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Bridging Mobilities: ICTs appropriation by Cameroonians in South Africa and The Netherlands

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Mobility and migration at the crossroads: Mobile communities

Introduction

Bianca's story

When I finished high school I refused to study law at the University of Yaoundé. I just went into business. I was trading, buying beans from Ndu, Babessi and Ndop and I sold them in Douala. At one point I had a connection and I sent beans to Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. So that's how I worked and raised money. Then my first cousin, who is in Johannesburg, came to Cameroon and told me that it would be better to go out there than to pursue the business that I was doing ... She offered to help out in getting the documents. I said I had the money and if she could get someone who would do the documents, I'd be happy to go. It was when she returned that she got other documents processed and then I had my visa, and travelled in July 2007. When I arrived, I was in Johannesburg for two months, then I had a job there that paid me R1500 a month but I took it for four months just to see how life was going, but after some time, I converted it. Then, it was R 1450 to FCFA100,000 in Cameroon. I converted the money and saw that it was nothing because I was not even paying rent (sic). So that's the reason I decided to leave that city. Before then, another sister came from Cape Town ... she told me how life was in Cape Town ... I asked her what I'd do if I moved to Cape Town before I settled. She told me that she owned a flat in Cape Town and she was studying. If I came, we could 'patch' for a time before I looked for my own place to settle. Then I talked to the former president of the PIFAM who met me in Johannesburg. I spoke with him and he encouraged me and that's also the reason why I moved. I did not like it there ... I did not like the lifestyle in Johannesburg, it's too rowdy. It's just like Douala in Cameroon. A lot of crime ... There's a high crime rate in Johannesburg.¹

Unable to explain why she turned down going to university in favour of doing business, we can only attribute it to an attitude she grew up with at home – that of a father who was business-minded and would travel to different cattle markets to buy and sell cows. She says:

¹ Interview with Bianca, Cape Town; 17/08/2010

My father was a trader, he used to go to Wum, Nkambe and Mesaje, and he was a cattle trader.²

Bianca's story forms the backdrop through which we can understand the mobilities of the communities being studied in this research. Mobilities have increasingly become a chosen lifestyle for the majority of the mobile community. And this lifestyle of mobilities is propelled and sustained partly by kinship, by social networks and by ethnic enclaves that 'mobiles' have forged over the years. But there is also evidence to suggest that the mobility pattern of today's migrants is embedded and informed by those of their parents: it is born out of a learned and internalized habit that they have adopted.

The twenty-first century has seen a significant change in the context of mobility due to the age of globalization that has ushered in new dimensions of cross-border movements, flows and transnational networks. It therefore follows that the current migration flows are inextricably linked to globalization and have become the reagent in socioeconomic and political transformation in receiving countries as well as in sending countries (Castles & Miller 2003). However, we should avoid overly romanticizing globalization because mobility has always existed in terms of the movement of people and things. As Mbembe (2000: 263) explains; contrary to the bounded idea of place that is informed by classical ethnography, the world has always been composed of layers of multiple spaces 'constantly joined, displaced, and recombined through wars, conquests (as we saw in the history of mobility among the Mankon people) and the mobility of good roads and persons'. In the midst of this movement, there is also an illegal side, with trafficking that is equally embedded in historical perspectives as Schrover *et al.* (2008) have so well demonstrated. In this respect, it is arguable that, while humans have always been mobile, the ripple effects have been the creation of fluid identities, as shown by Gupta & Ferguson (1992: 9), a trend that is increasingly evident in the context of globalization. On the one hand, traditional sending countries, like Spain, Italy and Ireland, have seen a reversal in emigration and have become recipients of immigration and, on the other hand, the increasing wealth of some African countries like South Africa, Botswana, Equatorial Guinea and Angola, as well as some Gulf States such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain, have witnessed high levels of migration to these countries. Castles & Miller (2003: 4) claim that 'migration ranks as one of the most important factors in global change'. This, as most migration literature concurs, is thanks to advancements in the new Information and communication technologies and the complete overhaul of the transport sector, especially air travel, which has given people the advantage of incessant and multi-directional flows of mobility (Massey *et al.* 1998; Castles & Miller 2003; Urry 2000; Mazzucatu 2008). What can

² See previous footnote.

we therefore deduce from this accelerated mobility in terms of its impact on people? Elliott & Urry (2010: 7) shed light on this and hold that accelerated mobilities in people's lives will lead to the 'recasting of identity in terms of flexibility, adaptability and instant transformation', while holding onto the values that they consider as defining their identity. However much the advances in mobility/migration are hailed, they would, however, appear to have come at a cost to nation-states as they are gradually recasting the sovereignty and autonomy of nation-states and minimizing their ability to maintain effective border control. This is by no means meant to suggest that borders have become redundant but rather that flexible mobility seeks to make a nonsense of borders that have become contested spatiality between migrants and states. The age of globalization, which is defined by accelerated flows of people, goods and ideas and unbounded mobility, would appear not to be flexible to all. This limitation could explain why the sovereignty of states is being challenged. And with advances in new ICTs borders have become increasingly porous and the corollary is an explosion in mobility (Ferguson 2006; Nyamnjoh & Page 2002). Migration and mobility are therefore more of a seesaw, where closures are vehemently challenged and flows questioned and reconfigured thanks to migrants' networks. As such, mobility can best be understood through these networks and fluids. Furthermore, such developments appear to have led migrants to redirect their lives in a multiple society – to living a dual life – where geographic location and time are no longer issues of inter-connection and conversely change social structures and lead to cultural diversity and/or fusion. Pinyin and Mankon migrants are no exception. With such rapid evolution in mobility, the tendency is to obliterate the mobile culture of the past in favour of the new era.

Delving into the past informs the present, and mobile patterns of the communities under study can be seen in Bianca's story given that empirical data show that mobility, especially among the Pinyin, resembles the mobile culture of parents during the colonial and post-colonial era. This historical approach is also supported by Cresswell (2010: 29) who maintains that 'we cannot understand new mobilities, then, without understanding old mobilities. Thinking of mobilities in terms of constellations of movements, representations and practices helps us avoid historical amnesia when thinking about and with mobility.' The varied forms of mobilities as practised by the Pinyin and Mankon communities have thus come to represent an historical progression from traditional rural society to that of an urban and mobile society (Ferguson 1999; Andersson 2001).

This chapter sets out to understand the mobility patterns of the Pinyin and Mankon migrants and how these have evolved from when they were marked by bush trade and mobility to the plantations. In the same breath, it acknowledges that migration involves a point of departure and entry, as well as a dynamic sys-

tem in which migration represents and evolves from linkages between sending and receiving countries. The chapter seeks to understand mobility from the perspectives of the sending and receiving countries in order to explain the ‘flows within the context of other flows and emphasises that flows of people are part of, and often influenced by, flows of goods, services and information.’ And it sees a social network (see Chapter 5) as the connecting device given that networks bind family ties, kith, community and weak ties and are the catalyst for migration. As a result of mobility, networks connect migrants and non-migrants across space and time, and migration and mobility revolve around a seamless weave. These forms of mobility and network become a complete reversal of the assimilation form of migration in the past where migrants said farewell to their country of origin and embraced the new country. Instead, they opt for a more cosmopolitan and elastic way of life that prioritizes double presence, taking into consideration their cultural attachment (cf. Chapter 1). Against this backdrop, I question how this has evolved over the course of time. How can we draw on past patterns of migration to understand the current trends of Pinyin and Mankon migration? What does mobility mean to migrants? How are receiving countries reacting to the new wave of in-flows? And what is the role of ICTs in enhancing or stifling these new trends in mobilities?

