Language, education and identity in Africa

Pinxteren, L.M.C. van

Author: Pinxteren, L.M.C. van
Title: Language, education and identity in Africa
Issue Date: 2021-09-16

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Published by
LOT
Kloveniersburgwal 48
1012 CX Amsterdam
The Netherlands

phone: +31 20 525 2461

e-mail: lot@uva.nl
http://www.lotschool.nl

Cover photo: Bartosz Hadyniak, iStockphoto.com/hadynyah

ISBN: 978-94-6093-379-0
DOI: https://dx.medra.org/10.48273/LOT0595
NUR: 616

Language, Education and Identity in Africa

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van

de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,

op gezag van rector magnificus prof.dr.ir. H. Bijl,

volgens besluit van het college voor promoties

te verdedigen op donderdag 16 september 2021

klokke 15.00 uur

door

Lambertus Mattheus Christianus van Pinxteren

geboren te Amsterdam
in 1955

Promotor: Prof. dr. Maarten Mous
Copromotor: Dr. Akinyinka Akinyoade

Promotiecommissie:
Dr. Azeb Amha
Prof. dr. Ton Dietz
Prof. dr. Gert Jan Hofstede (Wageningen University)
Prof. dr. Gijsbert Rutten
Prof. dr. Ekkehard Wolff (emeritus Leipzig University)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank those who have commented on parts of various drafts of this text or who have discussed various aspects of this project with me: Dr. Azeb Amha, Dr. Elise Bagamboula, Prof. dr. Andy Chebanne, Prof. dr. Ton Dietz, Prof. dr. Geert Hofstede[1], Dr. Dodzi Kpoglu, Prof. dr. Michael Minkov, Prof. dr. Kwesi Kwaa Prah, as well as the anonymous reviewers who commented on some of my (draft) publications. I would also like to thank my teachers and fellow students in the Graduate Programme on African Studies at the African Studies Centre and the PhD group of the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics. The responsibility for the opinions and assessments (and mistakes) in this thesis is entirely mine.
The contributions of my supervisors, Dr. Akinyinka Akinyoade and Prof. dr. Maarten Mous, have been key to completing this work. Lastly, I would like to thank my wife, Jeanine Bomhof, for accompanying me on part of the field visits and for bearing with me during this period.

[1] Geert Hofstede passed away on 12 February 2020.

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0. Preliminaries

0.1 What is this study about?

There is a general consensus that Africa after independence has by and large not been able to meet the expectations its peoples had of it. In the literature, several reasons are given for this. A starting point for this book is the position taken by the late Africanist Jan Vansina who, in 1992, analysed that the key explanation lies with the lack of cultural autonomy in Africa. According to Vansina, this loss of cultural autonomy was caused by colonialism. However, he feels the situation will change for the better in future: Africa will find a new form or new forms of cultural autonomy. This book investigates that idea, looking more deeply at two aspects of it: an analysis of existing and evolving cultural identity in Africa and a look at the role in this of African languages, with a focus on higher education.

Some relationship between language, education and identity seems logical. In part at least, identity is experienced through language and transmitted through education. The Ghanaian sociologist Kwesi Prah develops an argument that in a sense is a mirror image of that of Vansina: where Vansina holds that new cultural traditions will be expressed through language, Prah argues that using African languages, especially in education, leads to culturally appropriate and broad-based development.

In order to explore the issues of language, education and identity, it is necessary to go back to the basics and to examine key questions that are usually left unanswered in the discourse on Africa. What is cultural identity? What is language? What is the role of education in connection to language and identity and what are the choices open to Africans?

In examining these questions, a recurrent theme in the book is the issue of African agency – the choices open to Africans. The study examines certain discourses on Africa in terms of whether they are empowering or disempowering. My conclusion is that there exists in fact a toxic cocktail of ideas that block or diminish African agency; this study seeks to suggest alternative approaches at least in the domains of language, education and identity that increase opportunities for African agency.

On cultural identity, the study uses the approach of cross-cultural psychology to present new data on actually existing cultural similarities and differences in Africa. It shows that, contrary to popular tropes about the continent, this diversity is considerable – but not endless. In some countries, new national cultural identities are emerging – in others not. There is no clear mapping of cultures onto languages. On

language, the book introduces a new distinction between 'discerned' and 'designed' languages. It argues that formal education always requires the use of a designed language, always different from that spoken at home. However, if education is to be culturally appropriate, economically relevant, to reach all and to work for the benefit of all, it is crucial to use a designed language that is as close as possible to what learners already know and speak. The book presents an innovative way for starting a discussion on which designed languages to choose and through a number of case studies shows how, at least in theory, rational choices are possible in Africa that would lead to immediate improvements: they would be more cost-efficient, better for learners, and would contribute more to building the cultural autonomy that is already developing. The book thus calls attention to the need for renewed attention to language policy and language planning in Africa.
The book can be read as a plea for a new appreciation of the cultural richness of Africa as it is evolving and of the key role African languages and education can play in mobilizing African creativity and agency and in attaining new forms of African cultural autonomy.

0.2 How did this study come about?

Chapter 2.3 gives some information on my position as a researcher, but in order to understand a bit of my intellectual and political background it may be helpful to give some information on how this work came about.
My political education started when I was in secondary school, a secondary school in the safe but slightly anarchistic Dutch town of Bussum of the seventies. I was moved by the injustice taking place in the colonies that still existed at the time in Africa, especially in Angola and Mozambique. Later, my view was broadened, as I became aware of unfair trade relations in the world, as put on the agenda by the Dutch third-world solidarity movement of the time. During and after secondary school, I developed in addition a fascination for anything related to communication between people of different cultural backgrounds. Through a year as a youth exchange student[2] and through contacts afterwards, I gained many useful insights and skills, which I have continued to develop.
In my University years, my focus was on how people can organize themselves in order to gain increased control of their living conditions and of their environment, especially in the Netherlands. However, after

[2] See http://www.afs.org

my studies, my focus shifted back to Africa. My first job was with one of the larger anti-apartheid organisations that existed in the Netherlands at the time, the Holland Committee on Southern Africa. That period taught me many things, including:

- The importance of solidarity: it means supporting a movement without necessarily always agreeing with every choice made by that movement. Solidarity in this case meant that the liberation movement was seen as the primary actor – the choices of that movement were leading. In principle, a position of solidarity means that one does not attempt to make choices for or on behalf of others.
- The importance of education: one of my jobs was recruitment and preparation of Dutch teachers who went to Zimbabwe.
- The importance of thorough political analysis: never again did I hear or read analyses as clear as those of the South Africans that I got to know in the period of the anti-apartheid struggle.

My second and third[3] jobs were for the international environmental movement. This also gave me the opportunity to live in Kenya for four years. A key difference between environment and development groups is that the environmental movement's primary orientation is towards influencing its *own* society: environmentalists want to improve the environment they themselves live in. By contrast, development organisations are primarily concerned with changing things *elsewhere:* change in the organisation's own society is at best a secondary thing for developmentalists. Internationally, within the environmental movement, there is again an attitude of solidarity based on a shared appreciation of how difficult struggles for change can be. This solidarity echoed my earlier experiences in the anti-apartheid movement and made me feel at home. I was greatly inspired by meeting some of the leading figures of the environmental movement, such as the late Nobel peace prize winner Wangari Maathai, of Kenya's Green Belt movement.[4]

My last job led me to do research into internet facilities of Universities and research institutions, primarily in Europe, but also in other parts of the world.[5] There, I became aware of the huge differences that exist between Universities: their organisation, their functions, the facilities they offer.

All these experiences gave me the feeling that Africa was handicapped not only by its history, but also by current perceptions of the continent and the choices made based on those perceptions. I started to explore

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[3] See http://www.foei.org

[4] See http://www.greenbeltmovement.org

[5] See https://compendium.geant.org

that feeling, first in a series of blog posts[6] and then later, when I had the opportunity to take early retirement, in the Research Master African Studies[7] that is offered by the African Studies Centre of Leiden University in the Netherlands. This led to a number of new ideas and experiences and to encounters with Africans, for example at the ECAS Conferences of 2017 and 2019.[8] These again also led to the establishment of the Edinburgh Circle on the Promotion of African Languages, which for me is an important forum for exchanging some of these ideas and for giving them a reality check.[9] All of this led to a PhD project that gave me the opportunity to investigate my ideas in a more in-depth manner. Parts of the study have been or will also be published elsewhere; however, I have attempted to tell the 'whole story' here and thus hopefully make it more than the sum of its parts. The study was made possible in no small part by my supervisors and a number of others, mentioned in the acknowledgements.

[6] Most of them still accessible or available through https://africanations.wordpress.com/
[7] See https://www.ascleiden.nl/content/research-master-african-studies
[8] See https://ecasconference.org/
[9] See https://ecpal.home.blog/

1. Introduction

1.1 Africa's Absurdities – a look at Adichie's Americanah

Fortunately, Africa has given the world a number of great cultural and literary contributions. It has produced many world-renowned musicians, artists and writers. One of them is certainly Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and one of her world-acclaimed novels is her 2013 book, 'Americanah'.[1] In the novel, she tells both about life growing up in a small University town in Eastern Nigeria and about the challenges of moving to and living in the UK and the USA. I read the book in a Dutch translation, but in fact her work has been translated into many languages, including for example Lithuanian and Malayalam.[2] However, what struck me as absurd is that the book is not available in any of the major Nigerian languages – it has not even been published in Igbo, Adichie's mother tongue.

Why is this so? Fortunately, Adichie herself gives the answer:

> 'I'm not sure my writing in English is a choice. (…) Although I took Igbo until the end of secondary school (…), it was not at all the norm. Most of all, it was not enough. I write Igbo fairly well but a lot of my intellectual thinking cannot be expressed sufficiently in Igbo. Of course this would be different if I had been educated in both English and Igbo. Or if my learning of Igbo had an approach that was more wholistic.
>
> The interesting thing, of course, is that if I did write in Igbo (…), many Igbo people would not be able to read it. Many educated Igbo people I know can barely read Igbo and they mostly write it atrociously.
>
> I think that what is more important in this discourse is not whether African writers should or should not write in English but how African writers, and Africans in general, are educated in Africa.'[3]

But does this not mean that Adichie is estranged from her own culture? Again, she herself gives a clear answer:

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[1] A short review I did at the time is still at https://www.africaontheblog.org/book-review-amerikanah/ retrieved 19 February 2020.

[2] http://www.cerep.ulg.ac.be/adichie/cnaprim.html#translation retrieved 16 February 2020.

[3] https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/01/i-am-proud-to-be-a-product-of-igbo-land-chimamanda-adichie/ retrieved 16 February 2020.

> 'Language is not just about communication it's about word feel. Some people argued that language is the only thing that makes a culture but I disagree. I think identity is much more complex, I think that culture is really a way of looking at the world and so there are Igbo people who do not speak the language but that does not necessarily make them any less Igbo.'

However:

> 'Language is the constructs of culture, the end of language marks the beginning of the end of culture. And this I think is giving value to who we are and to our culture (...) Having confidence in your culture does not mean you have to be ethnocentric or you feel your culture is better than others, what it means is that you are satisfied with what is yours. And so there will be no need to dehumanize others.'[4]

So according to Adichie, not being able to use one's own language sufficiently leads to a handicap, because it limits how certain feelings can be expressed. There is a relationship between language and culture, but it is not one-on-one: one can be culturally Igbo without necessarily speaking the Igbo language – however, if there would be no Igbo speakers left, that would be a threat to Igbo culture.

The example of Adichie's Americanah is only one out of many more that could be given and it is good to see that this is an absurdity, one that is peculiar to Africa. In Africa, intellectuals are educated in a language that is not their own. However, they are educated so well that they manage to appropriate this language so that it becomes their own – to the detriment of the language of their people, whose culture they still proudly share. This African absurdity, in a nutshell, brings together all the elements that this study wants to speak to: what is the status of African cultures today? What is the relationship with language and more in particular with language and education?

