job market, hunting for all sorts of whitecollar workers and professionals who were in great demand in the booming Botswana economy. These recruiting activities were intensified after the 1994 democratic transition in Malawi. They became increasingly successful after this transition and liberalisation when it transpired in Malawi that *de facto* very little had changed in the real prospects of the country and in its ailing economy.

Because of the partly politically induced push factors of the Malawian migration to Botswana it may come as no surprise that political tensions played a part in the formation of a recognisable Malawi migrant community and representative body. Although first talks and ideas on the formation of a representative body for Malawians began circulating in Gaborone in 1990, it would take another 8 more years to establish the organisation and register it with the Botswana government. The reason for this long process of formation was the fear of political annexation by any of the rival parties in the struggle surrounding the democratic transition in Malawi. This political distrust divided the Malawian community for a long time and upheld the establishment of the association for which in the meantime many had expressed a dire need. During the Banda era, the dictator's special forces were renowned for their long arms and their effectiveness in hitting hard at oppositional groups outside Malawi. Special forces had bombed opposition leaders in exile (e.g. in Lusaka, Zambia) and had expelled groups from Malawi in violent ways. The Malawian community in Botswana - as it furthermore consisted predominantly of disgruntled Northerners - had every reason to be careful in those years to see how their actions and proclamations were going to be

perceived by the regime back home. While the democratic transition of 1994 brought some relaxation, in the recent one and a half years political tensions have increased again as the ruling United Democratic Front (U.D.F.) of President Bakili Muluzi in Malawi is showing all the signs of returning to the old modes of dictatorial rule once more.

Despite all these tensions and sensitivities, the need for an organised community with a clear representative body remained strong among the Malawian migrants, for one reason in particular: funerals. The prospect of dying in Botswana and particularly of being buried in Gaborone while Malawi is relatively nearby, was for many unacceptable. In terms of preference, but also in terms of social prestige, family relationships, support and ancestry, the entire ideology prescribed that burials should take place in the village of origin, which for many Malawians in Botswana would mean transporting the corpse all the way from Gaborone to the far north of Malawi. This is not only costly, but also requires a kind of effective organisation on the ground that would be able to deal with all that is necessary and capable of managing the proper care of the deceased, his or her family as well as the complicated transport of the corpse back home.

While initially there had been ideas of turning a representative body into the kind of organisation that would cater to Malawian cultural and/or political life, what it turned out to be eventually was a burial society. This proved to be economically sound and politically safe. Many Malawians had been reducing the number of their visits to Malawi over the past years, as they had become too costly due to the high expectations created among their families 'back home' of what they would bring in terms of money and other benefits. Secondly, in political terms the enthusiasm dropped rapidly to pay obligatory visits to Malawi. Over the last one and a half years political tensions were on the increase again, freedom of speech was becoming problematic and families needed to be protected from any sort of property grabbing inspired on a political basis.

Among the Malawians in Botswana, this all led to a need to seek each other's assistance whenever a death occurred, so as to be able to transport the body home and organise all that is necessary to that extent. Any (financial) assistance from other sources, in Botswana or from Malawi,

was not to be expected and the community felt that it was dependent on its own resources. The need was so strong that it helped to overcome the internal political and ethnic divisions and to create a kind of unified effort in establishing a funeral fund. Since 2000 a funeral fund has been in existence whereby in addition to a membership fee for the association of Pula 75,- per person, each couple must contribute Pula 275,- per year to a kind of collective funeral insurance fund. From this fund a subsidy of Pula 6.000,- can be obtained per death while another Pula 1000,- can be received from the Association as a gift towards the overall funeral expenses. Transporting the corpse back home and all the further expenditures that are involved usually require about Pula 10.000,- meaning that through the funeral scheme of the Association two-thirds of the total costs are covered.

Although nearly 200 families have joined this scheme since its first year of existence, participation remains an upper-middle class affair. Malawians in more difficult positions, with less well paid jobs, bluecollar type of work or illegal residence in the country generally cannot participate in this scheme as the membership fee and the annual contribution to the fund are simply too costly. The funeral fund thus signals a class-based division within the Malawi community with which the community finds it difficult to cope. In a number of cases deaths have occurred of people who had only menial jobs and who did not possess additional financial resources. This then became a hotly debated issue on solidarity and the extent to which the paying members should also be willing to cover the costs for Malawians who did not have the resources to transport a corpse home. Suddenly, patriotic solidarity came to count for much more than kinship or any other form of social capital. Up till now the upper-middle classes appeared to have been prepared to dig deep in their pockets to help out in such situations and to make special donations. The overall ideology here appeared to be that from neither of the states, Botswana nor Malawi, could any real help or support be expected, that neither of the two provided for a community that would embrace the migrant and his or her needs, and that by being a migrant one is out there on one's own: a tormented condition not desired by many. These states only cater to their own needs and there is a widely shared

'cross-class' awareness of the greedy nature of the ruling classes and the kind of solidarity that is required to keep such greediness at bay. Hence the educated, well-paid Malawians in a way organised the funeral scheme as a kind of bulwark against the political machinations that might be expected from the present ruling classes in Malawi. Their divide-and-rule type of manipulations had been interpreted by this middle class as another strategy by which the state might try to ciphher off a bit of the wealth they were accumulating in Botswana.