Mobility trends in Cameroon from colonial times to the current wave of migration to South Africa

Prior to the current global trends of accelerated mobilities, mobility existed in most African states and was an integral part of people’s daily realities. Since the colonial period when the Germans established plantations to the post-colonial period in Cameroon, mobility was marked by movements to the plantations from Bamenda Division; with huge contingents of people moving from Wum and Kom and later from Momo (Meta and Ngi) from the Grassfields of the North West Region to the South West Regions, and to other coastal regions (Konings 2001, 2011; Delancey 1974: 181, 1988: 307; Warnier 1985; Geschiere & Gugler 1998: 314; Nkwi 2011). Such mobility patterns did not exclude rural-urban migration and rural-rural migration, and were not limited to movements to the plantations. They also revolved around economic activities, with traders crossing the country buying and selling goods. Although statistics on migration from Mankon to the coastal region are not available as they are only for other villages such as Meta, Ngi, Kom, Wum, Bali and Nkambe (Delancey 1974), migration to the plantations or the coast was commonplace. Oral accounts hold that migration to the plantations amongst Pinyin was uncommon because they are very industrious

and business-oriented and thus tend to be self-employed.³ Instead, mobile trends amongst them tilted more towards rural-rural migration and to weekly visits to neighbouring village markets as well as to Ikom, a town on the Nigeria-Cameroon border to sell pigs and foodstuffs such as pink potatoes, in exchange for salt⁴ and other goods not available in their own village. Those who went as far as Nkambe and Wum became conversant with another lucrative trade, namely bush trade between Cameroon and Nigeria, and East and West Cameroons. Bush trade was exacerbated by the lack of good roads at the time and most goods depended on ‘head-carry’. At the top of the list of goods that were brought back from Nigeria⁵ were clothes and gunpowder, which would then be taken to Bamileke in East Cameroon or present-day West Region where traders would sell and buy gunpowder and coffee seeds and goods such as cigarettes, spirits (drinks). Pinyin’s proximity to the West Region gave them an added advantage as it is widely believed that Pinyin people inherited their entrepreneurial spirit from the Bamileke.

These mobile patterns of the Pinyin are largely informed by historical patterns and the notion of ‘rites of passage’ that existed at the time, even though this was for economic reasons. It was a way of proving one’s coming of age and readiness to take a bride amongst one’s peers. By the same token, it catapulted those concerned onto a list of eligible marriage partners.⁶ The men converted their economic capital into cultural capital, wielding positions of hierarchy. This trend has continued to the present. Against this backdrop and following Geschiere *et al.* (2008: 2), I propose looking at mobility from a genealogical approach that takes into account migration and mobility since the colonial period through to the advanced era of mass migration enhanced by the revolution in communication technologies and air and road transport. Migrating to Cape Town followed similar patterns of step-wise migration as those manifested by the migrants’ parents who made the rounds of the neighbouring weekly markets. Migrants would leave the village for the city and later move to South Africa thanks to migration enterprises. Back then in Pinyin, coming of age and being independent was marked by the ability to belong to a peer group of ‘mobiles’, known as *nkang*, who visited weekly markets in the neighbouring villages of Ashong, Bali, Babajou, Bamesing, Bamumbu, Guzang, Wum, Nkambe and Mesaje and were also involved in bush trade between Nigerian and Cameroon, and the then East and West Came-

³ Interview with Pa Nkem, Bamenda; 21/09/2011.

⁴ File No.cb1919/1, Annual Report 1919 of Bamenda Division: Trade and Economics. p. 4.

⁵ File No. cb 1955, Annual Report 1955 of Bamenda Division. It asserts that bush trade increased between 1954 and 1955 as smugglers organized themselves in bands of upwards of 50 men when going on a trip, and used scouts, some of whom went ahead to check the road for customs officials. Archival data corroborates oral sources.

⁶ Interview with Pa Muluh, aged 71, Pinyin; 28/05/2010 and Pa Nkem, 68 years, Bamenda; 21/09/2011.

rooms⁷ simultaneously. The weekly markets provided opportunities for those who had migrated to these villages to receive news of relations and also for relations to send messages to them. In other words, information to and from the village had to be sent with villagers travelling from one weekly market to another. In line with Urry's 'systems', this was the only system in place at the time for moving information and ideas. Travellers took news from relations to Pinyin settled in other villages and *vice versa*. In the same vein, they came back with new farming techniques, new seeds and information about different breeds of pigs and piglets because Pinyin was famous for its pigs. With weekly mobility, those residents in other villages looked forward to market days as it gave them the opportunity to get news from home, especially from family. Traditional forms of communication were very much the practice at the time. Muluh, who had relocated to Njinikom, was urgently requested to return home because his father wanted to groom him as his successor (unknown to him then). He was sent a particular type of grass by his father through a village kin visiting the market. The significance of this grass was twofold: his presence was urgently needed in the village and the particularity of the grass signified the urgency of the message, i.e. to come with the grass still fresh. Corroborating this information, Nkem says that the recipient of the message was expected to return to the village before the grass died.

Rural-rural migration gave people the opportunity to move into rural areas and take advantage of the lack of emerging markets. This led to movements of Pinyin to villages like Nkambe and Mesaje (Pelican 2006) in Donga and Mantung Division, Fundung in Boyo Division and Bawuru in Menchum Division, all in the North West Region of Bamenda. In the process, an extensive use of kinship ties reaching across frontiers was used, especially by those involved in bush trade. A case in point is that of Mark and Nelson, whose parents migrated from Pinyin and settled in Fundong and Nkambe respectively.⁸ The migration trail of Mark's parents took them first to Wum, then to Nkambe and finally to Fundong. They established themselves simultaneously as businessmen, farmers and cattle owners with substantial herds of cattle. To these families, although Fundong and Nkambe have become a second home to them, they have not cut their links with Pinyin as seen from the development projects they are carrying out in the village as well as their presence at all the funerals and family occasions.

The linking up of rural areas by mobile communication networks has made it possible for the flow of information and virtual mobility. The culture of pitching (Chapter 4) in Cape Town is what those there have internalized over the years

⁷ File no. CB 1955/1. Annual Report 1955 of Divisional Officer for Bamenda Division; pp. 4, paragraphs 10-11, see also File no. BA 1969/1: Economic Quarterly Report on Mezam Division for the Quarter Ended 31 December 1969.

⁸ Interviews with Mark 04/08/2010 and 06/04/2011, and Nelson on 06/07/2011. Parow; Cape Town.

and are now reproducing. At another level, the children have become migrants in their own right as Mark's journey to South Africa was more for transit purposes before moving to Britain, while Nelson, having established himself in Johannesburg as a businessman, relocated to Cape Town for his studies and then moved to the South West Region of Cameroon. The mobilities systems propounded by Urry (2007) would appear to be acting in their favour.

Such mobile trends saw not only the arrival of new ideas and business opportunities, especially agricultural innovations in Pinyin and Mankon, but also heralded the inflow of Fulani cattle owners into Pinyin where they found vegetation. Pinyin traders going to East Cameroon and the Mankon plantation labourers introduced coffee growing from the seeds they brought back, and some Pinyin diversified into cattle rearing, almost rivalling the Fulani. Only recently have Mankon people branched out into cattle rearing, an area that was exclusively reserved for the Fulani. The culture at the time was to work as cattle herdsman and this was rewarded with a calf each year. With this new-found wealth came social mobility as well as extended criteria for marriage eligibility amongst the men. This trend did not, however, go unnoticed as it featured in one of the Quarterly Reports of the former West Cameroon.⁹ Could we, therefore, infer from these past mobility patterns something about the present fluidity and flexibility in mobility? Joe's story will elucidate on these new trends of mobility among the younger generation of migrants in South Africa.

Mobility and migration are no longer what they used to be but are guided by information and knowledge about migration from earlier migrants to prospective migrants; with the former becoming the communication out-post. And they have moved away from the old migration systems, that privileged assimilation to the new that integrates the 'here' and 'there'. This challenged and circumnavigated state borders and showed pride in cultural mobility.

A paradigm shift

Given the paradigm shift in trends of mobility, we are witnessing a new reorientation and diversification of mobility globally. Drawing on Urry's (2000) myriads of mobility, it is evident that we can no longer talk of individual migrants or individuation given their lives are inextricably linked to the home and host countries and to the global. Mobility is more about 'mobiles' who are aware of their surroundings and the global changes, and who are armed with informed choices and being assertive. Mobile communities are more the norm, with agentic powers that increasingly redefine the host and home countries. In this regard, the governmentality policies put in place to monitor borders are being challenged and

⁹ File no. BA 1972/1; Economic and Political Quarterly Reports of the Division of West Cameroon, 1971-1972: 93.