These are questions that may have answers that are different for every *individual* – but they may also have answers at the level of *societies.* It is this second level that is the focus of this study. In order to address the issues head-on, a few other elements need to be discussed first – that will be the topic of the following sections. Section 1.2 starts with a consideration of the word 'Africa' and what it entails; that allows me to define a basic starting point for the study, in solidarity with African thinkers such as Prah. Section 1.3 then provides a basic look at languages and at the criteria generally used for counting them. Section 1.4 briefly discusses higher education and its function in society.

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[4] https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/01/i-am-proud-to-be-a-product-of-igbo-land-chimamanda-adichie/ retrieved 16 February 2020.

Sections 1.5 and 1.6 look at identity: first in connection to the discourse on the nation state and then in connection to the internationalist discourse. Section 1.7 ends this introductory chapter with a plea for building a vision on cultural identity, language and education that explores possibilities for African agency.

1.2 Language, Education and Identity in Africa – starting points

Every word in the title of this study needs to be looked at in order to understand what we are talking about here and in what context these terms need to be seen. What do I mean by 'Africa'? What does 'Identity' mean? How about the terms 'language' and 'education'? These are all very broad terms, so it is proper to start to clarify how I want to use them and what more specifically I want to deal with in this work. Let's take it one by one…

First, the issue of 'Africa' and related to that, the issue of who is an 'African'. The name 'Africa' itself is not a recent invention, going back as it does to Roman times. Another name that has been suggested for the continent is Alkebu-Lan, which apparently is an ancient Arab term meaning 'land of the blacks'. Ali Mazrui (1993: 10) pointed out that Europe's gift to Africa was the gift of African identity. This is probably true – it is probable that in precolonial times, the Zulu already thought of themselves as Zulu, but certainly not as Africans. Of course as pointed out by Zeleza (2016: 17), the same holds true for everybody else – Europeans never thought of themselves as Europeans (many British still don't), nor did Asians or Americans. In that sense, then, the gift is not so much due to the charitable nature of Europeans but rather due to the centuries-old process of increased interaction between peoples of different parts of the world, a process in which Europeans played a prominent role, although they were by no means the only ones.

The issue of who is an 'African' has several answers.[5] One is to say that 'Africans' are people with a relatively high degree of skin pigmentation. I think that type of reasoning is infected by racist thought and must be rejected. Another is to say that 'Africans' are those who live or were born and raised on the African continent – including Arabs, but excluding African Americans. A third is to say that 'Africans' are those who regard themselves so – including African Americans but excluding Arabs. This latter position is the one taken by Prah (2014: 71). For me, as a European, I think it is not necessary to choose between these last

[5] For a discussion, see Adibe (2017).

two positions: since African unity is still a long way off in any way, shape or form, it will be up to Africans to settle this debate in the way that will eventually turn out to be the most appropriate. But what does that mean for identity in Africa and for African identity?

Mazrui wrote about 'identity' as a singular, but would it not be better to speak about 'identities' as plural? The example of Adichie shows that people have multiple identities – Adichie is a writer, a woman, an African, an Igbo and more - and all these are part of her identity. For the purposes of this study, I will limit myself to *cultural* identity or identities. In addition, my focus is at the level of cultural groups, not at the level of individual identification. This theme will be explored more in chapter three.

'Europe's gift to Africa', like so many of Europe's gifts, is not only a blessing, because in the European perception, the word 'Africa' comes with a host of preconceived ideas and peculiar conceptions that are not purely flattering – perhaps best summarized in the image of Africa as the 'dark continent' (see also Zeleza, 2006: 16). Africa and Africans have been portrayed as somehow less than human, as 'other', as 'savage', as generally inferior, threatening and not necessarily good, as open to being tamed and civilized.[6] The classic study on orientalism by Said (1978) can also be applied to Africa, as was shown in a grandiose manner by Mbembe (2001). This type of portrayal is by no means ancient history: Apartheid as an institutionalized system was dismantled only in 1990 but elements of the ideology that underpinned it did not suddenly disappear at the same time. Overcoming this heavy historical load and turning it around is no mean task. It has three starting points:

- A radical recognition of our common humanity and a rejection of any type of dehumanizing or othering discourse;
- A focus on African agency: on the rightful struggle of Africans to be in charge of their own destiny and to make their own choices;
- A look beyond Africa: consider Africa in its diversity as well as in its unity also in comparison and in relation to other continents.

These three starting points seem like truisms – they should go without saying. Why is it necessary to state them like this, at the start of the

[6] These mechanisms have been dissected in the field of postcolonial studies. For a good introductory text, see McLeod (2010). For an analysis of the type of discourse this has generated, see Pratt (1992). Another aspect is the way in which images of Africa are gendered – Africa as the emotional, mysterious, wild and threatening side of femininity, in need of salutary masculine moral and disciplinary intervention.

introduction? Unfortunately it is, because to this day, thinking about Africa is influenced by a number of influential approaches that are in contradiction to one or several of these starting points, as we shall see further on in this study.[7]

These European-based perceptions of Africa have of course been resisted and rejected in Africa and by Africans, who have sought to develop an alternative, decolonial vision of Africa. This has been done most clearly in the various strands of the Pan Africanist movement. But what is Pan Africanism, and what can Pan Africanist thinking contribute to thinking and research on identity, education and language?

Prah (2014: 1) gives a brief definition of Pan Africanism as a belief consisting of two parts: 1) 'that the future of Africa and Africans must lie in the hands of Africans' and 2) 'that only unity can rehabilitate Africans from the stunting legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism'. These are beautiful beliefs, but what is their practical meaning? There are a few elements that are relevant here. The first of these elements – the leading role of Africans and what this means for my position as a researcher – will be examined in chapter 2.3. Here, I will look at the idea of 'unity' as seen by Prah.

The issue of African 'unity' and of how to achieve it has itself and paradoxically been and still is one of the most divisive elements in the Pan Africanist movement. Unlike the issue of 'who is an African', this is an issue on which I do need to take a position. Broadly speaking, the division has been visible from before the days of the creation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963 and it can be characterized as the distinction between those who favoured a gradual approach to achieving unity, starting from the already-established nation states (e.g. Azikiwe) and those who favoured a quick evolution towards a 'United States of Africa' (e.g. Nkrumah) (see for example Prah 2014: 63/4).

The position I take here follows that of Prah (2014: 78), who takes a clear stand, one that at first sight might also seem paradoxical. For him, unity is necessary to allow for diversity and it has to be built gradually and bottom-up. Prah is critical of the current division of Africa into its various nation states – he sees a solution in a mosaic of arrangements that transcends current national boundaries: 'To build identities on the basis of neo-colonial states without recognising the primacy of deeper historical identities is tantamount to elevating falsehood to the status of truth.' Prah believes that 'tolerance and cultivated pluralism' are needed and indeed possible everywhere under normal circumstances. He calls (p 77) for decentralisation and a secular order: 'Decentralisation will

[7] See also for example Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020: 6): 'cognitive injustice is (…) a social injustice that cascades from the denial of other people's humanity'.

enable us to give better democratic expression to localism, ethnic diversities and popular empowerment at the local level. This will help keep ethnicism in check. Secularism will permit religious coexistence (…).' Prah is of course not alone in this opinion. Davidson (1992: 321) already felt that the nation-state should be dismantled in favour of more regional participatory frameworks. Wa Thiong'o (2004: 36) calls for 'a united Africa not as a union of African heads of state but as a union of the African peoples', borderless, but based on participatory forms of democracy.[8]

Prah is not a primordialist: 'The idea is not to give a new lease of life to cultural fossils and outdated practices which have no relevance for the present and the future, but rather to build on what people have and have had for ages, adding new values and ideas to foundations that are time-tested.' (p 80) This idea is echoed for example by Ayittey (2015). Englebert (2005), however, shows that even though there is *some* scope for a re-purposing of indigenous political structures, this should not be overestimated.

Prah is critical of the role of African states in the Pan Africanist movement. He feels the Pan African ideals should be 'driven by civil society' (p 95). He calls for a cultural movement that would help to combat self-hatred and would 'provide the pride and confidence necessary to forge ahead.' (p 97) This, in his view, should lead to 'democratic orders which are adapted to the peculiarities of African societies; constitutions which acknowledge diversity and provide scope for the coexistence of ethnic and cultural variation; decentralized systems which allow localities and constituencies the ability to create and run their own affairs.' (p 102) This is a view that is shared for example by Appiah (2012).

In this context, Wa Thiong'o points to the importance of language (p 33): 'The retrieval and use of African languages is of paramount importance.' Earlier on, Sow and Abdulaziz (1993: 551) already posited that African languages should 'perform or perish'. Prah agrees (p 78): 'Language is the most important feature of culture and it provides, as a historical record, better understanding of the peoples of Africa than the colonial experience.' Therefore, he sees developing the different African languages as necessary for the achievement of African unity. However, he also argues that the number of African languages (commonly put at over 2,000) is grossly overstated.

It is in this spirit, then, that this study has been written. Although restricted by the limits imposed by my background and intellectual capabilities, I choose to work within a broad framework that has been

[8] For a more recent but similar example, see Oloruntoba and Falola (2018: 29).

developed by African thinkers. I do not take a position on who is or is not an African. But I do want to stand in solidarity with Prah and others with him who see Pan Africanism as a way of building Africa on the basis of African cultures and languages and carried by civil society. African identities from this Pan Africanist perspective means a view of African identities as actually experienced and built by Africans – not as constructs that have been engineered by the various state-building and nation-building initiatives that have been imposed from above, often with very limited success.

Taking this position opens up a vast agenda of research and analysis and in this study I will only be able to do a fairly limited exploration of the most important issues regarding the two central elements pointed to by Prah, the element of group cultural identity and the element of language, especially as related to education. This is because languages are no longer only transmitted from generation to generation in the home. Education plays an increasing role: people acquire language skills not only through speaking, but also through reading, studying and via the media. The extent to which people are able to acquire and use language skills depends to an increasing extent on the education they will receive.

Before diving into that, however, some more introductory remarks about the separate elements of language, education and identity are in order to further clarify my position.

1.3 Languages: the importance of numbers

Almost all discussions of languages in Africa start with a reference to the Ethnologue, which currently lists Africa as having 2,140 living languages.[9] However, this is not the only source on the number of languages in Africa. Another database is the Glottolog, which has the aim to list all 'the world's languages, language families and dialects'.[10] They work closely with the Ethnologue and list the number of languages in Africa as around 1,845 (Hammarström 2016: 23). Maho (2004: 294) argues that the Ethnologue grossly overestimates the

[9] https://www.ethnologue.com/region/Africa, retrieved 10 July 2019.

[10] http://glottolog.org/about/about, accessed 22 June 2020. The Glottolog database is interested in discerning a high number of languages because it uses these distinctions for an attempt to show the historical evolution and the relative age of languages – their genealogical relations. This is also known as 'glottochronology'.

number of languages in Africa and thinks 1,500 would be a better estimate. Likewise, Djité (2008: 23) feels 'the multilingual picture of the continent is blown out of proportion'. The Encyclopaedia Britannica of 2001 lists 1055 linguistic groups (cited in Alesina et al, 2002: 159). Prah (2012) does not give a specific number, but feels the number of languages in Africa is even more grossly overstated. He quotes Lord Hailey who gave a number of 700 in 1938 (p 302) and also points out that in any case, 90% of Africans can be reached through their first, second or third language in not more than 39 languages. Maris (2010) has taken the Ethnologue's description of languages in the Netherlands as his starting point; on the basis of this, he estimates that the Ethnologue overstates the number of languages in the world by a factor two or three.