A group that almost by definition would not be part of the funeral scheme and all it stands for are the Malawian muslims. There are several Islamised ethnic groups in Malawi, such as particularly the Yao and the Lakeside Tonga at Nkotakota. Their funeral ceremonies are very simple and modest and do not require considerable investment or a costly shipment of a body back home (most burials do not even require a coffin, for example). Their interest for and participation in the funeral scheme has therefore been minimal, and for the Yao in particular an additional factor may have been the fact that President Bakili Mulizi is a Yao muslim and his regime is very much supported by this particular ethnic group.

The funeral scheme has laid bare both a sharp class division within the community of the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' as well as a sharp notion of what it means to be a migrant and a stranger with regard to both the Botswana and the Malawi states. While there is an element of communality on the basis of a shared nationality, the way in which Botswana life and urban space and culture is experienced makes for fundamental differences in the community. Some of these differences are discussed in the next section.

Experiencing the urban public realm

The Malawi migrant community of Gaborone is marked by a highly differentiated experience of the urban space and public sphere this city offers them. To a certain extent these differences are class-based, to another extent, however, there is a specific cultural and occupational difference to it as well.

Malawians that have been attracted to Gaborone on the basis of their occupational qualifications have become part of the upper-middle classes of society. As academics, managers, professionals and the like they are found in the higher income brackets of the urban economy, occupy the better houses in the more expensive housing areas and have benefited from all the privileges that the Botswana government offered them in previous years. They have now become the subject of the Botswana localisation policies which means that some of these privileges have been taken from them (such as free schooling for their children) and they are placed more and more in direct competition with the 'local' middle classes and increasingly are feeling less welcome. This is more and more turning into straightforward feelings of unease and hostility which are partly fed by the feelings of xenophobia they meet in their daily lives. Interestingly none of the upper-middle class families I met had developed friendships with their Botswana neighbours, nor took part in much of Botswana cultural life and important events such as marriages or funerals. Although some of these families had been living in Gaborone since the early 1990s this kind of integration never developed while feelings of seclusion had only been strengthened through the government localisation policies.

This appeared to be of particular significance for middle-class women, often dependent on their husbands' position in society. They are not allowed to work in the many sectors of the urban economy as most of the female sectors of work are highly 'localised'. The companies at which their husbands are employed do not provide them with additional jobs. Applying for jobs in other sectors is almost impossible as these women tend to fear exploitation. Knowing that almost none have employment permits, some employers try to take advantage of the situation and clandestinely offer them jobs at a much lower salary rate than they would usually have. Most of these women, before leaving Malawi to join their husbands in Botswana, had been occupied in jobs or businesses, but their departure to Gaborone had meant that they became economically inactive: for many a gigantic offer they made. These women explained in great detail their feelings of vulnerability now that they were forced to sit at home in their big houses, doing nothing. Their families had now become

totally dependent on one income only, that of their husbands, while they were no longer in a position to contribute to the family income. They could no longer contribute in a substantial sense to the upbringing of their children, and for sending remittances home to their kin in Malawi they had become dependent on whatever their husbands were prepared to donate. Furthermore, being turned into 'housewives' *avant la lettre*, they were forced to play the 'good wife' all the time as any conflict with, or any divorce from, their present husbands would put them in jeopardy. If that occurs deportation from the country would follow almost immediately as they have no economic basis to legitimately stay in Botswana.

There was an element of despair in the talks with these middle-class women as their lives had become idle, an idleness aggravated by a secluded existence in a city that to a large extent remained strange to them. Like their husbands, they felt unable to establish friendships with the locals and were inclined to seek the company of other Malawians in a similar position.

This is in sharp contrast with Malawian women who are active in the lower socio-economic brackets of the urban economy. These women, sometimes living a life as illegals in one of the Gaborone suburbs, appeared to be much more active outside their houses, and were out on the streets to make money as traders, hairdressers, or seamstresses. As there is no immediate economic necessity for the middle-class women to do the same, both groups live an urban life where they come little into contact with one another, although they share the same space. The middle-class women tended to look down upon these 'informal' activities and did not consider them to be realistic options for coming out of their almost Victorian seclusion.

On the men's side, the middle-class whitecollar professionals all stressed with great emphasis the temporal nature of their work and stay in Gaborone. Without exception the ones I interviewed stressed their desire to return to Malawi as soon as possible and to set up a better life there. Their incomes amounted to Pula 8000,- per month, excluding all sorts of benefits which their companies had taken on so as to convince them to leave Malawi and accept these jobs (such free housing, a car, health

insurance etc.). In terms of income and livelihood, they are doing fine and have much to spend on their investments in Malawi which they keep as a security for returning home one day. Many are building houses in Blantyre and Lilongwe, many have co-ownership of companies in Malawi and are developing lands in Malawi for agricultural produce or housing and other construction activities.