contested. In this respect, it also influences the way communities seek to reorganize themselves in the face of such mounting closures. South Africa which used to be the cradle of labour migration to the mines among its Southern African neighbours (SADC), is witnessing a downturn in labour-intensive migration to the mines in favour of other forms of migration, such as student migrants and a new wave of economic and professional migrants who are self-employed (Shindondola 2007; Segatti 2011). The defining features of these migrants, as opposed to the traditional mine labourers, is that they are post-apartheid migrants. This has led to a huge influx of Congolese (DRC), Nigerians, Somalis and Cameroonians, and the reasons for migration especially from Cameroon have been well expounded by Shindondola (2007: 8-12). Be they post-colonial forms of mobility or new cultures of mobility, they are guided by what Urry calls 'systems' (see also Tyner 2009) given their ability to make possible movements and provide 'spaces of anticipation' (Urry 2007: 12-13). By the same token, they are making a tremendous impact on their family's stability and organization. His idea is backed by Licoppe (2004) who believes that communication technologies are the driving force behind the systems. But perhaps, Urry's 'system' is limited only to those that make movement possible and does not consider the 'systems' that endanger mobility. Although he alludes to the theory of 'complexity' that 'investigates emergent dynamic, self-organising and interdependent systems' (*Ibid.*: 2007: 30), it fails to be explicit when, even in the face of such complexities, it should be noted that one emergent dynamic is the breaching of social relations. This is something that Giddens (1990) terms as the perspective of mobility at 'disembedding' the social functions: it is a liberation of the individual. Hopkins *et al.* (2006) look at mobility from another vantage point to assess how social identity considerations shape spatial behaviour. Concurring with the latter, social identity has been one of the driving forces behind the high rate of Pinyin emigrating to South Africa. For instance, most of the informants (all but two) in this study recall how coming to South Africa was facilitated by already-settled relatives who later assisted them in their own businesses. In this regard, the mobility of the Pinyin and Mankon may be affected by the degree to which particular places (in this case South Africa) contribute to their sense of personal continuity, of community/distinctiveness, self-esteem and self-determination.

An attempt to understand the migration and mobile patterns of these groups will be anchored in a migration-systems approach that calls for the study of both ends (the home and host countries) in the migration flows that form the cardinal point in this study, the linkages between the places and the networks that have propelled the sustenance of migration (Massey *et al.* 1998; Fawcett & Arnold 1987; Fawcett 1989; Boyd 1989; Hagan 1998). While social networks (family, community and informal networks – weak ties) inform migration and are coping

mechanisms that help migrants to settle in, they equally perpetuate it through chain migration and the migration industry or enterprises. The ripple effect is the creation of a network society, one that is underpinned by ICTs and migrants' strives to create a home-away-from-home. Comprehension of all these linkages will enhance our understanding of migration and mobility among Pinyin and Mankon migrants. This study also considers the nuances of the systems and complexities of mobility and migration flows. These same systems that make it possible could equally mar mobility when the 'in-betweens' are not adequately coordinated and managed. Mobility could best be understood by engaging it from the perspective of everyday life and assessing how it translates to the formation of a mobile community. Given that everyday life is where all events and daily activities take place, capturing the tendencies of everyday life should offer an understanding of the concept of mobility that involves the in-betweens. In summary, the analyses in this chapter are premised on complexities, migration systems and the notion of everyday life through which the in-betweens of mobility and migration are captured and understood.

Expounding on the concept of globalization and mobility, Appaduria (2000) argues the case for 'globalisation from below' as globalization can be experienced irrespective of whether one is mobile or not. Given that most of the world's population is sedentary, it is thanks to the mobile individuals that it is possible for most 'immobiles' to connect with the rest of the world (Sichone 2008). This presupposes that at either level, be they mobile migrants or the sedentary 'immobiles', the gap still exists even if we tend to look at globalization from below.

As part of the paradigm shift, there is an increasing discourse on cultures of mobility (Hahn & Klute 2007; Adey 2010; Greenblatt 2010) that is embedded, on the one hand, with mobile communities seeking to negotiate with other communities and the host communities, and on the other, in cultural mobility as migrants are mobile with their culture. Making a case for cultural mobility, Clifford (1992, 1997) and Greenblatt *et al.* (2010) maintain that mobility is not limited to people alone but that people and cultural travel and this process link people and places as well as sedentary cultures of host and home countries because the inhabitants of any such places are already embedded in the global flows of people and culture. It follows that cultural mobilities herald the formation of strong ethnic enclaves whose goals, besides the pursuance of economic interests, are replicating home-away-from-home with its hierarchical structures that seek to perpetuate the status quo. This is, however, not without its challenges from members who want to belong to the community even though they still want to have room to manoeuvre where belonging is on their own terms. De Bruijn *et al.* (2001: 64-67) discuss how population mobility in Africa is frequently a cultural phenomenon and is

culturally mediated, but how mobility is also a way of dealing with climate variability.

In a way, mobility also articulates the migrant's conviction of belonging and, while striving to maintain their identity, they take on that of the host country given that one of the ripple effects of mobilities is the formation and re-formation of identities. These changes in mobilities lead to a variety of patterns of identity formation that can be flexible, adaptable or transformed (Clifford 1997). With regard to the Pinyin and Mankon communities, while they opt for flexible identities, they are still very conservative in terms of holding onto their 'Pinyin-ness' and 'Mankon-ness' as can be seen through their associations (Chapter 7) and their cultural practices (Chapter 8) that are an integral part of their existence in Cape Town. For instance, the traditional outfit of the Pinyin and Mankon is known as *ntogho*. The very act of wearing this outfit denotes the person's identity and the fact that they belong to the Bamenda Grassfields society. However, given the flexibility of their identity, there is no gain in saying that the outfit is limited to the Pinyin and Mankon exclusively. But what this denotes is that its wearing evokes a particular culture and identity, namely Grassfields. Amongst the mobile communities and in addition to the *ntogho* that is often transported from the home country to the host country, one other item frequently carried by the migrants is food. The *ntogho* carries with it a lot of prestige, thus making it a must-have for migrants. For example, at the start of this research only a hand full of Mankon owned *ntogho*. However, when they were visited by their sister association from Johannesburg; all of whom were dressed in *ntogho* on the cultural evening that was organized in their honour, it was a serious challenge to the Cape Town members because they did not have theirs on. Soon afterwards, most of the members sent money home for one to be (bought and) sent by DHL or with someone travelling back to Cape Town. Conversely, a sizeable number of PIFAM members now own one. Equally, the formation of tribal ethnic associations, where home is replicated in these associations and belonging is emphasized, is with those who do not want to be looked down on as an outcast.

Cultural mobility is not mutually exclusive to food and traditional regalia and can also encompass cultural objects or memorabilia (Baldassar 2008) and the significance attached to them. As opined by Lury (1997), the movement of objects from place to place reaffirms the notion of belonging and memory, and conversely creates an emotional wellness (Baldassar 2008). This is well exemplified in the movements of large framed photos that are a reminder of deceased relatives (especially parents) in the migrant community, new and old photos of the family that they take on their maiden trip and some artefacts reminding them of the home they have left behind.

Globalization has given rise to an unprecedented level of cultural mobility and it is mostly the cultural values, norms and goals of migrants that are altered in the process. This speaks to the ways in which migrants (especially the Pinyin in Johannesburg) have tended to brandish ‘bought’¹⁰ or inherited (as successors) cultural titles from the village to enhance their cultural capital. Such categorization is not far from what Hall (2000: 215) refers to as the ‘unintended effects’, that is ‘subaltern formations and emergent tendencies’ of cultural mobility, to which Greenblatt (2010: 14) contends that such a form of cultural mobility ‘can take the form of attempted cultural murder’. Although Greenblatt (*Ibid.*) alludes to the era of Roman conquest, I would rather we see it as the reinvention or transformation of culture, given that culture is dynamic and not static. The Pinyin and Mankon in South Africa want to enjoy the benefits of royalty, thereby giving another interpretation to their culture thanks to mobility.

The discourse on mobility is not limited to the above-mentioned points *per se*. Given the dynamism of mobility, other systems and forms have given rise to propel it. These include the virtual/real and imaginative as suggested by Urry (2000) and transnational mobility that forms part of this culture of mobility. Internal and transnational mobilities have become part of a single arena of spatial mobility and social transformation that connects these communities to those back home. It should be recalled that their spatial mobility starts long before they leave the country with information fed to them by earlier migrant communities. For most Pinyin and Mankon migrants who are unable to go home due to a lack of proper documentation, virtual and imaginative migrations are the options they are left with. By asking relations to put a phone on speaker so that they can follow the events during a funeral, they can imagine what is happening and participate virtually. Similarly, through their mobile phone communication with families back home, the sending back and forth of photos, videos of events at home or in the host country, migrants and families are transposed respectively to the home village and the host country and are temporarily connected to their families and bear witness to each other’s daily lives and happenings. Similarly, they learn the new cultural dance styles that are in the village and the songs that go with them, especially the *mbaghalum* dance from videos. Permit me at this juncture to share what I consider a classic example of virtual migration. The scene is at the home of John in The Hague where we were both watching the DVD of the funeral of his late mother. When we got to the section when the casket is being lowered into the grave, John said:

¹⁰ Interview with Bianca, Cape Town; 17/08/2010. During fundraising occasions in Johannesburg, members offer to be the highest contributor in order to be given titles such as chiefs of the quarter they hail from in the village. They take this role seriously and act accordingly.