How is this possible? Is linguistics not a science that works with unambiguous, objective criteria, leaving no room for misunderstanding? Clearly, it is not. The Glottolog gives the commonly-used definition that in order for a language to be considered separate from all others, it should be '*not mutually intelligible* with any other language.'[11] This criterion, as shown by the different estimates given above, is open to different and subjective interpretations and has itself been criticized as ideological (Rajagopalan, 2010). Several attempts have been made to find tests and to establish criteria for deciding on mutual intelligibility, but no general model has emerged, as Gooskens (2013: 209) concludes in her methodological overview. Therefore, the decision on what to call a language is, in principle, not only a scientific but also a political decision. The Ethnologue is clear about this, listing two criteria in addition to the criterion of mutual intelligibility:

'• Where spoken intelligibility between language varieties is marginal, the existence of a common literature or of a common ethnolinguistic identity with a central variety that both speaker communities understand can be strong indicators that they should nevertheless be considered language varieties of the same individual language.
• Where there is enough intelligibility between varieties to enable communication, they can nevertheless be treated as different languages when they have long-standing distinctly named ethnolinguistic identities coupled with established standardization and literatures that are distinct.'[12]

This means that for example for English, it is possible to speak of one language, in spite of the numerous varieties of English (also known as

[11] https://glottolog.org/glottolog/glottologinformation, retrieved 22 June 2020.
[12] https://www.ethnologue.com/about/problem-language-identification, accessed 23 June 2020.

'World Englishes') that exist in the world, with partly very limited mutual intelligibility. In this context, McArthur (2003: 56) has introduced the term 'English Language complex'.

On the other hand, this type of criteria setting allows the Ethnologue to split Oromo,[13] a language of Ethiopia spoken by more than 37 million people and widely used in the media and in education, into four different languages. By its own admittance, the Ethnologue's criteria for keeping the various Englishes together as one language but splitting up Oromo into four are not purely linguistic. Makoni and Meinhof (2006) make the point, also made by several other authors, that what is and what is not called a language in Africa has been manipulated by the needs of missionaries and colonial administrators. Makoni (1998) illustrates this more in detail for Shona.

In line with the approach chosen by Heller and McElhinny (2017), it is important to ask the question what political functions are served by the different discourses on language numbers in Africa. Once the question is asked, it is not so difficult to find the answers. As Prah (2012: 303) has pointed out, the Ethnologue's owner, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), is a Protestant missionary organization committed to bringing the Gospel in all the 'tongues' of the world. Their desire to be complete in this may lead to overstating the number of languages.[14]

Given the political nature of these criteria, it would be possible to apply them in a different way, for example a way that is appropriate to a decolonial, Africa-centred way of analysing languages. This is precisely what has been attempted by Prah, the founder of CASAS, the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Societies based in Cape Town, South

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[13] Oromo-speakers themselves call their language Afaan Oromo, but it is also known as Oromiffa. It is common that languages are known by various names and spellings. Just as the decision on what to call a language and what to call a dialect can be a controversial one, about which there is not always unanimity between linguists, so also the names of languages and their groupings into families and subfamilies can be contested. Many languages have a name in their own language and a different name in the languages of those they come in contact with. Sometimes, the name by which a language is known is considered to be pejorative by the language speakers themselves. I cannot claim any detailed knowledge of the languages discussed in this and the following chapters. The designations for the languages I use are mostly those used by the Ethnologue or by the ASJP database (see chapter 5.4). For language (sub-)families, I have relied on the classifications given by Glottolog. Use of these names and classifications implies no academic or political position on their appropriateness or accuracy.

[14] For a related, much more explicit approach, counting the number of 'unreached people groups', see the Joshua Project, https://joshuaproject.net

Africa (now part of the University of the Western Cape).[15] Part of its core mission is to work on the harmonization and standardization of African languages, based on their mutual intelligibility.[16] Their stated interest is to minimize the African language count.

It is important to note that this discussion is not a value-free academic debate: the way the number of languages is counted in Africa has real consequences in a number of ways. One is that the number of languages itself is often cited as a key reason why using African languages more in domains such as education would be impractical, if not impossible. Attah (1987) is a good example discussing this problem for Nigeria. Another is that statistics on language numbers are often taken as a proxy for statistics on ethnicity. There is a large body of literature that tries to explain Africa's uneven development record as a function of the ethnic fragmentation that is seen in many African countries – see, for example, Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016). Obviously, the input data may have an influence on the outcomes. Thus, uncritically using these numbers may lead to distorted outcomes. Much of the work in this area, starting with that of Easterly and Levine (1997) uses the Soviet 'Atlas Narodov Mira' of 1964 as its basis. As Posner (2004) has pointed out, this Atlas is based on data from the colonial period. This leads to an explanation of Africa's relative under-performance that leaves little scope for African agency.

The position I take, then, is that the term 'language' is not politically neutral and needs to be problematized in an African context. However, this study does not pronounce itself on the number of languages that exists in Africa. Instead, it proposes a more sociological approach that will be elaborated in chapter 4.1.

1.4 The function of education

If the discussion on 'language' is in part also a political and ideological discussion, the same holds true more strongly for education. In order to understand the political functions of education, I make use of the productive theoretical framework that has been developed by Bourdieu and Passeron (1979). These authors define education as a *field*, a system of social positions, structured internally in terms of power relations. Education helps to form the *cultural capital* of a country and

[15] https://www.uwc.ac.za/News/Pages/UWC-Gifted-Priceless-African-Gem-CASAS-Lifts-African-People-By-Lifting-African-Languages.aspx retrieved 10 July 2019

[16] http://www.casas.co.za/History.aspx retrieved 10 July 2019.

provides a specific *habitus*. Together, these terms help us understand the role of education in class (re-)production. Higher education can be conceptualized as a sorting machine that selects students according to an *implicit* social classification and reproduces the same students according to an *explicit* academic classification. This explicit academic classification in fact closely resembles the implicit social classification (Naidoo 2004, summarizing Bourdieu).

Bourdieu and Passeron help us understand that enrolment levels in tertiary education for a particular country give an indication of the social function of tertiary education in that country. This indication is largely independent of the quality of the education. In general: if only a low proportion of the population of a country has access to tertiary education, then that education will be key to reproducing such a country's elite. If, on the other hand, a very high proportion of the population of a country has access to tertiary education, then such education itself will not be the key mechanism for reproducing the elite.

Bourdieu and Passeron's theory leads to a second important element to look at when analysing education: this is the relation between the elite and the rest of the population. An indicator of this is the amount of selectivity in the educational process. This is about the difference in educational level between the elite and the rest of the population – in other words, about how 'steep' the educational pyramid is in a given country and at a given point in time. Highly productive societies in the global North depend on a highly-educated population. In other words, in these countries there is a broad intellectual top that is made possible by a broad base of people who also receive the best education that suits their capabilities.

So, Bourdieu and Passeron identify two elements that are relevant for analysing and understanding the social functions of education in a society: one element is which proportion of the population receives higher education; the other element is the relationship between that proportion and the proportion of people in education in general (the 'steepness' of the pyramid). For Africa, these two elements are tremendously important, although they are usually overlooked in the literature. This is also where there is a meritocratic or, one could say, demographic linkage between education as such and the medium of instruction (the language) used in education. For people at the top end of the intelligence scale, historical experience has shown that in a way, it does not matter what the language of instruction is. In Europe, elite education for a long time was in Latin or in other languages other than the mother tongue. In India, Sanskrit has been used as a medium of instruction for centuries. All over the Arab world, the classical Arabic used for instruction is very different from the spoken languages. And in

Africa, the use of colonial languages did not block the emergence of great intellectuals. For people closer to the lower end of the intelligence scale, the language of instruction may be of greater importance; this issue is examined in greater detail in chapter 4.

At independence, Africa inherited colonial systems of education aimed at recruiting only a small elite for employment in administration and business. Therefore, the issue of which language to use for higher education was not really pressing – there were more than enough intelligent Africans to fill the few places available in the colonial education systems. However, this meant that inequalities in society were reproduced and strengthened via the mechanism of knowledge of colonial languages. However, language abilities are not distributed equally over a population. It is to be expected that as education expands, the issue of the medium of instruction can become relevant, where it was not relevant before in colonial systems of education. This idea is examined more in detail in chapter 4.2.

However, colonial administrators did not only introduce their languages as medium of instruction because they felt it was convenient for them. It was always also part of a project to drastically reform, 'civilize' African societies in order to better suit the colonial project (see for example Lebeau and Ogunsanya, 2000). It is interesting to note, as Prah has done, that there is one group of Europeans to which to some extent this has also happened, namely to the Afrikaans-speaking community in British-administered South Africa. They fully understood what was going on at the time and fiercely resisted it. Prah (2010a: 141) quotes Boer leader Steyn who in 1913 quoted Tacitus who wrote some 2,000 years ago: 'The language of the conqueror in the mouth of the conquered is the language of the slaves.' The function of education in reproducing the cultural capital of a society is therefore profoundly tied to medium of instruction issues. A discussion aimed at overcoming the problems and injustices introduced in colonial education therefore in one way or another also needs to take language of instruction issues into account.

The task colonialism set itself of 'civilizing' Africa was not a small project and it had considerable effects on African cultural identities, both intended and unintended.[17] In order to explore those issues a bit more they are discussed in the next sections, first within the context of the debate on the nation state and then within the context of the debate on internationalism.

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[17] Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020: 5) cites Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in this context, who has used the image of a 'cultural bomb'.

1.5 Identity and the Nation state

The discussion of European versus African perceptions of the continent leads to the need to discuss another one of Africa's absurdities, the current setup of Africa's states, as inherited from colonial times. Can national cultural identities even exist within the framework of Africa's colonially-determined state borders? This is a debate that I cannot do justice to in the framework of this study, but it is important to take a look at some of the ideas doing the rounds, because they do influence the thinking on language, identity and culture in Africa to a considerable extent. To do that, I will use as an example the thinking advanced by Dutch author René Grotenhuis.[18]

Current Western thinking about states and nations has a history and it is good to have that history in mind. In 1830, formal colonization of Africa had barely started, through some French and Portuguese footholds and the Cape Colony. At that time, Europe was recovering from the Napoleonic wars. In Europe, monolingual nation states were still a marginal phenomenon: countries like Germany, Italy, Ireland, Poland or Norway did not exist yet. The continent was dominated by a number of large multinational empires and Kingdoms: the Austro-Hungarian, British, Ottoman and Russian empires being the most conspicuous, together with the French monarchy. In 1815, around the time that Moshoeshoe I struggled to form a Sotho state (covering an area much larger than the current state of Lesotho), what is now Germany consisted of a loose federation of 39 independent states. As a unified state, Germany was founded only in 1871. Its first leader was Bismarck, who played a key role in the later carving up of Africa. Italy came together a year earlier, in 1870, after several wars led among others by Garibaldi. Greece more or less came together only in 1919. In other words, the processes that went on in 19th century Africa are not altogether different from those that went on in Europe in the same period, even though the power relationships and the resulting patterns of domination and resistance were of course quite different. One term that is often used with reference to Africa is the term 'Balkanization', pejoratively referring to the large degree of ethnic diversity (and strife) that characterizes the Balkan area of South-Eastern Europe. It is good to realize that in the racist discourse rampant in Western Europe 150 years ago the peoples of the Balkan area were not considered to be much above Africans.

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[18] His book was chosen not so much because it is a foundational text on these issues, but because it provides a useful overview and serves as a backdrop for clarifying my own position.