Again, as with the women, little contact appeared to exist with Malawian migrants in the city who were not in such well-paid positions, but more or less were forced to fend for themselves. Specific niches are formed by two Malawian dominated occupations: tailoring and traditional doctoring. Malawian tailoring is well known and highly valued in the city and there are a number of self-employed Malawian tailors who own their own shops. I interviewed a small number of them and noticed a similar pattern as with Ghanaian businesses in town: it becomes 'national' in the sense that there is a preference for employing fellow Malawians. Their skills in dressmaking are in high demand and are less common among the locals. During the 1990s tailoring appeared as a promising avenue for Malawian labour in the city, but again the localisation policies are hitting hard. For the establishment of a tailoring business every non-local entrepreneur has to pay the Botswana-government nowadays a fee of Pula 65.000,- for a permit to start a workshop. Even after payment it may then still take years before a permit is granted, leaving the owner of the tailoring shop in the insecure position of wondering whether his or her investment will become profitable or not. One of the issues is that the owner must employ a specified number of locals, irrespective of skills or training, and that this must be proven to the authorities as a matter of fact. This labour, however, fluctuates and changes constantly, so that every time and again the application for the permit never corresponds with the actual situation of employees. During that period bank loans are impossible to secure and further investments to improve the quantity and quality of a business are a highrisk affair. The purpose is clear: Malawians must be pushed out of tailoring so as to make room for locals to take over. Tailoring furthermore is experiencing stiff competition from relatively cheap Chinese and Taiwanese clothing that is flooding the market and from the import of secondhand clothing, which penetrates the

market from Zimbabwe and Zambia (the so-called *salaule*). Another complicating factor is the unwillingness of Batswana to pay for the clothes they order at once in exchange for a system of paying in endless instalments. One tailor showed me a room packed with clothes he once made, and for which instalments had been paid, but which had never been collected by their owners. He was still expecting the payment of many final instalments on these clothes, but realised that for most of them that final payment will never come.

Discussing these issues with other business owners, such as a car-mechanic workshop, I found that a heated topic of discussion was the extent to which one was 'localised'. The expression "I have localised" meant to say that as an owner one had been able to comply with all the rigid localisation criteria set by the government. For the tailoring business, I got the impression, this was a lost battle: although being 'localised' the government's intention apparently was to push foreigners out of this line of employment irrespective of the question of whether skills, financial resources and an interest for style and fashion are present among the locals.

For these self-employed Malawians, contrary to their more prosperous fellow country-men, a return to Malawi is not an option. Their incomes have been much smaller, hence their means to invest in something meaningful in Malawi have not been substantial. Although they may have some vague desire of return, there is little that will help them to bring that about. The feeling of being locked into a hostile Botswana society among this group was therefore much stronger: a kind of experience of being pushed with one's back against the wall and nowhere to go. It might mean that among this group many are disappearing into illegality and are now trying to find work by other means. Once a foreign-owned business has ceased to exist, the owner is supposed to leave the country as long as no other employer is prepared to take the person on. The impression is that the Malawian skills of tailoring are still much in demand, but that Malawian tailors have been forced to start working on an illegal basis in companies/workshops owned by others.

Among these groups of Malawians there is a much greater need to interact with locals. There is less a feeling of seclusion from Botswana

society, but a stronger sense of interdependence and even competition and rivalry for certain jobs or segments of a market. Membership of a Malawi nationals Association was considered of minor importance by the tailors that I met and the membership and funeral fees were considered huge sums of money. In their perception therefore the urban sphere was more a space of interaction, opportunity and risk, than a space of exclusion, strangerhood and temporal residence. Still what they had in common with their more affluent countrymen was the feeling of a shrinking public domain. In previous years, opportunities for tailoring, for introducing their style of clothing, for influencing this element of consumer appetite had been larger and much more promising than nowadays and as a consequence of the localisation policies, participation in that space had been pushed even further back into illegality.

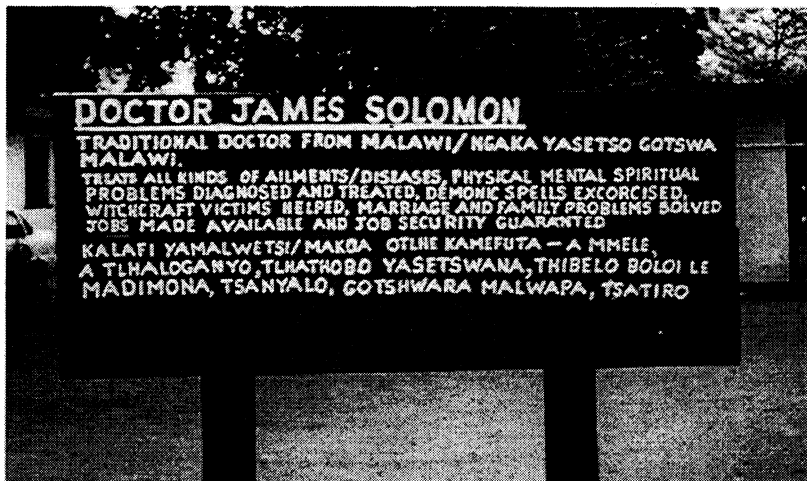
For a third group of Malawians however, this conception of the public domain however, worked out quite differently again. This group consists of the so-called 'Malawian doctors' which comprises traditional healers of some sort.