The day they were lowering my mum on that Saturday, I was alone in this house at home! And I called my brother and asked that he put the phone on speaker so I could follow the funeral. I was listening to the choir and also dancing at home here.

Q: Why did you ask that the phone be put on speaker?

A: Because I wanted to be present physically but it was not possible. And that was only way I could be present. I imagined how the site of the grave was full of mourners, except me. I really felt bad I was not there like the rest.¹¹

After we finished watching the video, John played the ring tone on his phone and asked if I recognized the song. Apparently it was the song that was sung during his mother's interment. He had chosen to keep this song as his ring tone to remind him of his mother until he goes home to see her grave and organize his own 'cry die'. While this confirms Lury's (1997) assertion of memory and its importance to migrants, the ring tone reminds John of his mother and he wants to remember her as the 'tall, soft spoken and hardworking mum he left back home'. Similarly, it highlights the relationship between mobility, ICTs and the social shaping and appropriation that occurs at such a time.

Similar accounts from Pinyin migrants in Cape Town and family members in the village concur with John's. Often such virtual mobility is heightened in times of grief and emotional stress and these directly affect the migrant. Although they acknowledge the cushioning effects of the phone in mitigating their sorrow, they equally admit it does not come close to appeasing the emotional trauma they experience. However, the phone gives them a partial feeling of presence and they can imagine how the events were managed.

In this respect, memory and imagination are useful tools that sustain their mobility. To them, remembering the places, persons left behind and things give them a sense of virtual and imagined mobility, as well as a sense of connectivity. Although it keeps them attached to home, their knowledge of home is invariably one that is stunted or informed by the information they receive from home. For those who have regular documentation that permits them to oscillate between home and village, albeit occasionally, they are able to effect real migration and face-to-face meetings (Urry 2003).

Face-to-face meetings are often necessitated by the obligation to go home after a long period of absence, the need to re-internalize memory and also by fear. This may be fear of what the family will say and think about the migrant's long absence and/or fear of bad-mouthing by relations that the migrant has severed links with the family, something Jake does not want to happen to himself. When Jake goes home from Cape Town, which he does only infrequently, he makes a point of visiting all his relations and acquaintances. A large part of his stay at home is spent travelling from one region to another with his family. He undertakes these journeys with the aim of immortalizing the visit for years to come,

¹¹ Interview with John, Holland; 19/09/2010.

travelling with a camcorder and a digital camera. Over and above this is the need to see all his relations to dissociate himself from any form of badmouthing and to receive blessings from the elderly: ‘... what they will say about me when they heard I was at home and did not visit them, and to receive blessings from aging relatives’.¹² Although not all migrants pay attention to badmouthing, for those who care about it, it is fulfilling and takes on a cultural dimension. According to Jake, when relations talk too much ill about one, it gives room for illluck to befall one, an idea deeply rooted in the cultural repertoire of the Pinyin and Mankon and expressed in the following: ‘If you do not open your door to the devil, the devil will not come in’. Kinship relations, however, are one of the primordial reasons for going home and taking part in funerals and family gatherings. How then do these mobile communities function and what does their trajectory look like? For the most part, the mobility of the present mobiles is informed by the habits they learned from their parents in their childhood years. Joe’s story below has followed the pattern of his father’s.

According to Joe, his father was a bush trader who traded between Cameroon and Nigeria, specializing in buying guns and gunpowder to sell in Pinyin and the neighbouring villages. He was eventually arrested and imprisoned for tax evasion. Could this be the lone case that is mentioned in the archives? Prior to this, he was a herder and would earn a calf every year from the Fulani owner. Once out of prison, he became a builder, a trade he acquired in prison and that he complemented with farming. Soon he gave up building and went back into bush trade, buying cloth from Nigeria and selling them in bush markets. The Nigerian route was later abandoned and he would then go to the West Region to buy goods and this brought him into contact with coffee. He became a coffee farmer and went to neighbouring villages to buy coffee and supply it to the Pinyin cooperative. When the coffee boom was over, he reinvented himself as a butcher and reared cattle, travelling to Nkambe and Mesaje to buy cows and to Douala and Kumba in the Littoral and South West Regions respectively to sell them on. As we read Joe’s story today, the rate of mobility has not changed much: it is a circle of mobility.

Mobile society

Joe’s story

When I finished university in 1986, I went to practise as a trainee lawyer after I wrote the entrance exam for the military academy and failed. Not satisfied with this, I moved to Limbe where I set myself up as a businessman selling *fuenge* (petrol from Nigeria). Business was going well and I later branched out into medical supplies – laboratory reagents – that I supplied to hospitals in Foumban because I had a girlfriend working there. I would go to Nigeria

¹² Interview Jake, Cape Town; 04/08/2011.

by speedboat, buy things and within a week I was back to supply my clients. This went on for a while and things were promising, but my business crumbled when the boat I was travelling in almost capsized due to rough waters and I had to throw all my stuff into the ocean in order to save the boat from sinking. Back in Limbe, I changed from being a Christian to a Muslim and went on *hajj* to Mecca. My intention was to take advantage of the *hajj* and move to Saudi Arabia in search of greener pastures. I made it, and after the *hajj* I got a job but the lack of work permit made me a fugitive and I left Saudi Arabia after eight months.

Back in Cameroon, I decided to go to South Africa with a friend – who I literally pulled along – in 1995. Our whole idea of leaving Cameroon in the first place was to get into South Africa before independence and pass for exiled African National Congress members so we could benefit from South African nationality at the time as incoming exiles. It took us 16 months from Cameroon to South Africa, as almost all the journey was done by road. When we got to DRC, we were robbed and spent 12 months working, begging and hawking to get some money to continue the journey. But one important thing that helped us was Islam: it gave help to stranded traveller. For a while we slept in the mosque and when we had saved enough money, we set off for Angola, got to the small oil island of Cabinda and spent some more time there and got a visa for Luanda, from where we got a Namibian visa. While in Namibia, I got a fake South African visa but my friend did not. When we got into South Africa we were repatriated because I had a one-way ticket. We then smuggled ourselves into South Africa again and went straight to Cape Town to the refugee centre there. Here, it took me three weeks to save R40 to buy my first box of chips, which it took me three days to sell as a hawker.¹³

Joe's story expounds on the fluidity and flexibility of mobility and identity, and the porous nature of borders. Being a Christian and taking up the identity of a Muslim and name changing was a means to an end, although he has come to appreciate Islam. Joe's mobile life spans a quarter of a century and mobility is still part and parcel of his lifestyle. Even after settling in Cape Town, he still frequently travels to Johannesburg and other towns in South Africa for business, and occasionally to China to meet suppliers.

Elias from Mankon similarly changed to Islam while studying in the UK because of the benefits it offers but, unlike Joe, he has remained a Muslim even after migrating to Cape Town. Joe is the embodiment of the late-twentieth/early-twenty-first-century migrant who takes advantage of every avenue that facilitates mobility and takes on multiple identities as he goes along. But in his case, his major handicap has been a lack of communication technology as, back then, the mobile telephone was just starting its journey to Africa. His ability for smooth sailing was hampered.