The development of more or less monolingual nation states also led to or was spurred on by the forming of a number of new and influential ideas, notably ideas about how forming such nation states was a natural phenomenon (*primordialism*, see for example Shils, 1957). In its more extreme form, these led to fascist ideas of 'Blut und Boden',[19] the 'inalienable' ties between a person's cultural background and the nation he or she should identify with. The reaction was likewise influential, pointing out the *constructed* nature of nationalist sentiment (see for example Gellner, 1983 and Anderson, 1983). These are basically the two frameworks that have been developed in analysing nation state formation in Europe and that authors have endlessly attempted to use in providing suggestions for how states should be seen in Africa and for what should be done to improve them. Either Africans should attempt to form homogenous nation states, different from the current ones (the primordialist view) (for an African view on this, see Agugua, 2018: 118); or Africans should try to turn their states into viable entities ('nation building', the constructivist view) (for an African view, see Ugwuanyi, 2018) or Africans should not bother about statehood at all.

In my view, neither of these recipes does Africa sufficient justice. The model of the nation state is a social innovation that has been appropriated by people the world over and that offers advantages as well as disadvantages (in different combinations in different economic, social and historical settings). Africans will have to make use of this innovation in their own way and in doing so, adapt it to suit their own needs, needs that will not be the same everywhere on the continent and at all times.

Here, I will discuss the work of Grotenhuis (2016) and his ideas about and experiences with fragile states (not only in Africa). His main argument is that for fragile states, it is not enough to do state-building (a process of building a country's national institutions). It has to be accompanied by a process of nation-building (a process of building a sense of identification with and belonging to the country). In that sense, Grotenhuis reaches similar conclusions to those of Olowu and Chanie (2016: 12), who have examined the issue of state fragility using a number of case studies, mostly from Eastern and Southern Africa and who conclude that legitimacy is one of the key issues regarding state fragility. Because Grotenhuis gives the more comprehensive treatment of the two, I will concentrate on his line of reasoning.

Grotenhuis seeks to provide an answer to how the concepts of nation, nation-building, fragility and identity are related and are meaningful. He points to the idea that in modern nation states, **people** are supposed to

[19] These are the German words for blood and soil.

determine their own future (principle of self-determination), rather than rulers. For Grotenhuis: "The nation is about identity, who we are in the sense of 'self-identification'." (p 28). But how does this identification come about? Grotenhuis puts himself in the constructivist camp. He discusses whether or not it would make sense to redraw state maps, in order to provide a better match between peoples and states, but is against that. He mentions the 'risk of fragmentation', saying that it will not offer a real solution (p 39) and that homogeneity cannot be created because of the diversity that is everywhere nowadays.

Grotenhuis is ambivalent or, one could say, contradictory about nation-building. On the one hand, he is against redrawing borders. On the other, he holds that 'sovereignty of people is the founding principle of the nation – without this a nation has no existential legitimacy' (p 59). But who are the 'people'? For this, he turns to the concept of 'republican citizenship' (p 61), that implies both rights and responsibilities in relation to the state. He discusses the 'communitarian perspective' (p 62), which he sees as problematic. Instead, modern republican citizenship is built on a recognition of rights and obligations. It is this that gives the nation-state it legitimacy (p 70). Legitimacy 'is rooted in the affirmation of belonging by the people' (p 75). 'The challenge is to build states using domestic capacities, knowledge and traditions.' (p 79). This also needs trust (p 84). 'There is a pre-reflective sense of relationship that gives the confidence to ask a question or try to solve a problem: We understand each other by language but also by culture, values, accepted behavior.' (p 85)

Just letting this happen naturally could take generations and current fragile states cannot afford that, Grotenhuis argues. Therefore, a conscious effort at state-building needs to be accompanied by nation-building. The 'European road to nation-building, paved as it was by violence, is not a very feasible road for fragile states today' (p 90). 'homogeneity can no longer be a goal of the process, simply because it cannot be achieved. Nation-building has to be realized in a fundamentally diverse reality.' (p 91)

Grotenhuis examines what he calls the 'Scylla and Charybdis of nation-building' (p 101). The Scylla is that nation-building 'is laying the fundaments for exclusionary politics.' (p 102). The Charybdis is denying the idea of identity altogether, which in the eyes of Grotenhuis is wrong as well: 'It means claiming that in essence we are unique individuals and that identity is an individual not a collective issue. I believe that such a claim presents a serious misunderstanding of our social nature' (p 103). The solution he sees is what he calls 'moderate patriotism' (p 105). "Being connected to our specific 'imagined community' does not exclude the possibility of engaging with and caring for others outside

that community." He thinks a constructed, 'modern' national identity can co-exist along with sub-national cultural, ethnic or religious identities. Grotenhuis is against copying the European model of nation-building, even though 'research shows a relationship between (ethnic) homogeneity and economic progress' (p 111). Yet: 'The challenge for fragile states today is to foster a sense of belonging and togetherness that is strong enough to build a stable and secure society, but that avoids the goal of homogenization'. The idea of building identity is introduced through the concept of 'identification' (p 111). The problem becomes how to make 'Toareg, Peul and Bambara into Malinese without the need to discard their ethnic or tribal identity' (p 114). In other words: 'The challenge in fragile states is to build an overarching national identity out of a range of minority identities.' (p 117) He seems to be against decentralization of the type favoured by Quebec: 'Accepting the substate nation as a viable option will only fuel the ambition of these nations to govern themselves.' (p 120) He repeats that fragmentation is a risk, rather than a solution (p 121). He then proceeds to provide an outline of a programme for nation-building, consisting of stressing the common elements and shared cultural features (p 157). 'There is one cultural component that merits specific attention: Language. It will be difficult to create a national sense of belonging without a common language.' (p 157). However, this can be solved because many people are polyglots (p 158). He also sees the possibility of a 'limited number of official national languages'. Globalization helps in his view: 'The nation-state does no longer need to load all the aspects of our identity with specific national content' (p 158/9). He feels a conscious and inclusive design process needs to build this and calls for national fora to do the job. (p 163).

In spite of this, he also points out that 'When legitimacy is the key problem, nation-building as a complementary process of state-building seems counter-productive and impossible.' (p 174). He reiterates that 'institution building is embedded in a cultural, social and spiritual understanding that they relate to' (p 185). He calls for further research into 'how people understand their national identity' (p 187).

In my view, Grotenhuis deserves to be commended for his recognition of identity issues and for his plea for accompanying state-building with nation-building. He correctly points out that a state that is not understood by its inhabitants will not have legitimacy and will therefore fail. However, the solution he proposes falls short of the mark for four reasons:

- An over-confidence in the power of social engineering.

Europe has always tried to re-engineer Africa and the world and Grotenhuis is part of this grand tradition (for another example, see

Yeros, 1999). He seems to feel that any fragile state can be morphed into a nation. Even for the ones that currently lack legitimacy in the eyes of the people, where nation-building is impossible, the only solution he sees is preparatory measures, awaiting the time which must surely come that people will come round to the view of the nation-builders. This is where Grotenhuis is trapped between his own Scylla and Charybdis. On the one hand, he sees the importance of community and rejects the image of people as completely atomized individuals. On the other hand, he believes that any combination of cultures and ethnicities can productively be brought together in a modern nation. The fallacy here is to assume that when something is 'constructed' there must also be a 'constructor', a distinct person or institution that does the constructing. Instead, there are social processes at work here that involve so many different actors that to assume a common, conscious construction project is a gross overstatement of what is actually possible (even if it were desirable).

- An inadequate understanding of culture.

Grotenhuis sees 'culture' as uniform and not allowing for diversity. He does not understand that a common cultural framework still allows for considerable diversity among individuals.[20] He therefore wrongly equates nations that are characterized by a common national culture with homogeneity. Wrongly equating cultural coherence with homogeneity logically but wrongly leads to the conclusion that because such homogeneity does not exist (anymore) it is fruitless to strive for it. He is unable to discuss the problem in the terms in which it deserves to be discussed, namely to what extent cultural diversity can still be managed within a single nation state.

- Scant attention to the problem of language.

Stating that because many people are polyglots the problem of a common language can be solved does not do sufficient justice to the issues at hand – this is discussed in greater detail in chapters four and five; I will not elaborate on it here.

- Acceptance of the status quo.

Even though Grotenhuis acknowledges that states are social constructs, have not always been around and probably will not always be around in their current form, he refuses to discuss any type of redrawing of state borders and refuses subnational decentralisation, saying this will only lead to fragmentation. In this, he differs from Olowu and Dele (2016: 14), who see decentralisation as one of the possible solutions.[21]

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[20] For a fuller treatment of this topic, see chapter 3.1.

[21] The issue of decentralisation itself points to a rich literature that is impossible to treat within the framework of this work. For a good introduction of the possibilities and difficulties, see for example Erk (2015).

This is a contradiction in his line of reasoning that Grotenhuis is unable to resolve. By sticking to the status quo, Grotenhuis also ignores the insights of people like Smith (2013), who have argued that decentralisation actually gives opportunities for creating citizenship and increases feelings of belonging and does not necessarily lead to secessionism.

All in all, Grotenhuis believes that national cultural identities can be constructed within the framework of Africa's colonially-determined state borders – but it remains little more than a statement of faith. He sees the problems, but does not manage to really tackle them. Before going into a more in-depth investigation of the issues, there is another element that also needs to be looked at – the influence of internationalist thinking, especially Marxist thinking on theories of the state in Africa.

1.6 Identity and Internationalism

From the start, Europe's supposedly civilizing mission in Africa has been contested – contested not only by Africans, but by Europeans as well. Karl Marx, in his *'Capital',* published in 1867, lambasted the capitalist powers for their 'undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder' in the colonies (quoted in Lamola, 2019: 56). Therefore, from an early period onwards, Africans who sought knowledge about Europe and its ways also encountered European ideas and ideologies resisting colonization and all that it entailed. In 1917, the Bolshevik revolution proved that it was possible to overthrow the established order and to build a new one. This greatly increased the appeal of Marxism-Leninism to oppressed peoples everywhere and those who stood in solidarity with them – including to Africans.

It is difficult to underestimate the importance of Marxist thought for thinking about Africa and I do not want to underplay its contributions. However, Marxist thought systematically underplays the role of culture and of cultural differences. This is understandable when looking at the development of Marxist thought in the context of its period. The nineteenth century was the period in Europe were more-or-less homogeneous nation states were being formed: the countries of Germany and Italy both date back to the late nineteenth century. The Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires were on the retreat. Napoleon established a multicultural empire under French leadership, but was defeated, leading to France retreating more or less within its linguistic borders. These developments were ideologically supported by an increasingly nationally-oriented bourgeoisie that used nationalistic

ideologies and sentiments to muster support for the often violent conflicts that marked these developments. (Financially, the bourgeoisie was able to do this in part because of the revenues it obtained from the colonies.) Within this context, Marxism proposed an alternative way of looking at the world. It posited the basic similarity in interests of the dispossessed workers (the 'proletariat') in different countries and put forward class struggle as the way ahead. The socialist revolution would lead to a new system, to a common, equal culture of socialism, sharing the wealth of the earth among all that inhabited it.

The Marxist prediction is yet to become reality. The collapse of the multinational states of Yugoslavia and Russia led to a resurgence of nationalism, even in former socialist countries. Differences between countries are not only based on linguistic differences, but also on differences in mentality (see chapter three). Hofstede (1980) and others after him have shown that cultural differences are persistent over time and relevant for explaining a host of social phenomena.

In the Marxist view, 'culture' is at best a thing of the past, consisting of folkloric remnants from a precapitalistic past. The unifying effects of capitalism would lead to all workers being equal in their impoverishment ('V*erelendung*') and, after the socialist revolution, their equality in the ideal world of socialism. At worst, 'culture' is an instrument in the hands of the capitalist class, used to divide workers and to enlist their support for wars that were fought in the interest of capitalism and imperialism.

These views can all still be seen in current thinking about Africa – denying, downplaying, deprecating or incriminating cultural identities is common. However, as Ake (1993) points out: 'we tend to forget that even though ethnicity might be constructed it is also a living presence, an important part of what many Africans are.'