Malawian powers in the urban domain: of doctors and social soccer in the public sphere

In a variety of places in and around Gaborone houses can be seen with signs or with sign-boards placed at the road-side reading 'Doctor from Malawi'. In some cases this advertisement will then be followed by an explanation of the traditional medical practice found at that particular place and the kind of illnesses and misfortune treated by the resident doctor.

In some cases these 'doctors from Malawi' occupy nice, neat little houses of which so many can be found in the Gaborone residential areas, in other cases these doctors occupy nothing more impressive than a little shack. I was able to talk, more or less successfully, with three of them who were living in the Bontleng and in the Broadhurst areas. Malawian healers have a great reputation for being able to deal with, and provide for, strong 'muti', which is the catchword for the kind of occult medicine with which a lot can be treated but through which in all of its ambiguity harm can be done to others as well. There is a local fascination with

'Malawi' as the imaginative space from where real and powerful medicines, therapies and doctors originate that can truly make a difference in the Botswana situation of afflictions. All that is extraneous and from beyond Botswana borders figures highly in the locals' search for powerful medicines and therapies, and it is in that sense that the 'doctors from Malawi' have found a growing market in Gaborone. Some locals would rather prefer to turn to these doctors than to those that are clearly of local origin.



Sign of doctor Solomon a 'doctor from Malawi'

There were two questions that I decided to look into more deeply concerning the 'doctors from Malawi': first of all the question of whether this fascination with Malawi in the realm of healing was limited to these doctors or whether in other forms of healing (e.g. the prophet-healing churches) a predominance of things Malawian could be noted as well. Secondly, the question obviously was, what exactly does 'Malawian' mean? What elements and aspects of these healing practices carry a Malawian identity, and to what extent do the doctors consider themselves to be Malawian in any meaningful way?

To start with the first question, Gaborone is noted for the many healing churches that can be found in and around town. Most of these churches

belong to the type of Independent Christian churches that in most cases have been founded in the past by healing prophets. There is a range of Zion healing churches in town, but also a variety of Apostolic, Full Gospel and 'Ethiopian' churches which all engage in various forms of spiritual healing. Many of these churches have spread over a wider area in the Southern African region and are also known in Malawi where their variety is as broad as it is in Gaborone. Most of these churches are very comparable in terms of church structure, liturgy, symbolism, attire and uniforms. Because of the similarities between Botswana and Malawi in that sense, it could be expected that this type of spiritual healing would be meaningful to the migrants that have travelled from Malawi to Gaborone. There could have been an element of recognition, perhaps even an element of homecoming for Malawian migrants if they participated in such practices that they are already familiar with from Malawi. Furthermore, it may even have been the case, that similar to the 'Doctors from Malawi' these prophet-healing churches would show a fascination for things Malawian and that therefore a conglomerate of healing practices would exist in which 'Malawi' offers a space for healing, powerful medicines and spirits.

The specific location in Gaborone where many of the activities of these healing churches are concentrated is the squatter area of Old Naledi. I therefore decided to tour Old Naledi and contact as many of the prophet-healing churches as I could. The kind of questions to be asked would be whether they had any Malawian membership or any kind of Malawian leadership, whether they originated from or branch out to Malawi and if there was any correspondence in healing practice which what stems from Malawi. I contacted 14 of these prophet-healing churches, ranging from the well-established, large Head Mountain of God Church with its splendid church building and uniforms, to churches hardly anybody knew of, often meeting in little shacks hidden behind larger houses (⁵). Without

⁵ The churches contacted were St. Mathews Apostolic Church, Apostolic Faith Church, Lefoko Apostolic Church, New Jerusalem Church, Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion, St. Peters Apostolic Church, Dipesalema Church-Apostolic, The Lamb Followers Apostles Church of Alpha and Omega, Memorial Apostolic Church, Morian's