By contrast, Nixon's case will shed more light on how advances in road infrastructure coupled with mobile telephony acted as a catalyst for him to navigate geographical spaces with ease. As Nixon failed to complete secondary school in 1992, he moved from Bamenda town back to Pinyin where he took up gardening and running a bar. Later he would harvest his produce and take it to Douala in Littoral Region about 350 km from Pinyin. These journeys became an integral

¹³ Interview with Joe, Cape Town; 24/07/2011.

part of his activities as he would go to Douala in a truck every fortnight to sell vegetables. His business was thriving until he suffered two successive losses due to breakdowns of his rented truck on the highway for a week and the perishable nature of his goods. He lost everything and as a result of a lack of capital, he relocated to Yaoundé; the capital of Cameroon, in 1999 at the invitation of a friend. Nixon's life in Yaoundé was a daily struggle for survival. He moved between jobs and later (2001) he became self-employed, selling vegetables in the market from Pinyin, Santa, Babanki, Dschang and Yaoundé. Having made a name in the trade as an honest person, Nixon was constantly supplied with vegetables by farmers and he would sell on commission and send the agreed amount of money to the farmers electronically or by the same bus service that brought the vegetables to the capital. They cultivated a network of mutual trust and benefit with the farmers sending their produce on the overnight bus as unaccompanied luggage and Nixon collecting it the following morning with a list of the items sent. Good road networks linking the North West Region where most of the vegetable came from and the introduction of cell-phone communication were added advantages, ensuring that the produce arrived the next morning by 6:00. This is a far cry from when he started transporting vegetables from his village to Douala with a lack of knowledge about the needs of the market at the time. As we are reminded by Castells (2004), a network society functions when there is access to information and knowledge. This was lacking when Nixon started out, in contrast to the period when he moved to Yaoundé and when the phone was already omnipresent. According to Nixon, the cell phone was his organizer and he topped up air time for FCFA 5000 on a daily basis in order to reach his suppliers and update them on the market and what vegetables to send and/or not send. Invariably, the cell phone was the contact between him and his clients, who would call to find out about the availability of goods or he calls to tell them about new arrivals. Nixon's friend migrated to South Africa and a year later convinced Nixon to join him, opening up another avenue for further migration. Within three months, Nixon got a passport and left for South Africa where he was introduced to pitching (hawking) over long distances, trekking each day, and on Sundays he goes to the flea market to sell by the beach.¹⁴

Joe and Nixon's stories complement each other and show not only the extent of mobility but the level of migration that is engrained in their daily activities. Their livelihoods revolve around mobility and migration. While Joe's story epitomizes the challenges faced by earlier migrants in the mid-1990s, it also gives insight into when the cell phone was not very popular, seen from the length of time it took him to get to Cape Town (16 months), and was completely out of touch with his family, learning about his mother's death only a year after it hap-

¹⁴ Conversations with Nixon, Cape Town; 19/05, 26/05 and 30/05/2011.

pened. Nixon, by contrast, reported that for some migrants, even before his migration to South Africa, the phone was already shaping their daily lives. Both stories show at one level the challenges migrants had to put up with due to limitations in mobile connectivity, and, at another, it shows how mobile communication has facilitated and organized people's daily lives and activities, with mobility centred on the mobile phone. Besides, the insights they gather from their sojourns in various places along their mobile trajectory come in handy at their final destination. At another level, one is able to glean information from the stepwise/chain migration that is characteristic of most Pinyin and Mankon migrants. Whether national or international, there is often a sentiment that transnational links by those who have gone ahead can be seen in the decisions taken by Nixon's friend to invite him whenever he relocates. He moved from the village (Pinyin) to Yaoundé and from Yaoundé to Cape Town and in each instance he invited his friend along and Joe has, in turn, brought most of his siblings too.

While migration has evolved from what it used to be in the past, the new trends put women in the spotlight as well and introduce a gender dimension to the mobility of Pinyin and Mankon women. Unlike when Pinyin and Mankon women were seen to be sedentary and taking care of the household and their children, they have increasingly become mobile in their own right and also to join their husbands or going into marriage. However, in relation to the number of men who migrate on an individual basis, migration among women is still hampered by factors such as doubts about finding a spouse in the host country and kinship obedience (Castles & Miler 2003: 36-37; Boyd 1989). Although the majority of Pinyin and Mankon women in Cape Town came because of spousal reunions and/or to study, there are still a handful who made the journey on their own in search of greener pastures. The small number of women is further upheld by the idea of machismo: to be a man one needs to import a spouse from home; a woman who will be subservient. This notwithstanding, migration to South Africa and the Netherlands is characterized by young generational movement. Those who engage in it are often in their late twenties.

The new mobile culture means that migrants can oscillate between return and transnational migration. In Cape Town, for instance, there are individuals whose families (spouse and children) have been left at home and have come simply to work, save money and go back home to invest. For these groups of migrants, their return is imminent, while the second group is more transnational and have opted for a foothold in the host country and another in the home country, like Joe and Nixon. Such a dualistic lifestyle could be led because they have increasingly appropriated the new communication technologies to increase their virtual presence although they are far away. They are bridging the distance between host and home country by constant telephone communication and other social network

sites at their disposal. This dualistic lifestyle is echoed by a willingness to do so and to be seen as responsible, hence garnering respect and cultural capital.

Such connections, either among migrant networks or back in the home country, equally give rise to social spaces – the ‘in-betweens’ who are often propelled by communication technologies. Though the activities that take place among the in-betweens give insight into the real and daily lives of the ‘mobiles’, such as their economic activities, managing social relationships and ICTs in coping with the in-betweens as well as participation in association, being actively engaged invariably guarantees a ‘posthumous’ (Castles 2002: 1154) form of migration back to their country of origin. One thing both communities under study agree upon is the taboo of burying one of theirs in South Africa or the Netherlands. As a result, many migrants belong to their cultural association as a form of insurance that makes provision for a posthumous return home in the eventuality of death. Returning home either posthumously or for family visits requires the necessary documentation, with passports/visas giving one the right of entry into one’s country or another country.

Passport mobility

Mobility, as we have conceptualized it is not simply the movement of people, it is an encompassing of the movement of things, ideas and fashions. The general trend is to travel with a legal passport, as is required by the regulations on international travel. Until 1914, people were largely free to move and live anywhere they wanted to until the post-war period when people were required to have travel documents (Taylor 1965 in O’Byrne 2001: 401). As O’Byrne, (2001: 400-403) put it: ‘(a) passport carries a significant political meaning and a subtle cultural or symbolic one’ and he goes on to say that this is the onset of encroachment into the everyday lives of people. This therefore underpins the fact that passports have a multifaceted role: proof of citizenship, identity, the right of border crossing, of admission into another country and the protection of the issuing sovereign state. The passport thus could also be seen as a means of policing borders, controlling people’s access to resources and monitoring international flows of people (Bakewell 2007). The question that this section seeks to address is whether there are sentiments attached to these identification documents by those who carry them. Do they attach the same importance to their passport as the issuing sovereign state does or are they simply a means to an end? The answer could perhaps be found in Bakewell’s (2007: 14) article on identity paper in North-West Zambia in which he states that ‘people may make statements with their mouths and sign paper to gain a new nationality, but they will retain their attachment to the nation from which they came’. In other words, people claim membership in more than one place. This suggests that migrants/refugees take up other nationalities in

the host country as a means of accessing resources and safe passage as can be seen in the story of CJ and the host of other Mankon and Pinyin migrants who take up South African nationality more as a means to access the benefits to be derived from it than to be 'proudly South African', especially as in South Africa legalistic citizenship is prioritized over integration. Perhaps it is in this context that Sichone (2008) delineates the intricate ways in which migrants that travel (especially within Africa and to a lesser extent in Europe) dexterously negotiate the need for passports and visas/asylum permits and temporary/permanent permits. And to a large extent, they often challenge systems of state border control and national boundaries (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000).

Another phenomenon akin to Cameroonian migrants' views of passports is the high mobility of unaccompanied passports. In this regard, one of the regulations to be found on page 29 of the Cameroonian passport states that: 'The passport is strictly for personal use, and must be signed by the bearer. It may not be loaned or sent by post.' The last section of this regulation is our focus here and seems to have been largely ignored by the Mankon and Pinyin migrant community judging by the number of passports that make the journey to South Africa before the actual migrant undertakes the journey. The high level of networking that goes into this phenomenon is exact and highly dependent on trust. Above all, for a passport to make the unaccompanied journey from Cameroon, it often has to be initiated by a relative in Cape Town and usually takes two forms.

First I will describe how Henry's passport made the journey. Henry is a Mankon migrant who felt the need to migrate but had no friend to assist him in the process. Informed of a branch of a migration syndicate based in Bamenda that provides Mozambican visas for those wanting to travel to South Africa at exorbitant fees, he blindly went ahead. Henry gave his passport to the syndicate and made an advanced payment for the fees stipulated. He was given the itinerary of the passport as follows: it would be sent to their agent in Johannesburg for onward transmission to Maputo to another agent who would take it to the Foreign Service for the visa to be stamped into the passport. Once it had been done, the passport would begin its return journey to Cameroon following the same itinerary. When the passport got to Bamenda, the owner would be shown the passport with the visa, and receive it on payment of the full sum. Henry was able to complete the payment and collect his passport before the visa expired in time to make the journey.