One example of the Marxist type of analysis is Walter Rodney (1972). His 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa' is still a standard text on Africa's history and a must-read for all progressive thinkers on Africa (see also Hirji, 2017). Rodney's work offers insightful analysis in clear language and debunks many myths on African (under)development. However, he employs a strict Marxist schematic, according to which societies progress from the communalist system via the feudal system to the capitalist and then the socialist system. That means that to him, the development to capitalism is progress: it is a necessary stepping stone before socialism. Nationalism, in Rodney's approach, is a phase in social development (p 242), occurring when large enough units are formed. As a true Marxist, he assumes that it will disappear under socialism.

The intellectual difficulties that this presents can be illustrated by Neocosmos (1995). Neocosmos, himself a Marxist, discusses and criticizes the 'invention of tradition' discourse that has been put forward by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1984). In looking at the history of struggle in Southern Africa, he is forced to admit that "not all 'ethnic' movements are in and of themselves anti-democratic" (p 43). He explains this by saying that due to the undemocratic and oppressive nature of colonial regimes, progressives were forced, almost against their will, to mobilize along ethnic lines. However, as soon as democracy appears, Neocosmos contends, progressives will abandon ethnicity and organize in accordance with their true class interests. The possibility that people might at the same time decide to organize within frameworks bounded by common cultural identities *and* be progressive is not one that a traditional Marxist can admit to.

A more recent example of how a Marxist approach interprets ethnicity is seen in Van Binsbergen (2017). He analyses the emergence of an Nkoya ethnic feeling in Zambia as a form of 'false consciousness': in the Marxist scheme of things, ethnic feeling detracts from the unification that must necessarily come with capitalist and socialist development and therefore goes against the 'class interests' of the oppressed – hence the term 'false consciousness'. Using this type of reasoning, Marxist thinkers (both African and from elsewhere) have consistently dismissed group cultural identities as perceived by Africans themselves as backwards, constructed, artificial and in short, 'false'.

Lamola (2019), discussing Mbembe's 'On the Postcolony', points out how Marxism helps to explain the dehumanization of Africans from an economic point of view – its usefulness in terms of organizing economic exploitation, where Mbembe analyzes the discourse at an ideological level. However, Lamola does not move beyond this – the way forward he sees is not one in which different cultural groups regain their autonomy, but again an ideal democratic society, in which all differences magically disappear in favour of a homogenized common humanity.

So, what have we seen? One the one hand, different strands of thought, either Marxist or other, all downplay the importance of cultural and linguistic differences in Africa and therefore deny and disempower African identities. On the other hand, they over-estimate the possibilities of social engineering, continuing Europe's tradition of assuming that Africa could and should be re-shaped, 'civilized'. One line of reasoning follows the pattern of Grotenhuis: because linguistic and cultural identities are 'constructed' anyway and since the pattern

followed in Europe was in some way wrong or outdated or not applicable, Africa can freely take a new path towards credible national identities that fit neatly within the boundaries drawn for it during the time of colonialism. The only thing that is needed is the right approach towards 'nation-building'. Alternatively, the reasoning is that Africa, like the rest of the world, is well on its way towards socialism and under socialism, nation states as we know them will become a thing of the past anyway and cultural differences will be eroded, until only the nice folkloric dances and handicrafts of the past are left over.
These influential ideas have a great effect on what has been written about Africa. How is this being done?

1.7 Identity and culture: my perspective

Culture, ethnicity and language are important issues for Africa that can hardly be avoided. Yet, these are also large and contentious problem spaces. This means that it is difficult even to get a reasonable overview of current thinking, let alone to take a position. Therefore, many scientists would rather avoid it. Instead, they fall into either one of the two traps described by Mamdani (1996: 11): 'abstract universalism and intimate particularism turn out to be two sides of the same coin: both see in the specificity of experience nothing but its idiosyncrasy.'
Thus, for example, it is common in anthropological literature that authors take issue with the compromised points of view developed by their predecessors and take issue with the image of Africa as a patchwork of a large number of 'tribes', each with their own territory, culture and language. However, it should be realized that if the analysis stops here, it ends up doing in a different way what it criticizes in others: it defines Africans by what they are ***not.*** It is this definition of Africans by what they are not that authors such as Fanon[22] and Mbembe (2001: 9) have developed an allergic reaction to. Unfortunately, this is what happens: the intellectual analysis stops at this point, giving way to one of two myths that are both logical consequences of defining Africans by what they are not. These are the pre-scientific 'Africa as a country' and 'Tower of Babel' myths, two contradictory myths that exclude one another, yet happily exist side by side in the discourse about Africa (Prah 2008: 71). (Indeed, myths in other domains often contain contradictory and seemingly incompatible elements as well – that is part of what makes them so fascinating.)

[22] See Gordon (2010) for a discussion of Fanon's approach to knowledge in this context.

Why is this logical? The starting point, as we have seen, is defining Africans by what they are **not**: for example, they are not like the images created by earlier anthropologists and are not like Europeans. But then what *are* they? That is a very big question for Western science, which normally does not deal with questions like this. Thus, the answer to the question is typically not given; instead, one may see that a small area is identified and studied and described in great depth, using for example the 'thick description' approach pioneered by Geertz (1973). In itself this can be fine, but not if done in isolation. So if the answer about African identities is not given, what general image of Africans remains? Two avenues are open to the speculative pre-scientific Northern mind: either that of all Africans as a relatively homogeneous group of 'others' (the 'Africa as a country' myth)[23] or that of Africans as an infinitely atomized and fragmented group of 'others' (the 'Tower of Babel' myth). Both myths or tropes, then, are a consequence of a line of reasoning that starts and ends by defining Africans as what they are not. Both essentially paint a picture of Africa as static and unchanging, are defining Africans as 'other' and are therefore essentially disempowering.[24] Both, also, obscure an appreciation and understanding of the different African cultural identities that form part of the full spectrum of human cultural identities. But of course, even in spite of the self-imposed blindfold of Northern science, people in Africa are attached to and do claim their cultural identities and this cannot all be dismissed as 'false consciousness' (Doornbos and Van Binsbergen 2017:71). Africans who celebrate their cultural identities are rewarded for this by being portrayed as eternal trouble makers: ethnicist, essentialist, tribalist, identitarian – all words that are symptomatic not of the backward nature of Africans, but rather of the backward nature of dominant Western scientific discourse.

What is needed therefore is a vision of what Africans *are* like or what they are becoming, in their unity and in their diversity, in their

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[23] See also the insightful analysis by Mbembe (2002: 630), who criticizes both the 'nativist' idea of African nationalism and Marxist-inspired 'Afro-radicalism' as sharing the same mode of knowledge production or 'episteme': '[B]oth consist of superstitions that function to persuade us that nothing is happening in Africa because history (…) has already happened'.

[24] The discourse on empowerment and disempowerment is outside of the scope of this study. However, I understand these terms in the sense as originally defined by feminist thinkers and movements at the end of the 1980s. In that sense, the term 'empowerment' challenges existing power relationships in society, whereas disempowerment takes away the possibility to raise such challenges. For an overview of the origins and evolution of the term, see Calvès (2009).

dynamism and in relation to other humans on the planet. This study represents an attempt at mapping out a vision, using approaches that have been used elsewhere as well. It starts with a look at the area of group cultural identity. In order to find a way of looking at the continent in such a way, I have not used an anthropological method. Instead, I make use of the approach of cross-cultural psychology (chapter three), an approach that relies on survey material from different countries. In chapters four and five, I look at language and language in education issues, again making use of data analysis methods.[25] Chapter six then tries to combine the theoretical framework developed in the earlier chapters and to apply it in five case studies, looking at as many countries. This approach may seem distant and in a way it is, although it is taken in a spirit of solidarity, as outlined in chapter 2.3. It allows me to think about language, education and cultural identity in a way that tries as much as possible to start from African self-representations and that explores possibilities for African agency.

[25] In the literature, this would be characterized as an *etic* approach, one that looks at the subject from outside. This would be opposed to an *emic* approach, that tries to describe subjects from within. Both approaches have their inherent difficulties, advantages and disadvantages – discussing them falls largely outside the scope of this study; for a good discussion, see for example Peterson and Pike, 2002.

2. Research questions and research methods

2.1 From starting points to research questions

In chapter 1.2 I based my position on Prah, arguing in favour of a view of African identities as actually experienced and built by Africans. But that is still a very abstract statement – how does it lead to research questions and, just as important, why does it even matter to develop such a view? In order to get a bit closer to answering those questions, I need the thinking of the renowned Belgian/American scholar on Africa Jan Vansina.

In 1992 Vansina published a little-noticed but key article, entitled 'A Past for the Future?' He started his article with words that are still relevant today, almost 30 years later (p 8):

> 'Watchers of international statistics of development know that the evolution of the countries of tropical Africa north of the Limpopo and south of the Sahara including Ethiopia and Sudan differs from what is happening elsewhere in the world. (...) there is no other block of countries in the world that is in as bad a shape.'

In fact, Vansina's article is not the only one that starts this way – many authors over the past decades have wondered why Africa seems to be underperforming and have offered several types of (partial) explanations. Vansina offers an explanation that is crucial to this study (p 9):

> '[T]he uniqueness of Africa south of the Sahara and its difficult situation today flows from problems with its basic cultural traditions.(...) there is no longer a single cultural tradition to which all the people within each country or larger region subscribe. This means that even the basic criteria for perceiving reality are not commonly held by all (...) This situation is the fruit of a cultural history unique and specific to the region as a whole.'

What makes Africa unique in Vansina's eyes is not the content of its cultural traditions by themselves. Rather, it is the way these traditions were destroyed in the colonial period (p 16):

> 'By 1920, the conquest had cost the lives of perhaps half the population of East and Central Africa and had ruptured the continuity of the old traditions in the whole region by breaking their capacity for self-determination. The old social order was totally destroyed by 1920 and replaced by a new social order based on European views.'

So, in the Americas and in Australia, the indigenous populations were basically decimated and a settler population took over. In Asia, existing cultural traditions were largely left intact. It is only in Africa that a significant population was kept, but their cultural traditions were destroyed. The word 'destruction' here suggests that nothing was left, but that is perhaps too strong.[1] However, a dichotomy was created between the colonially-educated elites and the masses that did not exist before. Vansina (p 18) calls the colonial period an interlude in history, 'but one that left the population of each territory in great cultural disarray between a popular tradition that was still being formed and a European tradition instilled into a small elite. From today's point of view it could be argued that either there should not have been a colonial period at all or that it did not last long enough.' In Vansina's view, the relatively weak performance of Africa is due to 'the congruence of a minority tradition with a despotic ruling group which denies the self-determination of the majority tradition that is the rootcause, even though the congruence be imperfect. This situation prevails in Africa south of the Sahara. It does not in any large block of countries elsewhere in the world' (p 22).

However, Vansina holds that this situation is by definition unstable and unsustainable. In his prediction: (p 22/3)

> 'There will emerge two neoafrican traditions built in part on the common Christian or Muslim cultures and in part on the legacy of precolonial traditions. These neoafrican traditions will be carried by African languages. They will not be monolithic.[2] Variants of popular culture will reflect urban and rural ways of life as well as of different social strata all within the common neoafrican tradition. But the creation of a stable common majority tradition, like all such major cultural phenomena may take a long time, perhaps two generations still, and its emergence will not end the cultural dichotomy by itself. (...) In the end the rulers themselves can no longer avoid being drawn into the orbit of the majority. The baneful dichotomy between western influences and the majority tradition can then be expected to end through the absorption of portions of the western tradition, despite its

[1] Willerslev and Meinert (2016) provide an insightful account of the (temporary) consequences of a complete breakdown of the social order during famine, for the Ik people of Northern Uganda.

[2] Two traditions that are not monolithic – the imprecision of this language suggests that Vansina himself was not too sure about the number of traditions that will emerge and how they will be subdivided. In this study, I will not take a position on this but stick to the main idea, namely that new cultural traditions will be formed.