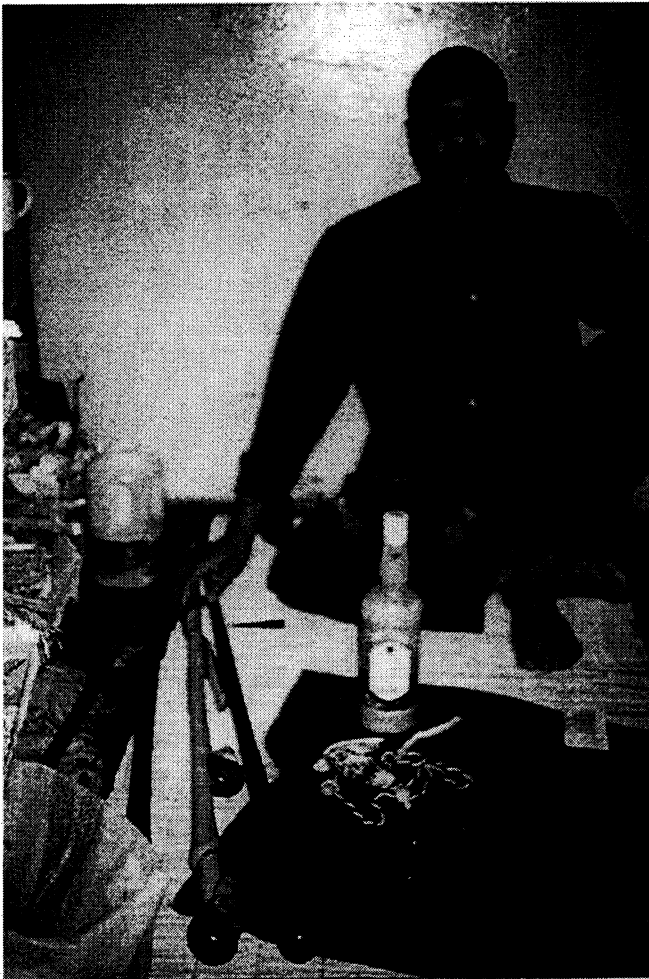
exception the liturgical ground within the church premises is marked by the central position of a burning candle and the arrangement of seats and benches in a circle around that. In local parlance these are the 'candle-churches' and none had Malawian membership whatsoever. Neither was there Malawian leadership nor any significant relationship with things 'Malawian' where healing practices, herbs or other powers were concerned. Some of the leadership were quite explicit about the absence of Malawians, as they said that these churches "are not for foreigners". Only the local language is spoken, no English, and for their ritual repertoires, styles, uniforms etc. no direct relationship with anything 'foreign' was deemed of significance.

Clearly, the 'doctors from Malawi' are indeed a special case. In the three contacts that I made with them I immediately noted that the word 'Malawi' is an index for a complex field of meaning and practices. First of all, all three admitted that in being termed 'doctor from Malawi', one does not necessarily have to be a Malawian (⁶). It could be the case, as two of these three claimed, but it could also have to do with a relationship of distant kin, such as a great-grandfather as the third one indicated; a great-grandfather who happened to have lived in Malawi even before the country was named as such in post-colonial times. Hence the fact of nationality was as such of more limited significance than what the three shared together, which is the common reference to a set of ideas and medical practices. That is what made them 'Malawian' in the first place and attributed them great healing powers. All had registered with the Botswana national traditional healers association, the Dingaka Medical Association of Botswana, but not as foreigners, which would mean a serious obstacle to being allowed to work in Botswana in the first place. Traditional healing again is 'localised' and only under very special conditions and criteria can a foreigner be allowed to practice in a field where so many locals are active. When asked, the Dingaka confirmed that only one Malawian was registered with them and that person did not

Episcopal Apostolic Church, Full Gospel Church of God, Holy Christian Apostolic Church in Zion, St. Nehemiah Apostolic Church, Helekia Christian Church.

⁶ These three were: Dr. R. Shumba (in Bontleng), Dr. R. Makhoyo (in Broadhurst) and Dr. J. Soloman (in Broadhurst).

happen to be one of these three as he was residing elsewhere in the country. So, the symbolic and socio-political meaning of the term 'Malawian' became clear from the start: it refers to the nature and power of a certain number of practices while it conceals at the same time the fact that a national identity, a serious matter in Botswana of the moment, can be negotiated.



Doctor Shumba, a 'doctor from Malawi' and his divining apparatus

Two of the three were prepared to show me the rooms where they treat patients and explained the range of medicines and divinatory practices that they apply. A highly syncretic picture emerged of medicines, herbs, roots and divinatory practices which at the same time showed the vast and extended area over which these doctors assemble their skills and gather their materials. They travel to Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique to collect what they need, guided by certain spirits that show them the way and indicate the right kind of plants and roots to pick and to dig up. However, for the most potent and the most secretive ones a trip to Malawi would be necessary as that is the place where the objects and substances can be found for which there is great local demand. So, by applying the term 'Malawi' they make clear to the general public that not only certain substances are present and available in their practices that originate from that imaginative space, but also that they are prepared to make that explicit effort of travelling that distance and that they are guided by specific spiritual powers; forceful ones capable of covering extensive distances in space and time. One of the two kept a small statue in the cabinet of his medicines which was the representation and proxy of his great-grandfather's spirit, a person who had been a powerful *sing'anga* himself in Malawi many decades ago and who had selected his great-grandson to be inspired by his still-present powers and spirit. The other, a 63 year old pensioner uses hallucinating snuff to call two spirits at the same time, the spirit of his MO/FA and the spirit of his FA/Mo who both lived in Malawi, to guide him while divining. The third healer was not prepared to be that specific and simply talked of ancestral spirits which he indicated by a *Ndebele* term of *madlozi*.

For the divination of the affliction or illness of the visiting patients a range of objects and techniques can be used. The most complex was the first healer who in addition to the throwing of shells applied a kind of random generator in the form of an empty bottle on top of which a balancing piece of bent metal was swinging to and fro. Where and how that piece of metal would drop from the bottle top upon or near the shells would provide the healer with further information on the patient's condition and on the answers that patients would give to his probing

questions. The third healer that I have mentioned here instead of shells uses wooden tablets and a detailed account was obtained of his practice through one of my research assistants who went in for a consult with him.