The second case is that of Terence¹⁵ (from Pinyin) who is in Cape Town and wants to bring his younger brother (a carpenter by profession based in Bamenda)

¹⁵ It was told during a series of conversations, visits at home and at work with Terence and his wife Joyce that I was able to gain knowledge of the Pinyin community and their own stories too.

to join him there. Terence sent money for him to get a passport and once it was ready news was sent to him. He gave instructions as to whom the passport should be given, namely a returning migrant. In the meantime, Terence made all the necessary contacts regarding the visa and the fees (R4000). When the passport arrived, he sent it and the fee via a Pinyin friend who was going to Johannesburg for delivery to the contact person. The person took it to his contact at the Mozambican Embassy in Johannesburg for the visa. Once it was ready, the passport began its return journey like Henry's. In some instances the entire fee is required upfront before the passport is sent but in Terence's case, he completed the payment after he received the passport. With nobody travelling back to Cameroon to carry the passport, he was obliged to send it via DHL. Within a week of receiving the passport, his brother was in Cape Town. The whole process took about two months.

The various itineraries made by passports are significant here as they show not only the free flow of goods and people but also the length and determination to which people go to travel. The choice of Mozambique is because of the relative ease with which the visa could be obtained. Of late, passports are no longer required to be sent to Johannesburg or Cape Town from Cameroon and migrants are now issued with a visa at the airport upon arrival, which facilitates the migration process. The creativity of migration syndicates and invariably the powerlessness of migrants come to light in the face of the syndicates. Migration thus becomes partly the decision of the migrant and relations in the host country who sponsor the trip, and the entire process is made possible by weak ties. This presupposes that migration should not only be considered from socio-structural perspectives but also needs to be perceived as a decision made by migrants themselves about migrating (Knorr 2005 in Hahn & Klute 2007).

Travelling inevitably requires a valid passport but to some migrants; '*passport na passport as long as ee fit take me enter the country wey I want go*',¹⁶ which echoes Bakewell's (2007) notion of handheld and heartfelt identity. Migration to South Africa for Charles was a springboard to another destination (see below) which is why using a Swazi passport to go to Japan presented no qualms for him as long as it served its purpose and took him to his final destination. Charles had to 'transplant'¹⁷ using someone's (in this case Swazi) passport. Joe's transplant was however using that of a fellow Cameroonian because he needed to go and see his family, and managed to go to Cameroon and back successfully. To travel to Japan, Charles was dependent on the migration industry and the idea was for him to use Cameroonian and Swazi passports respectively to travel. He said that

¹⁶ Interview with Charles, Cape Town; 23/08/2010.

¹⁷ Inserting one's own passport photo into someone else's passport in order to take on that person's identity before using it to travel.

I used two passports; a Swazi and a Cameroon passport because a Cameroon passport is visa-free to go to Singapore. Now you need a visa from Singapore to Korea. So in the Cameroon passport, I had a visa from Singapore to Korea. I had to enter Korea and then apply for a visa to enter Japan (using the Swazi passport). I had two options – either to go to Japan or Canada. When I entered South Korea, they said my passport was a transplant. That's where the problem started and I was repatriated.¹⁸

The notion of identity is questioned through 'handheld' and 'heartfelt' nationality. In the age of globalization, identity, it is argued, must be seen as one of hybridity with migrants taking on a multiplicity of identities that are combinations of home and host countries. But as can be seen in Charles's case, taking on Swazi identity was to ensure entry into Japan as Swazi nationals at that time did not need a visa for Korea, from where he would apply for a Japanese visa. Flexibility of identity only helps to strengthen the argument for handheld and heartfelt identity. Identities are taken on as long as they serve the person's interest at the time, and a multiplicity of identities is taken on if necessary given the circumstances. Much as passports and valid visas are there as speed bumps against unauthorized migrants, migrants have also trivialized and contested this claim, while circumventing the speed bumps put to check them. This has made passports goods for commodification (Bakewell 2007) and they are therefore regarded by migrants more as a means to an end.

Migration to South Africa and The Netherlands

In a single decade, between 1990 and 2000, South Africa became the new migration hub at the southern-most tip of the continent, drawing hundreds of thousands of migrants from Central, East, and West Africa and as well as Bangladesh, China, Pakistan and Eastern Europe. For some of these migrants, South Africa is just a temporary haven en route to Europe or North America. For others and unintentionally for many, it has become a final destination (Segatti 2011: 9).

While the quote above succinctly and aptly captures the new migration trends into South Africa, Europe is often still the preferred destination for most economic migrants, especially those from Sub-Saharan Africa. Cameroonian migrants are no exception (Alpes 2011; Ngwa & Ngwa 2006; Nyamnjoh & Page 2002). South Africa has had a long history of 'regional contract migrants' (Shindondola 2007; Crush & McDonald 2000) destined for the mines and the collapse of apartheid and the transition to an open and democratic South Africa opened the floodgates to migrants who hoped they would be able to enjoy a share in its riches. This has also meant that the traditional forms of migration that are being reconstituted are giving rise to new migrant networks of students, asylum seekers, traders/hawkers and professionals. The collapse of apartheid, the changing dynamics of migration and mobility, and the building of 'Fortress Europe' have

¹⁸ See Footnote 16.

all helped to catapult South Africa into the spotlight. Pinyins constitute the largest number of migrants in South Africa compared with other Cameroonian groups. South Africa was considered by many to be a springboard from where they could launch migration to their country of first choice and as a place of transit. As Peter puts it; 'Even though South Africa was my last resort then, I want to tell you now that I wouldn't have been what I am today elsewhere. A lot of people do not know much about South Africa.'¹⁹ Although this notion of South Africa as a transit zone has been not completely abandoned, most migrants have come to terms with South Africa as their final port of call. For instance, Charles and Mark from Mankon and Pinyin left Cameroon for South Africa with the intention of going to Japan and England respectively. While Charles was twice deported from South Korea en route to Japan and arrested for being in possession of fake documents (see above), the agent that asked Mark to move to South Africa in the hope that it would be easier for him to get a visa, cut off all communication with him. Jerry, however, after having lived in Cape Town for ten years finally migrated to France via Germany. From France he sent an email to friends announcing that he had 'finally achieved his dream of getting to Europe'. Jerry's story confirms that mobility is a conscious lifestyle choice and that time does not necessarily make one forget one's initial plans regarding mobility, it may simply put plans on hold. This also implies that migrants are not especially attached to any particular location and that there is often a tendency to look further to satisfy their quest for the Utopia they have imagined at a future destination. Accordingly, Charles shared some of his dream:

... when I came here, my intention was not to come and remain here. You know that when we were in Cameroon, we always had the belief that South Africa was a stepping stone or a bridge to Japan and other places. I was a technician and thought that if I went to Japan I would easily 'make it', more easily than here. You see ... so that was my intention, to come here, work out my line and go to Japan.²⁰

Stories corroborate the finding of Alpes (2011) about Cameroonian migrants and their eagerness to fall bush at any cost or to go home using someone else's passport. However, the idea of using South Africa as a transit country is beginning to disappear as the first groups of Pinyin migrants are seen to be succeeding and engaging in development projects back home, unlike most of the earlier migrants who left for Europe. Europe to some parents in Pinyin is synonymous with the 'place where people get lost' and are not heard from again. As such, much as some migrants in Europe are held in high esteem, most are considered to be passive towards home and development projects. As a result of seeing how those

¹⁹ Interview with Paul, Cape Town; 01/03/2011.

²⁰ Interview with Charles, Cape Town; 23/08/2010.

from South Africa respond to developmental projects and family subsistence, parents are now choosing to send their children to South Africa.

Migration to South Africa has also been assisted by the continuing wide-scale availability of networks and information flows that assist migrants and facilitate settlement in a host country. The huge migration network built up by the Pinyin community can be seen as the driving force that propels migration to South Africa more than to Europe. Having circumvented visa and entry requirements, this explains the large number of Pinyin migrants in South Africa. At the time when the South African Embassy for Central Africa was located in Gabon, two Pinyins in Cameroon set up a network to process documentation to South Africa for a fee. It is thanks to these networks that earlier migrants (those who went in the 1990s) made it to South Africa before the Mozambican route became operational.