> continual reinforcement from outside of the region. And then Africa south of the Sahara could finally flourish (...)'

Where Prah's general views are abstract, Vansina adds a layer of historicity and gives a clear justification why studying cultural traditions in Africa as they are emerging is important: it is only once neoafrican traditions have evolved that Africa will be able to flourish. This is a slow process, one that takes generations – but perhaps it could be influenced with sound policies, based on an appreciation of what is happening.
There is much in Vansina's sweeping statements that could be explored further. One thing to note is that he speaks of 'emergence', alluding to the fact that this is a long-term societal process involving many actors. He does not use the language of 'construction' or 'building' employed by Grotenhuis and many other authors. For the purpose of this study, two aspects are of key importance: one related to cultural traditions, the other one related to language.
Vansina wrote his prediction almost 30 years ago – that means that we are now almost one generation later. In his prediction, we still have to wait for another generation until the formation of 'a stable common majority tradition' is complete. If that is to happen, however, the process of forming such a tradition should already be on its way and it should be possible to see a glimmer of where things are going. But how can this be researched?

2.2 Research Questions

Bekker (2001: 3) has asserted 'that there is no current elegant theory on the construction and elaboration of ethnic identities which may be applied across countries, cultures and continents'. The traditional way of discussing cultural differences in Africa is by looking at different ethnolinguistic groups, however problematic distinctions along ethnolinguistic lines may be. If Vansina is right, then cultural differences at the ethnolinguistic group level must be losing their significance and new cultural patterns must start to emerge. It is my assumption that it is possible to see something of these processes by using the approach of cross-cultural psychology, an approach that analyses cultural differences by looking at differences at the level of countries or larger groups. My first question is:

- How can we describe current large-scale cultural differences and similarities in Africa, using the methods and terminology of cross-cultural psychology?

This question will be explored in chapter three of this study.

A key element in Vansina's prediction is that African languages will be the carriers of these neoafrican traditions he hopes to see emerge. Culture is transmitted in large part through language. Language and culture are both transmitted in the home, but also in important social institutions, such as education. This in fact ties in directly with the work of Prah, who wrote as far back as 1991 (p 61): 'If African languages are developed, to carry modern science and technology, transformation of the African earth would be rapidly advanced.' This is echoed in the assessment by Djité (2008: 2), who asserts that the 'education systems, the health systems, governance and hence the economy are all crippled, and in no small measure, because of lack of genuine communication.' Like Vansina, Prah wants to see Africa flourish. However, he sees the increased use of African languages as a precondition for such a development and specifically points to the need to develop them for use in science and technology. For this to happen the first step would be to use African languages as medium of instruction up to tertiary level. This is currently not the case and this then becomes the second central question that I want to investigate. It translates into two specific research questions:

- Why are African languages currently not being used more in higher education as medium of instruction?
- What possibilities are there for rational language-in-education policies in Africa?

I am not the first one to ask these questions: they were asked in similar terms by Djité (2008: xiii).[3] Here, they will be explored in chapters four and five. Chapter six tries, to the extent possible, to bring the two strands together, through five case studies of as many countries.

It is clear that these two elements, the culture element and the language element are related and will have a mutual influence on one another. This will be further examined in the last chapter of the work.

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[3] Djité asks: '[W]hy should Africa continue to use European languages as the sole media of instruction and administration?' and: 'How can African languages be used to improve outcomes in (…) education (…)?'

Before getting to the meat, though, first a reflection on my own position and perspective as a European researcher is in order.

2.3 Research methods and my position as a researcher

When discussing issues of language and culture it is important to clarify one's personal starting point as well. This is partly a matter of upbringing, gender, experience and age that is inescapable.[4] However, I do believe that it is possible to 'work around' these givens and to consciously choose a position.

In my view, science is not a value-free thought experiment. Scientists should be aware of the role they play in societal debate. The role I want to play is one in solidarity with those who are resisting oppression and are trying to build an Africa based on authenticity, based on the interests of the peoples of Africa and not based on narrow self-interest. I want to seek alliances with those Africans that seek the same path. In spite of these big words, I want to do that in a way that is modest and conscious of the pitfalls. For pitfalls there are: in the 'good old days' of colonialism and apartheid, things used to be easy, in a way. It was easy for a well-meaning European to choose sides against colonialism and apartheid. But today, these choices are not so easy and obvious any more. Yet, in the literature as well as well as in person, I have found a number of Africans I can choose sides with and it is partly through their guidance that I have been able to develop some of the thoughts outlined in this work. Two of the starting points that I mentioned in chapter 1.2 are worth repeating, because they are related to the position I have chosen:

- A radical recognition of our common humanity and a rejection of any type of dehumanizing or othering discourse;
- A focus on African agency: on the rightful struggle of Africans to be in charge of their own destiny and to make their own choices.

In addition, I will try within my limitations to be conscious of how a gender perspective may be relevant to elements of my research.

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[4] Dutchman, originally Roman Catholic, experience mostly in progressive NGO settings, 60+ - these are terms that together serve to pigeonhole me fairly tightly for those who are familiar with the Dutch context and I give them here for the sake of completeness – but as said, I think their relevance is limited because they do not fully determine the positions I take.

For the research methodology, this means that I will try not to take on a role as 'mediator' or 'interpreter' and therefore not to speak on behalf of or for Africa or Africans. I will take positions and present opinions, some of them strong, but they are my own interpretation and do not pretend to present an 'African' point of view, even though I do think that my work can be seen as being inspired by a Pan Africanist perspective as outlined in section 1.2. I will restrict myself to using data that are based in a way that is as direct and unmediated as possible on African self-representations. The data I use are not 'mine': they are out in the public domain and can be used by anybody. My research methods should be transparent and repeatable. In addition, I will only use research methods that can and have been applied equally well in other regions than Africa alone. In doing that, I want to avoid an otherizing gaze, also at the methodological level. My interest is in documenting long-term trends and showing Africa in its dynamism and diversity. In that sense, my use of data sets fits in with the long-term approach chosen for example by Dietz and Akinyoade (2018). Language, education and identity are all very wide fields of inquiry and in the framework of this study it will be impossible to go very deep into all of them. Therefore, the research in all three areas should be regarded as attempts to deliver a 'proof of concept', hopefully inspiring others more competent in every one of those areas to do further work.

Since part of this study is about language, a short reflection on the language I want to use may be appropriate as well. Parts of this study makes use of statistical techniques and engages with specialist linguistic literature. There, I need to use terms from those fields that may not be familiar to readers with different backgrounds. However, my pledge is to attempt to use language that is plain and that will be understandable for any educated reader. Some scientists seem to glorify in using language that is as elaborate and as difficult to understand for the uninitiated as possible.[5] This may be a useful strategy in certain academic circles but it is not how I want to write.

[5] Just to show off, a reference here to Syrotinski (2007) seems appropriate. For the masochistic reader: this is a completely impenetrable text that discusses, among others, the work of Mbembe.

3. Culture

This part of the study explores the first research question: how can we describe current large-scale cultural differences and similarities in Africa, using the methods and terminology of cross-cultural psychology? Sections 3.1 through 3.3, section 3.5 and the corresponding appendices are based on my unpublished Master Thesis (van Pinxteren, 2018b). This thesis is available temporarily through the Leiden University student repository and after that from the author. Partly because of the temporary nature of the availability of the Master Thesis, parts of that text have been used verbatim in this chapter. An adapted version of section 3.5 is also due to be published separately (see note 32 for further details).
In order to explore the first research question, I will start in section one by discussing my definition of culture and explaining the unit of study. Section two introduces the thinking of cross-cultural psychology in some detail and shows the position I have taken within that field. This is followed in section three by an excursion into other literature on cultural differences and similarities, concentrating on Ghana and Southern Africa. Can this other literature shed light on the topic? The conclusion is that it offers only very limited answers and that therefore it is interesting to explore if cross-cultural psychology can offer new relevant insights. The next three sections then offer some insights, using three different but related lenses: the lens of hierarchical cluster analysis, the lens of cultural dimension scores and lastly, building on the previous section, a comparison between Africa and other continents. The chapter ends with a number of preliminary conclusions and questions for further research.

3.1 Ideas of Culture

In this section, I will explain how I see culture, also in relation to other concepts, such as ethnicity and tribe. I will also define my unit of study.[1]

3.1.1 How I understand culture and ethnicity

Ake (1993: 1) referring to the concept of ethnicity, has already pointed out that it is 'phenomenally problematic in Africa'. Culture and ethnicity

[1] This section is adapted from chapter 2.1 of my Master thesis – see Van Pinxteren (2018b).

are seen as sources of problems for Africa. I think a different perspective is possible, one that sees African cultures as a positive source of inspiration (Ayittey, 2010). But what do I mean when I talk about culture? For me, cultures can be characterized by value systems.[2] In my view, culture can be described in terms of **a value system that serves as common point of reference to a people**.

This means that I look at culture at the level of societies, rather than at the level of individuals.[3] Yet, the two levels are linked: people who are knowledgeable about a particular culture have a certain mental 'map' of what can be considered 'normal' or 'appropriate' in that culture. How this works was well described by Peterson and Barreto (2014) through their cultural expertise and personal values proposition. Of relevance are the 'Social learning of expertise and values principle' and the 'Personal value principle' (p 1135). The first states that socialization strongly supports expertise on culture, but only moderately supports acceptance of specific aspects of that culture. In other words, individuals can be part of a culture without accepting all of it. This is further elaborated in the second principle, which states that individuals vary in their support or rejection of aspects of their society's culture.

It is worthwhile to explore these points a bit further, especially when dealing with an African context. Many authors who write about 'culture' or 'identity' define culture as something that is *shared* by the individuals who are part of this cultural group (see for example Grotenhuis, 2016). This implies that the value systems that are supposed to characterize a specific culture also characterize all individuals that belong to that culture – it is what the word *sharing* seems to suggest. These authors then criticize the term culture as being *essentialist* – assuming that there is something in the 'national culture' of a nation that is so strong that it determines the values of all those who are born into that culture.

The principles described by Peterson and Barreto show that what is shared are not so much the values held by individuals. These can be very different as described by the 'personal value principle': individuals may have personal values that are considerably different from the dominant cultural norm – but they can still identify with that culture. This is because of the 'social learning of expertise and values principle': what is shared are not so much the values in themselves, but the *knowledge about the cultural norm*. The values may not be shared, but the knowledge about these values is. This is what makes my definition

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[2] The importance of values as elements of culture was pointed out already in 1935 by Talcott Parsons – see Camic (1991).

[3] See Hofstede (1995) for a fuller discussion of the methodological significance of this distinction.

of culture *non-essentialist*: culture is defined as a common point of reference about which people as individual members of a cultural community share knowledge, but by which they are not determined and to which they do not need to all subscribe. Of course, this concept becomes meaningless if there is no commonality – in order for a culture to be distinct from others, *many* individuals who are part of it will subscribe to and in that sense indeed *share* many if not all the values that are part of that culture. The boundaries between when one can still speak of a common culture, given the variety between individuals, and when this is no longer the case can be fluid – exactly how this works in particular cultures remains to be explored.

For Africa, this means that there could be countries in which different peoples live together each with their own traditions, languages and cultures, but with at the same time a shared knowledge about a dominant or common culture that all can refer to and understand. If that is the case, then the question becomes whether or not there are limitations to such a concept – when do cultural value systems become so divergent that they can no longer be brought together under a common 'national' umbrella, but instead compete with one another? This is an issue that I will seek to explore.

The tradition in which my approach stands has several sources.