Whereas the phase of divination is relatively cheap (Pula 10 to Pula 20 per consultation) the actual and prolonged treatment by these 'doctors from Malawi' can become a truly costly affair. Depending on the nature of the problems presented to them, the amounts to be paid to them can climb from Pula 1000,- to double that demand, excluding the additional costs for anything or any animal that in the course of the healing practice must be sacrificed. Hence the doctors from Malawi can become more costly than their 'local' counterparts for which the Dingaka Association prescribes the kind of rates that can be charged to the general public for their services.

While there is much more terrain to uncover in these healing practices, in its syncretism, in its virtuality of national identities, in its appeal and in the general public's fascination for it, a question still remained as to what extent these doctors had any relationship with the Malawian migrant community? Do they cater specifically to Malawian needs? Do they have a well-recognised position in that community and are they regarded as elements and representatives of aspects of any Malawian cultural life in the diaspora? None of the three, however, claimed to have a specific Malawian clientele. Perhaps even to the contrary, as their powerful appeal specifically seems to work with regard to the locals and their needs and not so much for foreigners. The Malawians that were prepared to talk to me about such issues as healing by traditional doctors first of all came with the common middle-class rhetoric of being well-educated and Christian people who would never get themselves involved in such things. Others, however, explained to me that these doctors from Malawi in a way are too syncretic, too "mixed" as somebody said to be of any true value for them. When facing problems of a nature that would require this type of care, Malawians would generally prefer to make the explicit effort to travel to Malawi. And some seem to do so on an occasional basis. Often such trips are a kind of multi-purpose visit whereby the family is visited, one's investments in building a house are checked and a more or

less secretive visit is paid to one of the powerful healers in Malawi. The ones in Gaborone are declared to be ‘charlatans’ as they do no longer represent the pure form of Malawian healing.



The Malawi social soccer-team

The reason why ‘Malawi’ figures as a place of special powers is not yet clear. A part of the answer may be related to the Malawian notion of ‘washing’; i.e. the total cleansing of the person from all evil powers, particularly witchcraft, through what is known in Chichewa as *kuchapa*. The *Mchape* anti-witchcraft movements had a place of origin in the southern part of Malawi from where they started to spread over a much wider region the 1930s ad 1940s. All of the doctors from Malawi made mention of the fact that bodily ‘washing’ was very much part of their healing practices as well as the catching of one’s reflections in a mirror to check whether all impurity then had left. Also my female assistant was invited by the third traditional healer to be washed by him which in

addition to some of the sensual overtones it may have also resonates with much what the *Mchape* witchfinders did. Much was necessarily left for further exploration here as this reference to those forms of witchcraft eradication practices may not explain all in trying to understand the 'Malawi' popular imagery. The powerful aspect of this Malawian popular imagery was brought home to me again in another and quite unexpected domain: that of sports, social soccer in particular. Gaborone has many football grounds and on Saturdays and Sundays soccer teams occupy these grounds and play games against one another even in blazing heat.

Often these teams are formed on the basis of nationality. There are therefore Zimbabwean, Zambian, Botswanian, Mozambican and of course Malawian soccer teams. The Malawi soccer team is well organised and plays in outfits carrying the national colours: hence their public recognition as being the Malawi soccer team is very much present. In addition to that they are considered extremely tough, rough and powerful. I spent one entire Sunday-afternoon with them and found them drinking pints of beer long before the game they were going to play even started. They were going to meet a Botswana social soccer team, and as they prepared and drank more the atmosphere heated up. Here was a team as one of the coaches explained that really was a team, that took care of one another whenever one of them had problems (for instance with the authorities as some of them are illegal immigrants) or needed any sort of assistance. In that sense my presence at first made them a little nervous, but as I did not appear to be overtly interested in that issue, suspicions evaporated. The point is however, that there is a kind of public aura around the powerful nature of Malawian presence and self-representation. This team, despite the drunkenness of some, and despite the scorching temperatures played a kind of power-play difficult to counter by the other party. Although the audience of other Malawians for this game was very small - a handful - within the Malawi community many seemed to be well aware of the power of this team: it was no place for softies.

Here is therefore a domain for further exploration: the public imagery of the migrants' power in the physical and spiritual world in a context where the 'stranger' is considered the weaker party. Malawians do not

display, nor do they intend to do so, the kind of societal weakness that can be assumed to be present from the side of the host society where strangerhood is concerned. There is in other words an apparent counter image that does not make the Malawian weak and dependent but represents the Malawian as strong and powerful. Unfortunately for the Malawian middle-class women, not all share or are able to share in these aspects of the public imaginary.