Conversely, the group of Mankon migrants has not been as exponential as their Pinyin counterparts. This is partly due to what I term the loose kinship relationship that exists among the Mankon compared to their Pinyin counterparts. With Pinyin being a more highly polygamous society than Mankon, there is increased pressure on siblings from the same mother to assist each other and improve their 'mother's house'. Hence earlier migrants take along other siblings or help them to migrate elsewhere once the first member of that household migrates. The idea is that with more persons having left, the burden of assisting is lighter. Apart from spousal reunion, there are fewer than five Mankon migrants who have sponsored siblings. Contrary to the Pinyin community who see the need to bring in as many siblings into South Africa as their finances will permit, their Mankon counterparts are reticent about bringing in relations. For instance, Henry's nephew has repeatedly requested that Henry assist him in travelling to South Africa or Thailand, but he is not interested. Bringing in his (Henry) wife was the most he ever did. Despite this influx of migrants from Pinyin and Mankon respectively, the challenge they all face is the stifling government control policy aimed at controlling the country's borders.

For the Mankon and Pinyin respondents in the Netherlands, migration was more for studying for John, James and Ted, while Pat and Beatrice were joining their spouses. Those who came to study often overstayed their visas and subsequently had to seek other ways of regularizing their situation, for example by paying exorbitant sums to Dutch or other foreign women with Dutch citizenship who were prepared to agree to a marriage of convenience. John paid a Zambian lady € 15,000 to pose as his wife so he would be granted Dutch citizenship and could subsequently get a passport. For her part, Pat came to the Netherlands on a tourist visa at the invitation of her fiancé and a few days afterwards was advised to go to the asylum-seekers' centre with a well-framed (politically motivated) sto-

ry to substantiate her case. Her story was believed and she was granted asylum. Migration to the Netherlands is difficult given the strict visa regulations, even for those who want to use education as a means for migrating. Nonetheless, migration industries have emerged to circumnavigate the tight border controls in Fortress Europe. Would-be migrants pay up to € 5000 to migrate or for a relation. EU countries such as Italy, Greece and some Eastern European states have become ports of entry for migrants because entry visas are relatively easy to obtain, perhaps by colluding with some officials. James, for instance, brought two of his sisters through Italy and had to drive from The Hague to Milan to pick them up. He used the migration industry to facilitate the process for him, although he thinks he was very lucky as some of these industries collect money and disappear, as was the case of Mark who was duped out of € 2000 and left stranded in South Africa. Like James, Pat brought in her brother who has successfully sought asylum in France. Although Emile from Pinyin came to France using one of the migration syndicates from Cameroon, he has relocated to The Hague but is continuing to seek asylum in France and spends a few days in France every month with his lawyers to follow up on his case. On the whole, migration to the Netherlands is much more difficult than to South Africa due to the various common treaties that have been put in place by the EU to restrict entry. While both South African and Dutch immigration policies are still overly centred on border controls and regulations, migrants have sought various means of challenging and circumventing them.

Migration governance or governance fragmentation?

Aliens control stems from the basic right of a country to decide which non-citizens are welcome within its borders. (Lindiwe Sisilu, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, South Africa, 10/04/1995. In Peberdy 2009: 1)

Southern Africa's national policies ... remain marooned in an approach rigidly based on border control and national sovereignty. (Segatti, 2011: 9)

These quotes emphasize the role of the state, particularly South Africa, in determining the fate of immigrants within its territorial space. Nineteen years after the pronouncement made by the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, policies concerning border controls and closures have, if anything intensified. Fast forward to today and the current language and migration policies, the country has had an open-door policy to those that meet its skills requirements of extraordinary and/or exceptional skills, the guiding principles of exclusion remain fundamentally the same. Peberdy (2009: 147) has shown that 'since 1994 immigration policy has been mostly exclusionary, based on a strong national, protectionist and territorial vision', which is geared towards the exclusion of Sub-Saharan African migrants, especially those from Zimbabwe who have taken to

tearing down border fences. The importance of this is the ability of the state to define the parameters of contemporary citizenship; as this is seen to be the basic fundamental of exclusion and inclusion, and ultimately belonging (Faist 1998).

The age of globalization that ushered in an accelerated flow of capital goods and presumably persons has, however, left developing countries questioning the embargo on the flow of persons. There is a call for the placing of immigration on a par with free trade and the free flow of capital (Freeman 2006; Ferguson 2004). But as Zolberg (2006) and Sack (1986) contend, it is borders of states that make international migration possible as a distinct social process and hence, in the absence of state borders, international migration would not be an abstract. It is in this light that Sack (1986; also Peberdy 2009) sees borders as powerful social constructs governing access to resources and signifying a powerful relationship between those who control and those who are controlled. Borders have become a mechanism for exclusion and inclusion. While they reveal the vested responsibility of nation-states, the power of choosing who to admit also reveals the concerns of these states regarding the 'contamination of non-members and citizens within its territories' (Peberdy 2009). This has led Basch *et al.* (1994) to caution that, in the wake of transnationalism, 'deterritorialized states' are emerging with potentially destabilizing consequences for state security, national identity and international politics (see Maharaj & Moodley 2000). These controls invariably lead to contestations and transgressions of borders because of the restrictions imposed by nation-states that give rise to the margins and all forms of illegal activities, as shown by MacGaffey & Benzenguiny (2000) and Das & Poole (2004). The rise of the margins and contestations of state borders could be put down to the disjuncture between state policies and immigration realities in the sending and receiving countries (Ros *et al.* 2007). Migration has often been depicted by the receiving countries as a problem (Nyamnjoh 2010; Portes & de Wind 2007) and, increasingly, is the concern of state sovereignty (Castles & Miller 2003). Except for a few cases of collaboration with other states (Nyamnjoh 2010), for example the wave of boat migration to the Canary Islands, states want to control immigration by introducing legislation in their respective countries (cf. Castles 2004). With the explosion of migration and mobility, governments of receiving countries have, in addition of being intolerant towards unskilled immigrants and refugees, taken a tough stance on unauthorized migrants. Yet, policies to curb this upsurge continue to yield few results, perhaps, due to what Castles & Miller (2003: 114; Castles 2004) describe as the direct consequences of the activities of the migration industry²¹ or the 'liberal paradox' (Hollifield 2004) whereby receiving nations are prevented by human-rights conventions they are signatories

²¹ This migration industry is in fact what is encouraging the high rate of Pinyin and Mankon migration to South Africa.

to from suppressing and effectively controlling unwanted migrants, especially those already within their borders.

States want to know who belongs and who does not, and questions of identity, belonging and citizenship are high on the agenda in this regard. Since 9/11, the European Union has sought global governance, increasingly building up Fortress Europe (Castles & Miller 2003: 118; Nyamnjoh 2010). Why then are some states overly concerned with border controls and do not see the benefits of migration like some Asian countries that have 'built national development strategies around migration' (Segatti 2011: 9) to enhance growth? Foucault's governmentality approach (Gordon 1991: 20) sheds light on the process of global governance, maintaining that countries seek to exert control over the 'territory' and the 'subject', which in effect are the targets of power. Central to understanding the approach of governmentality is the notion of disciplining the population; where the population is conceived as thinkable entity that is primordial for effective governmentality. Governing, according to Foucault, involves a form of surveillance and control similar to that of a family head over his household and dominion. He asks if it is possible 'to introduce this meticulous attention of the father towards his family into the management of the state' (Faubion 1984: 207) and goes on to exemplify that 'to govern a state will mean to apply ... a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and his good'. To attain governmentalization, the state must adopt tactics that make 'possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not' (*Ibid.*: 221). As such, those who do not respect the common good essentially have to be 'disposed' of. In this respect, migrants are not seen as part of the household and to be protected but rather as people who do not respect the common good of the state and who will deplete the resources of the household. Hence the household must be protected against them by adopting stringent laws that keep them out. This, as Merlingen (2006: 192) concurs, is about the 'suppression of otherness as a condition for the realisation of order(liness) imagined by authorities'. By the same token, such policies invariably lead to resistance and the reversibility of power relations (Merlingen 2006). Dealing with such mobile migrants calls for trackable security processes because, as Deleuze (1995) explains, societies that control with power are more fluid and de-centred. It is in this respect that governments seek to impose systems of reason upon the rapidly moving and the restless (Urry 2007). As such, migrants have become the target for both sending and receiving countries to exercise their power over them by employing various methods that have been put in place to restore borders, check their influx and bring it to an end as if it were a tap that can be turned on and off. For instance, when Charles was deported from Japan, there were 15 immigration officials and police on hand to 'welcome' him at the

airport. He was then sent straight to jail (Postmor Prison). While South Africa is yet to exercise deportations to Cameroon, deportation is one of the favoured means of control adopted by the Dutch government, although some still manage to evade the long arm of the law.