Geertz (1973: 44) focuses on cultures as 'recipes for the governing of behavior'. Compared to earlier approaches, this implies a shift in emphasis from concrete behaviour to values as the core elements that define cultures. In this terminology, there is a direct link between the 'recipe' (a culture) and an individual's behaviour – in that way, it is different from my approach. Geertz emphasizes the role of interpretation or 'thick description' as almost the only acceptable way of describing cultures. Even though I appreciate the value of 'thick description', I have two very different objections: first, that it resists scientific generalization (Shankman, 1984; Greenfeld, 2000). Second, that Geertz does not seem to see a role for the self-representation of cultures and for cross-cultural dialogue (Clifford, 1983: 133).

Hofstede (2001) has in a way abbreviated the definition of Geertz, seeing culture as 'the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another'. Again, it is easy to see how such a definition can lead to a misunderstanding, portraying as it does individual minds as being somehow determined by a common culture. My definition is therefore slightly different from that of Hofstede.

These are broad definitions; following them, cultural expression is broader than music, art or literature; it also includes expressions such as language, idiom and gestures.

Vansina (1990), in his ground-breaking 'Paths in the Rainforests', does not use the terms culture, tribe or ethnic group, instead talking about cultural 'traditions'. Vansina argues for the existence and vitality of a single tradition in equatorial Africa (roughly the area now covered by RDCongo and the DRC).[4] One of the characteristics of tradition, as outlined by Vansina, is the 'fundamental continuity of a concrete set of basic cognitive patterns and concepts' (p258). However, a tradition can only function if the peoples who carry them 'have the power of self-determination': 'Given its capacity to accept, reject, or modify innovation, a tradition will not be overwhelmed by another major tradition as long as its carriers still retain enough liberty of choice.' (p259).

Vansina's definition of 'cultural tradition' is, in my view, close to the definitions quoted above and close as well to my own perspective. As pointed out above, my view is different from Vansina, in that I do not think that it is necessary that everybody within a certain cultural area or tradition *shares* the *same* common beliefs and values – but at least everybody will be *aware* of those common beliefs and values, so that they serve as a common point of reference.

In short, then: I primarily see cultures as expressions of the different creative answers that societies have found to the problems confronting humanity. I think it would be a mistake to leave an appreciation of the importance of culture to populists and xenophobes only.

A concept that is related to culture is that of ethnicity or ethnic group. The term ethnic group is itself not clearly defined.[5] Those that do define it generally use one of two approaches. Ake (1993: 2) and others hold to the distinction that ethnicity is descent-based, whereas culture is socially determined. Prah (2008: 67) and others feel that the concept of ethnicity emphasizes cultural distinction. I will use this second approach, thereby equating culture and ethnicity.

A major criticism of the use of ethnicity as a category in African studies is the fact that ethnic designations can be seen, at least in part, as creations of colonial times, influenced by the gaze of foreigners, warped and manipulated to serve the needs of missionaries and

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[4] A description of some other major precolonial traditions in Africa is given in Devisse and Vansina (1988).

[5] Thus, for example Venkatasawmy (2015: 26) in his discussion of ethnic conflict in Africa does not go beyond the statement that " 'ethnicity' is an inevitably elusive concept".

colonial administrators.[6] Raynaut (2001: 15), writing about West Africa, says:

"Frequently, West African ethnic groups first identified by colonial administrators (...) exhibit strong cultural and social internal heterogeneities (in terms of language, religion, family organization, etc.). Yet there are sometimes close relations and similarities between ethnic groups labelled as 'different'."

Africans have pointed to this as well. Asiwaju (1985: 3) has already shown how colonial powers sought to separate peoples, in part by giving different names to the same peoples. He also laments the tendency to create

'numerous artificial cover-names for language units which are, in many cases, identifiable as dialects of the same language. This practice has had the effect of exaggerating the picture of cultural diversity in the continent' (p 252/3).

Prah (1998) has echoed and reinforced this criticism, particularly in the area of language diversity; for a further description, see Miles (2014).

To my knowledge though, no alternative knowledge base has been produced: there are no contemporary African-based lists of ethnicities or of cultural areas. My position is that in order to arrive at such an overview, an entirely different approach is needed, one that goes beyond self-designations but is still based on modern African self-perceptions. But how can this be done? How can culture be studied productively in an African setting? From what perspectives, using which methods? Here, I will limit myself to a few basic ideas.

Broadly speaking, I can see three different perspectives from which cultures can be studied: the intra-cultural, the extra-cultural and the cross-cultural. An *intra-cultural* perspective is one where academics basically study and explain their own culture. They may draw in theoretical concepts from abroad, but they use these basically to explain their own culture, possibly in its historical development and in relation to other significant cultures. They do this for an audience that forms part of that same culture. The *extra-cultural* perspective is one in which a culture is studied by somebody who is not from that culture. In cultural anthropology, it is common for a researcher to spend a prolonged period of time immersed in a culture that is not his or her own and in so doing to develop a deep understanding of that culture.[7] The third perspective is the *cross-cultural* perspective, which can be

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[6] The study of borders and how they came about is a large domain that is outside the scope of this work. For a recent discussion on West Africa, see Nugent (2019).

[7] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (2005: 160) has aptly called anthropology 'the study of the insider by the outsider'.

formed by a dialogue between academics with different cultural positions, take the form of a comparison between two or more cultures or a combination of both. In anthropology, this has been attempted by comparative anthropology, a field of study that tries to collect and compare information on a number of different traits, customs and behaviours from around the world, looking for example at kinship systems. A large database of this kind is being maintained at Yale university, the Human Relations Area Files.[8] However, I feel that a study of underlying values, although itself not without problems, may allow for more meaningful comparisons than a study of customs and behaviours.

Then, there is a perspective for studying culture that at best yields incomplete results: the method of asking people directly how they see their culture. Yet, this method is very common. It basically consists of asking people to directly define what they themselves see as key elements of their culture, sometimes also in relation to other cultural groups that they have some familiarity with. Yet self-assessments as such are misleading, to say the least. Everywhere in the world, people in adjacent villages will claim that they are very different from those on the other side of the hill. Even in a relatively homogeneous country like the Netherlands, people perceive cultural differences.[9] Yet seen from a further distance, they may in fact be part of the same cultural area. Most people lack both the perspective and the vocabulary to have a useful discussion of these issues. As Minkov (2013: 48) points out, if it were different, 'there would be no need for marketing experts, consumer behavior analysts, political scientists, and personality and social psychologists.' No study that relies on self-assessments for describing culture can be trusted.

3.1.2 Nations, nationalities, peoples, ethnic groups, tribes and polities

'**Nation**' as a concept itself has different meanings. One is the meaning of the nation state: an officially recognized independent country. But 'nation' can also refer to a group independent of whether or not it is tied to a particular state. Thus, the UNPO, the Unrepresented People's Organisation, states: 'A Nation or People shall mean a group of human beings which possesses the will to be identified as a nation or people and to determine its common destiny as a nation or people, and is bound to a common heritage which can be historical, racial, ethnic,

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[8] https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/ehrafe/, accessed 1 March 2020.

[9] See for example https://mobiliteitsplein.inperson.nl/nieuws/cultuurverschillen-in-nederland.html (retrieved 23 November 2017).

linguistic, cultural, religious or territorial.'[10] Here, the words 'Nation' and 'People' are used interchangeably. Ethiopia has also adopted this usage, explicitly recognizing the rights of its nations, nationalities and peoples in its Constitution. "A 'Nation, Nationality or People' for the purpose of this Constitution, is a group of people who have or share large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory."[11]

In colonial days, ethnic groups were labelled as 'tribes'. Later, these same groups were labelled as 'polities' or 'ethnic groups' – so the labels were changed, but they basically apply to the same groups. Because of these colonial origins and their relevance up to this day, it is useful to examine the concept of 'tribe'. Schapera (1953, reprinted in Schapera and Comaroff, 1991: 30) gives a workable definition of a '**tribe**': 'a tribe is a politically independent unit, with its own chief and territories'. Going by this definition, a 'tribe' is not the same as a cultural unit: indeed, Schapera recognizes that the Tswana form one cultural whole (a people), but that in precolonial times they were divided into independent units – what he then calls tribes. Going by this same definition, then, 'tribes' ceased to exist as soon as territories came under colonial domination.

Schapera builds on the earlier work of Van Warmelo (1937, as reprinted in Hammond-Tooke, 1974). Van Warmelo mentions the difficulties in grouping peoples into tribes. However, he also discusses arranging tribes into larger groups, and mentions five such groups for South Africa, of which Sotho (comprising also the Tswana) is one. However, he immediately says that 'It is a misleading over-simplification' (p 58). He mentions that it had been suggested these were all part of a single 'culture province', but does not venture to give an opinion on the matter.

The word 'tribe' has (rightly) become associated with racist thinking (although even today it is not perceived as such in many countries in Africa). Instead, it has become fashionable to use the word '**polity**' – but that amounts to replacing an already imprecise term with one that is even less precise. Wikipedia quotes the definition of Ferguson and Mansbach (1996): 'A polity is any kind of political entity. It is a group of people who are collectively united by a self-reflected cohesive force

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[10] Article 6 of the UNPO Covenant, http://unpo.org/section/2/1 accessed 17 July 2017.

[11] Article 39.5 of the Ethiopian Constitution, http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/et/et007en.pdf accessed 17 July 2017.

such as identity, who have a capacity to mobilize resources, and are organized by some form of institutionalized hierarchy.'[12]

What this conceptual imprecision boils down to is that in most cases, the same groups that used to be called tribes in colonial times are currently called polities, nations or ethnic groups, depending on what the author wants to stress. A distinction that might be applied is that both the notions of 'nation' and of 'tribe' imply some form of territoriality – the existence of a bounded 'homeland', whereas ethnicity could be seen as more fluid and not necessarily bound to territory. In any case, ethnicity is usually equated to language and culture – leading to conceptual confusion because, as I have shown, the old tribes, morphed into polities, morphed into ethnic groups cannot be equated to linguistic or cultural units.

There are a number of issues that surface in discourses surrounding ethnicity:

- Ethnicity and 'ethnic cultures' are exploited by social entrepreneurs to gain social and economic advantage, thereby exaggerating some elements of what is there and suppressing others. To the extent that they are successful in this, it itself influences people's self-perceptions.
- Cultures evolve over time, at various speeds, in a process that spans generations. Things do not stay the same. Yet that does not mean that over time, all people will be the same culturally. In that sense, an 'end of culture' is just as unlikely as the 'end of history' that Fukuyama proclaimed in 1992.
- But still, that does not mean that culture as a construct is useless, impossible to study or irrelevant. Even when people see their main identity in gender, religious or professional ways, they do so in cultural ways. The average European feminist is different from the average African or North American feminist and these differences can be explained by cultural differences.

Ake (1993: 5) already remarked: 'Our treatment of ethnicity and ethnic consciousness reflects this tendency to problematize the people and their culture, an error that continues to push Africa deeper into confusion.'

In order to come to a further clarification of my position and a discussion of what this means for research, I will first discuss other approaches to culture, and some related terms.

[12] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polity, retrieved 29 March 2018.

3.1.3 Other concepts of culture

Storey (2001), following Williams (1983), gives three broad definitions of the word 'culture': as a process of aesthetic development; as a way of life; and as the product of intellectual and artistic activity (p 1-2). What these definitions have in common is that all of them reduce culture to a set of products: aesthetic developments, artistic works, ways of life. However, none of these definitions pay attention to what in my view underlies these products and to what makes them specific and different: the underlying outlook on life, the underlying value systems. As Miti (2015: 3) has pointed out, referring to Africa: 'A popular understanding of culture is that it refers to the ways in which a people's ancestors lived. In other words, culture is taken to be part and parcel of a given people's past.' This is a popular understanding of culture that is based on concepts such as those of Storey.

Appadurai (1996) criticizes the use of the word 'culture' as a noun, because he objects to thinking of culture as some sort of object, as a (fixed) thing. Instead, the looks at the 'cultural' as allowing for a description of differences between different categories of people. He proposes to restrict the use of the term 'culture' to 'the subset of (…) differences that has been mobilized to articulate the boundary of difference' and thus to demarcate group identity (p13).