Conclusion: a brief comparison of the two cases

Whereas both cases show many similarities in how citizenship and nationality are turned into a liability, there is one striking difference in how Ghanaians as compared to Malawians deal with what Mitchell recently has called the 'State-effect' (Mitchell 1999). Through that term, he indicates the ways in which modern states try to adopt a set of practices that result in the state being experienced as an external reality, something that has preceded human action and intervention and thus produces an imagery of being totally outside the context of immediate and communal interaction between subjects. The Botswana state is not theirs, but at the same time neither is the state of the country of origin theirs. It forms an external reality and thus requires specific actions and practices to make it theirs. Ghanaians and Malawians show very different interests in these matters, and home ideologies (cf. Rapport & Dawson (1998)) have very different meanings. In the Ghanaian case, the Ghana state is making explicit efforts to create a new homecoming, to produce an imagery of a 'primordial' national identity that makes it morally compelling to have national interests in mind, to send remittances home,

to invest in Ghana and to send delegations from the diaspora back to Ghana in 'Homecoming Summits'. Ghana has a long history of this type of nationalist- inspired home-ties relationship, reproduced every two years at a cultural level also by such things as the PANAFEST festival. Elements of this ideology of 'national care' for the citizenry are reproduced by the association of Ghanaians in Gaborone, which from time to time becomes clear when young and illegal Ghanaians run into difficulties with the Botswana authorities.

This ideology is largely absent in the Malawian case. No homecoming summits in this case, no state ideologies bent on keeping ideologies alive by which migrants are expected to have a clear eye for national even patriotic interests. The Malawi state is perceived by the migrants as deeply introspective, only concerned with its own intrigues, its own and endless bickering over the few resources it controls and marked by a sheer lack of understanding of what its diaspora may mean in economic terms. Malawians opt for a constant retreat into the family circle, into tight-knit and small scale relationships so as to make the state as 'external' as they possibly can. Thirty years of dictatorship prior to 1994 have imposed upon them a minimalist notion of the state and a highly limited idea of what a public domain is or can produce. Malawi life is very much a circumvented family life with much clearer ideas of what the private domain should consist of, of who is interacting and for what reason. The situation in Botswana did not change much in that respect and in many ways produced a continuation of the family focus of quotidian life. Hence the Malawi association in Botswana developed primarily as a funeral fund, i.e. a reproduction of family interests par excellence, while 'doctors from Malawi' are those who have privileged insight into family related matters in the first place. So while in Malawi people were accustomed to deliberately withdrawing themselves from the public domain as much as they could, in Botswana that reduction of interaction with a public domain was more or less forced upon them by the localisation policies. The Malawian middle-class women and their secluded lives form a most telling example of that process.

The Ghanaian response to the emerging situation was partly different. Five Ghanaian Pentecostal churches have emerged, each with a clear

objective of branching out to other parts of Botswana as well. Together with the Ghana Association, but in a sense also in competition with the 'state-effect' characteristics of that organisation, they produce their own public domain. Here things can be said, one's voice can be heard, one's ideas can be expressed, one's status can be shown through clothing, hairstyles, attire etc.. Moreover, that domain is considered to be highly attractive to the 'locals' as well, who tend to be fascinated by West-African flamboyance and elegance. While initially Malawian tailoring may have had a similar effect of creating a specific niche in Botswana society for their identity, the Ghanaian success both at a spiritual as well as at a level of style and public presence has been much greater and more prominent.

In some cases Ghanaians prefer to employ Malawians and other foreigners. They feel that foreigners are often more aware of new African styles than locals, while the locals are considered to be 'provincial' in their appetites, interests and skills as their exposure to a more cosmopolitan and multi-cultural world, in their view, has remained limited. In addition to this unfamiliarity to modern style, they also feel that employing foreign labourers tends to be cheaper.

Obviously the Ghanaians experience the same effects of the localisation policies as the Malawians do, and while they complain bitterly about it, to a large extent their entrepreneurial response is very different than can be noticed in the Malawian case. The Ghanaian site of Pentecostal inspiration and West-African style and beauty turns 'locals' into strangers with regard to that milieu of consumptivism and hedonism. It makes clear how introvert and introspective the Botswana society is in Ghanaian eyes ("the locals never travel outside" Ghanaians said to me many times, expressing their utter amazement at what they perceive as a sheer lack of entrepreneurial interest), as if Botswana can serve the 'locals' from its own national resources all that they may need in life. The Ghanaian diaspora fosters a competitive identity and specific forms of social capital where businesses, hair salons and even the religious entrepreneurs of the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches compete for their share of the market and their niche in the public domain.