Policies put in place by states could either be seen as ‘policy failure’ or ‘securitization’ (Boswell & Geddes 2011). These measures probably epitomize the failure to consider migration as a dynamic social process and not make the economic model the scapegoat. But again, the very essence of global governance of migration indicates the complexity of the subject and the difficulty of finding a comprehensive policy that will mitigate migration because, as Beck (2000: 11) notes, ‘nation states are yet to comprehend, probably, the full scale of transnationalism wherein sovereign national states are crisscrossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of orientations, identities and networks’. By the same token, states and policy makers have underestimated the agency of migrants to circumvent and circumnavigate border regimes and state legislature, showing the limitations of nation-states in addressing mobility (Nieswand 2011).

Following the end of apartheid, the new democratic South Africa was challenged with putting in place migration laws that would reflect its new status and preparedness for South Africa’s arrival on the global stage, particularly on the African continent. Invariably, most other African countries have had to revise sections of their migration policies pertaining to South Africa. For instance, prior to the abolition of apartheid, passports issued in Cameroon carried the message that the ‘holder is barred from entering the Republic of South Africa’.²² The Migration Act (Crush & McDonald 2000; Peberdy 2009; Segatti & Landau 2011), has since undergone various revisions but the general trend still remains that of control and the policing of the borders. Policies have thus rarely achieved their intended goals and have conversely produced outcomes that, if anything, have created loopholes for migrants and the migration industry to exploit. Pinyin and Mankon migrants have taken advantage of these loopholes to regularize their migrant status, either through seeking asylum or marriage to South African women. Formerly, marriage to a South African citizen entitled the spouse to South African citizenship and when this law was enacted, a lot of foreigners took advantage of it and married South African women to benefit from it. And once they had citizenship, the marriage was annulled. However the high divorce rate caused the state to intervene and to introduce more stringent rules regarding marriage. For instance, the SABC talk show ‘Morning Talk’ had an official from the Ministry of Home Affairs as one of its guests on 11/08/2010 who confirmed that

²² The first passport issued to this researcher carried this message.

... the Ministry is drafting an amendment to the bill of marriage Act to send to Parliament for approval; whereby it would be punishable as a criminal act those who enter into a marriage of convenience with foreign nationals. They will revise the provision of Permanent Residence (PR) wherein once an owner of PR one can apply for citizenship, and also an amendment against a foreigner with a PR to bring in a parent. If the former is amended, one has to be a permanent resident for 5 years before s/he could qualify to apply for citizenship (it is now the case). As precautionary measures, those who contract such marriages will receive impromptu home visits from Home Affairs officials to check on them.²³

Until this law came into effect, the following accounts from CJ show how some took advantage of it at the time:

... I opted to get married to a SA at the time we discovered it, which was something that is/was existing, but because there was no access to information, we didn't know that through a conjugal relationship, you could actually be given permanent residence and you could apply for a SA identity card, which meant that a resident permit was good enough coming from that background. So that's what I did and I applied for permanent residency and I was granted permanent resident (PR) status and was issued an ID card. Unfortunately my wife passed away in 2007. The pattern at that time was generally that there were a lot of marriages of convenience because the spouses that we took were those that one could not actually be proud of, so to say. I remember my wife, it was very evident that if I stood in front of a home affairs official and told the Home Affairs that this is my wife, they would probably look at me and laugh and say my friend clearly this is not your wife.²⁴

Although visa requirements for South Africa are strict, Pinyin and Mankon migrants have found a way to circumnavigate this and now come into South Africa via Mozambique given the relative ease with which they can obtain a visa in this country, as was seen in the previous section on passport mobility. Others who are financially viable and want to have a genuine visa, apply for admission to a college or university, pay the admission fees and get a letter of admission that they can present at the embassy to obtain a visa. Once in South Africa, they temporarily or indefinitely suspend going to school in order to raise money for subsequent tuition fees and apply for refugee status, which gives them a rebate on their fees. This echoes the continuous attempts by migrants to mitigate border policing and controls in South African migration policies that determine those who are welcome to enter the country. But as foreseen by Basch *et al.* (1994), transnationalism was the start of fomenting border contestation and the authority of nation states. In the face of such contestation, how have South Africa and the Netherlands sought to establish their authority? A number of measures and laws have been put in place, including a reduction in the number of entry points, a strengthening of border and boundary controls, and the mobilizing of the armed forces to patrol their borders (Peberdy 2009). In South Africa, the various Immigration Acts of 1999, No.13 of 2002 and No.19 of 2004 aimed to curb and enforce influx control. While it gave legitimacy to government action, it also

²³ SABC's 'Morning Talk', 11/08/2010.

²⁴ Interview with CJ, Cape Town; 25/07/2010.

enhanced circumventing these acts. Policing borders has not always yielded complete success (Boswell & Geddes 2011). South Africa's borders proved futile when it came to ensuring proper control was enforced to counter migration syndicates that flouted and circumvented border checks and took advantage of every possible loophole in policy.

Europe is different due to the common European Union migration and asylum policy (Boswell & Geddes 2011) that helps member states comply with its aggressive policy of Fortress Europe, but the policy, as in South Africa, is primarily one of exclusion rather than inclusion. EU member states, including the Netherlands, have always relied on the numerous EU treaties signed to create a bulwark around it. First the 1993 Treaty of Maastricht, then the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 that included migration and asylum in the EU's main legal and political framework, and later the Lisbon Treaty signed in December 2009 that further consolidated the EU's migration and asylum policy (*Ibid.*: 7). As such, the EU is clearly strongly committed to the fight against illegal migration but also to a standardization of the rules in order to create a common EU asylum policy (*Ibid.*). This notwithstanding, it has its own share of policy failures, as their draconian measures to clamp down on illegal migration and on those overstaying their visas have been futile. In addition, migrants who come in as students rarely go home when they have completed their studies. Bogus documentation is on the rise due to the global migration syndicates. Cameroon is no exception here. Italy and Greece have become the loopholes for syndicates obtaining visas for their clients. For instance, James in The Hague had to drive to Milan to pick up his sister who he had brought to Europe using one of the syndicates.²⁵ Stringent border regulations in South Africa and Europe only cause further mutations in unauthorized migration processes, thus making a mockery of borders that are meant to control but have instead been subverted and domesticated by migrants.

These mutations may be due to the inability of immigration policies to include ICTs as an area for action or extended research in order to understand how this information flow fuels migration. According to Ros *et al.* (2007: 4), 'there is a complete lack of knowledge of the ways in which information flows shape the movements of people around the world'. Profound knowledge would help the formulation of policies that could take into account information flows.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to set the stage by addressing some of the issues that frame the analysis of mobility and migration. Mobility and migration are dynamic social processes that, in the wake of globalization, have seen a change in their

²⁵ Interview with James, The Hague; 23/09/10, and follow-up cell-phone communication on several occasions.

character and nature; changes that are inextricably linked to advances in ICTs and in road and air transport. The repercussions of these rapid changes are the compression of space and time, with the past and the future all in the present. Although changes in migration and mobility have been phenomenal, they have also been informed by the migration patterns of the past, by bush trade and travel to the plantations in the south western coastal region of Cameroon. With an increasingly mobile society that wants to live a dual life with a foothold in its country of origin and in its host country, the coming of new technologies has provided opportunities for such a dualistic lifestyle. Implicitly, the ability to live a dual life hinges on the social networks migrants have created in their home country and among other migrant communities. Mobility, as Adey (2010) has rightly suggested, should thus be perceived as a relationship through which the world is lived and understood. Conversely, this dualistic tendency is eroding state sovereignty, national border security and circumventing national border policing. In a way, immigration policies have not optimally attained their objectives of borderland control and exclusion. This is because policies have often considered migration and mobility as a tap that can be turned on and off at will. Instead, mobility cannot be continuously perceived as stasis: it is a dynamic process that is informed by different variables (ICTs, networks, kinship relationship, double engagement and migration syndicates). Much as these variables have given mobility a new dynamism, it nevertheless hinges on internal embodied practices. In this regard, policies need to take into account the development strategies that seek to manage the migration flows in the sending country as well as that of the migrant in ways that serve national interests and aim to find a win-win-win solution.

By and large, mobility is not limited only to the flows of persons and goods. Cultural mobility delineates the ability of migrants to move with their cultures and, conversely, take on or assimilate that of the host country as well as those of other migrant communities in the host country. In the process, they also project their identity and belonging. Atypical to mobility is passport mobility. Together with the flows of persons, they are contesting states' sovereignty, disregarding borders and creating new social structures. As a result of states wanting to control who is within their borders, the question of belonging and identity emerges.