Rising xenophobia in Botswana is playing a part in the making of minorities, in the politics of identity and citizenship and in the anxieties about competition in an increasingly trans-nationalising market-place (see for a more general discussion of these themes in contemporary Africa: Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000). While public ideas of a kind of 'splendid isolation' are surfacing in Botswana public debate, particularly as the country is flooded by refugees from neighbouring Zimbabwe, the sheer presence of African expat migrant groups signals the counter-process of diasporic movement that constantly undercuts such discourses. While Botswana identity politics have become largely preoccupied with dealing with issues that concern its 'internal' minorities, its more 'silent' localisation policies deal with the state's 'external' minorities. Still, as this report has aimed to demonstrate, these issues of 'isolation', of transnationalism, and of identity politics come together at the core of debates concerning the future of the Botswana state. Its future, as many commentators in the Botswana newspapers are arguing, is dependent to a large extent on cheap foreign labour which is prepared to do the menial jobs that autochthone Botswana increasingly refuse to accept. To a large extent it is dependent on entrepreneurial activity and investments that foreigners are prepared to undertake, and on the knowledge and expertise that (African) expats bring to the country (this is highly influenced by the AIDS-pandemic as well, which is hitting the economically active population of Botswana in the first place). Hence, while the Botswana government, for ideological reasons, is pursuing a localisation policy with all the xenophobic identity politics that it produces, it has as a matter of fact little room to manoeuvre when it seeks isolation from foreign labour. What Ghanaians and Malawians have in common is that they do not wait and see. Each is developing its own culturally informed ways of producing social capital within the community which interact with the public domain. Voluntary associations, collaborative entrepreneurial activity, burial schemes and churches all contribute to forms of trust, reciprocity and security that are considered indispensable in making a living in Gaborone. Social capital appears to live at the intersection of the private and the public, thereby paradoxically turning national identity into an asset as well. In both cases these ideological aspects of social capital

appear also to be of importance as to how strategies are developed of having securities elsewhere, outside Botswana. Contrary to the 'internal' minorities, these communities therefore devote considerable amounts of time, energy and money to things 'outside' and in that sense the Botswana localisation policy might even backfire and become counterproductive. Little surfaces, however, of whether these kind of considerations are part of the way the Botswana government perceives of its localisation policy and the xenophobic ramifications this has for society.

A future research project to be conducted among Ghanaian and Malawian migrant communities in Gaborone will explore many of the features of the issues of social capital, citizenship and belonging that have been spelled out here. A comparative study will highlight how in one context under prevailing conditions of xenophobia different culturally informed practices and ideological formations can emerge that seek to address this predicament. Little comparative diasporic study has been undertaken in Africa so far and the rising debates in Africa on issues of strangerhood and identity politics make such a research project not only topical but highly compelling as well. In a separate research proposal, based on this report, further ideas on that comparative research will be developed.

Appendix

Brief notes on methodology and time-input during the exploratory visits

The Sociology Dept. of the University of Botswana proved to be crucial for the progress I was able to make in the relatively short period of time that I had available for this exploratory trip. Dr. O. Selolwane, Prof. F. Nyamjoh and Prof. D. Werbner were very helpful in putting me in contact with certain key people, both at the university and elsewhere, and for making me aware of some of the pressing issues with which minority groups are confronted in Botswana society today. A special word of thanks has to be expressed to my friend and colleague Prof. D. Werbner who not only invited me to stay in his house, but showed me some relevant sources at the National and during the second trip kept me informed on the public debates that raged on with regard to the Tswana – Kalanga controversy and what this all meant for the impact of the issue of strangerhood on a national level.

Through the dept. I came into contact with final year students who were willing to assist me on a part-time basis and who proved to be very efficient in putting me in contact with a number of persons and a variety of churches. During the first trip these were Miss. Emereole and Mr. Kagiso, while during the second trip Mr. Kapaya took over from the last named. Their efforts particularly focused on locating the various Ghanaian and Malawian Pentecostal churches in Gaborone and their leaders or other representatives. Their assistance in this was greatly appreciated. They were also of help in translation and interpretation, did some work on the public media archives (newspapers mainly), and occasionally held interviews themselves on my behalf. Their support and dedication has been greatly appreciated.

Contacts with other people and departments at the University of Botswana proved to be of no difficulty at all and extended beyond the initial contacts that I had with the Sociology Dept. The contacts at the university developed in two directions. First of all, there is a sizeable community of Ghanaian lecturers at the UB who occupy positions in departments such as History (Dr. K. Dakwah), Social Work (Prof. K.

Osei-Hwedie), Law (Prof. K. Frimpong) and so on who were of crucial importance to my entry in the Ghanaian community. Some of these persons appear to play a key role in the organisational life of the Ghanaian community and take part in extensive networks. In addition these persons were also crucial to me in explaining aspects of the Ghanaian migration history to Botswana, a veritable brain-drain dating back as early as the 1970s, and the subsequent development in their positions in this society.

Secondly, contacts were also developed on a thematic basis with departments such as that of Religious Studies (Prof. J. Amanze & Dr. O. Kealotswe), Demography (Dr S. Rakgoasi), Population and Sustainable Development Dept. (Prof. J. Ouchou), and History (Dr. K. Dakwah). Issues discussed here related to questions of minority status and government policies, the size and history of migrant communities, xenophobia and economic prospects.

During the second trip, Prof. D. Kaunda of the Political Science Department became of great significance to the success I had in contacting the Malawian community and in understanding some of the major developments that have taken place over the last two decades.

The time input was roughly divided into three:

- interviewing key contacts, mainly on week-days
- participation in Pentecostal church life, as well as in some aspects of the migrant community's life, mainly at weekends
- consulting written resources, on weekdays, which comprised many of the Botswana newspapers as they are compiled in the National Reference Library, while the National Archives were consulted on Botswana's localisation policies.

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