Seeing culture as a marker of difference between groups, based on values but expressed in various ways points to a number of difficulties that need to be addressed.

One of the difficulties as mentioned by Appadurai has to do with the tendency to see cultures as static, somehow genetically determined attributes of people (the primordialist perspective). This fallacy has been criticised from many angles, partly, I suspect, by constructing strawman arguments. As Vansina(1990) has demonstrated for Equatorial Africa, cultures are not static – they are constantly reproduced in complex interactions between local and larger levels and in that process, they also evolve. But because all cultures evolve along lines that are not necessarily or not even primarily convergent, differences between cultures remain as difference – even though the substance of such differences may change as well.

Another difficulty in thinking about culture is related to the tensions between individual values, subcultures and cultures. There is a tendency to confuse and conflate these, but they should not be, as argued above.

Then, there is the issue of hybrid and multiple identities. It is often said that people nowadays are more mobile than ever before, that they are subjected to all kinds of influences via the mass media and the internet

and that this affects their sense of identity and belonging. Blommaert (2013) refers to this as registers: multiple normative orientations, that people have access to and shift between. There is certainly truth in this and yes, it complicates the picture. It is possible for people to learn to use and be comfortable in different cultures and to use different sets of orientations. It is also possible for people to acquire a hybrid mode that allows them to navigate in different cultural contexts, although not in the same manner in each context. Other coping mechanisms are possible as well. However, this still means that those different contexts, registers or cultures are distinguishable from one another. Even though people may be able to navigate between cultures with greater or lesser ease, this is still an acquired skill. It does not change the fact that this world is characterized in part by cultural difference.

The approaches of Appadurai and Hofstede (2001) are different in their basic appreciation: for Appadurai, the mobilization of cultural sentiments and cultural difference spells trouble. His focus is on explaining inter-ethnic violence and he blames 'culturalisms' for playing an instrumental role. For Hofstede, knowledge about cultures and cultural differences is important in order to improve cross-cultural collaboration. My own perspective is closer to that of Hofstede.

3.1.4 Conclusions

When I look at culture, then, I look at larger units or traditions, that may encompass speakers of several languages and any number of polities. As discussed in section 3.1.1, I follow Prah in using cultural or ethnic groups interchangeably. My way of looking at culture is mainly through looking at value systems. I think the definitions of Geertz and Hofstede are related and are related as well to Vansina's way of looking at 'traditions'. However, I use my own definition of culture, describing culture as **a value system that serves as common point of reference to a people**. I have explained that using this definition means that I use a non-essentialist definition, because it says something about what is seen as normal in a cultural area without implying that every individual subscribes to or sees him/herself as bound by that normality; it allows space for an examination of change over time.

I have contrasted this way of looking at culture to the more static artefact-oriented approach of Storey and to the more negative approach of Appadurai. Culture may be tied to nationality or to language – but it need not be. With Vansina, I do not subscribe to the one polity-one language-one culture idea. I have taken issue with the approach that denies the importance of looking at ethnicity and culture. I have suggested that there are several ways in which culture can be

studied. However, I have also argued that using a study of self-assessments of people cannot lead to reliable results. Instead, a different approach is needed: the approach of cross-cultural psychology. This approach is the focus of the next section.

3.2. Cross-cultural psychology

So far, I have outlined my view of culture and related concepts and chosen to study culture using the approach of cross-cultural psychology.[13] According to Kendra, 'Cross-cultural psychology is a branch of psychology that looks at how cultural factors influence human behavior'[14] It was pioneered by the work of Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede[15] and has been used especially in international management all over the world, for example when considering the importance and magnitude of cultural differences. Other uses include preparing people for moving abroad for a period of time. In an African context, there is the example of Gervedink Nijhuis et al (2012), who use the Hofstede dimensions for discussing the difficulties of a joint curriculum development programme in Ghana. Cross-cultural psychology as pioneered by Hofstede is based on survey analysis: on average, there are differences in how people with one cultural background answer certain questions, compared to how people from a different cultural background answer those same questions.
However, within this field there are different approaches; there is no universal agreement and there is also criticism of the field as such. Therefore, I will examine some of those approaches and criticisms in this chapter, before coming to a statement of my position.
The first part of this section contains a brief overview of the three most important approaches used in cross-cultural psychology: that of Hofstede/Minkov, of Schwartz and of Inglehart and Welzel. There are other approaches as well – a full overview is provided in Minkov (2013). I will also pay some attention to the exploratory work of Noorderhaven and Tidjani (2001), given its focus on Africa.
The second half of the section is devoted to a discussion of the immanent and transcendent criticisms that have been made of cross-cultural psychology and its various approaches. At the end, I will clarify my own position.

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[13] This section is adapted from chapter 4 of my Master thesis (Van Pinxteren, 2018b).
[14] https://www.verywell.com/what-is-cross-cultural-psychology-2794903, accessed 16 June 2017.
[15] https://geerthofstede.com/

Common to cross-cultural psychology is the use of various methods of data reduction. Thus, it does not lead to full descriptions of cultures; those have to be obtained through other methods. But they do help us understand and predict what may happen in certain situations. In that sense, as pointed out by Minkov (2013: 5), it can be a major cognitive tool that helps to understand the complex world around us.

Cross-cultural psychology arrives at descriptions of cultures and cultural similarities and differences via the use of value surveys. Instead of asking people directly to define what makes their culture different – something they generally are not able to do – cross-cultural psychology asks questions that people can answer, but typically answer differently in different countries. It is through an analysis and interpretation of these differences that aspects of cultures are described. These aspects, following the wording chosen by Geert Hofstede, the pioneer of the discipline, are usually called 'dimensions'.

For the African situation, there are two such surveys that are relevant. One, smaller in Africa but more explicitly oriented towards values, is the World Values Survey[16]. Started in 1981, it now covers 80 countries on all continents, using a common questionnaire and using nationally representative samples. The other survey, which covers a larger number of African countries but is not specifically focused on values, is the Afrobarometer survey.[17] This survey, started in 2000, also works with nationally representative samples and extends to over 30 African countries. Its motto is: 'Let the people have a say.'

Both surveys allow for disaggregation of the data in various ways, one of them by ethnic and linguistic groups. Even though, as I have argued, the ethnolinguistic distinctions in Africa are heavily influenced by the colonial period, this type of disaggregation can serve as a starting point from which to analyse the emergence or existence of distinct cultural areas in different parts of Africa. These surveys, then, although of course limited by their focus and the questions they ask, can serve as a basis for analysing current self-perceptions of Africans in many parts of the continent. Even though for some countries analyses have been implemented at the ethnolinguistic level in addition to the national level, the body of knowledge on this for Africa is still very limited.

Even the research presented here should be seen as an exploratory 'proof of concept' – more and better research would be needed in order to get a more precise, finely-grained and more complete picture. Yet, I intend to show how this type of research is able to shed new light on cultural similarities and differences in Africa, is useful for policy

[16] http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org
[17] http://www.afrobarometer.org

development and implementation and brings to light patterns that were not visible so clearly before and that are relevant for building the new Africa that so many in and outside of the continent are devoting their energies to.

3.2.1 Cross-cultural psychology: three main approaches

Hofstede/Minkov

The original Hofstede dimensions are based on surveys collected by Hofstede in the 1970s. He originally suggested four dimensions that could describe differences and similarities between cultures. They are[18]:
"Individualism (IDV) is the extent to which people feel independent, as opposed to being interdependent as members of larger wholes.
Individualism does not mean egoism. It means that individual choices and decisions are expected. Collectivism does not mean closeness. It means that one "knows one's place" in life, which is determined socially. With a metaphor from physics, people in an individualistic society are more like atoms flying around in a gas while those in collectivist societies are more like atoms fixed in a crystal.
Power Distance (PDI) is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
This dimension is thought to date from the advent of agriculture, and with it, of large-scale societies. Until that time, a person would know their group members and leaders personally. This is not possible where tens of thousands and more have to coordinate their lives. Without acceptance of leadership by powerful entities, none of today's societies could run.
Masculinity (MAS) is the extent to which the use of force is endorsed socially.
In a masculine society, men are supposed to be tough. Men are supposed to be from Mars, women from Venus. Winning is important for both genders. Quantity is important and big is beautiful. In a feminine society, the genders are emotionally closer. Competing is not so openly endorsed, and there is sympathy for the underdog.
This is NOT about individuals, but about expected emotional gender roles. Masculine societies are much more openly gendered than feminine societies.
Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. Uncertainty avoidance has nothing to do

[18] Descriptions taken from http://www.geerthofstede.com, accessed 9 May 2017.

with risk avoidance, nor with following rules. It has to do with anxiety and distrust in the face of the unknown, and conversely, with a wish to have fixed habits and rituals, and to know the truth."

Hofstede realized that his findings might be constrained by the questions asked in his surveys. In his later work, he pointed to the Chinese Values Survey, which asked different questions. They led to a fifth dimension, the dimension of Long- versus Short-Term Orientation (LTO) (Hofstede 2001: 351). Later, Michael Minkov, using data from the World Values Survey (WVS), found a dimension that he called *'monumentalism versus flexhumility'* and that was related to LTO. Hofstede and Minkov decided to join forces and came to new LTO scores, using WVS data (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 2010: 253).

Minkov et al (2018a), using data from a new study undertaken with commercial funding, proposed a new conceptualisation that reflects national differences in high versus low self-regard and self-confidence, being always the same person versus being flexible and adaptable, and liking to help people versus being reluctant to do that. The Short-Term or 'Monumentalist' pole here stands for high self-confidence, being always the same person and being helpful. I have taken this conceptualisation as being the most recent. The name is, in my view, far from clear. Mediacom, the company funding the study, called it 'Fix or Flex'. For the purpose of this study, I will use 'Fix vs Flex' (LTO).

In his analysis of WVS data, Minkov also found indications of a sixth dimension, Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR). 'Indulgence is about the good things in life. In an indulgent culture it is good to be free. Doing what your impulses want you to do, is good. Friends are important and life makes sense. In a restrained culture, the feeling is that life is hard, and duty, not freedom, is the normal state of being.'[18]

Schwartz

Where Hofstede's dimensions were first found in the data and then related to theoretical work by others, Schwartz has taken the opposite approach: he starts with a theoretically ordered model of human values, and then finds confirmation in survey data (Schwartz, 2006).

Schwarz has defined ten values which, in his theory, are universal but ordered differently in different societies.

Inglehart and Welzel

Analysis of WVS data made by political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel asserts that there are two major dimensions of cross cultural variation in the world:[19]

'
1. Traditional values versus Secular-rational values and
2. Survival values versus Self-expression values.

Traditional values emphasize the importance of religion, parent-child ties, deference to authority and traditional family values. People who embrace these values also reject divorce, abortion, euthanasia and suicide. These societies have high levels of national pride and a nationalistic outlook.
Secular-rational values have the opposite preferences to the traditional values. These societies place less emphasis on religion, traditional family values and authority. Divorce, abortion, euthanasia and suicide are seen as relatively acceptable. (Suicide is not necessarily more common.)
Survival values place emphasis on economic and physical security. It is linked with a relatively ethnocentric outlook and low levels of trust and tolerance.
Self-expression values give high priority to environmental protection, growing tolerance of foreigners, gays and lesbians and gender equality, and rising demands for participation in decision-making in economic and political life.'
The WVS leads to a map of societies along these dimensions.

Noorderhaven and Tidjani

Noorderhaven and Tidjani (2001) have explored the possibility that just like the Chinese Value Survey found additional dimensions, the same might be true for Africa, if one were to use questions developed by African researchers. They found dimensions such as belief in human goodness and importance of traditional wisdom. One dimension they felt might be very important was what they called '*jealousy*', which gave different scores for West and Eastern/Southern African countries (p46). Unfortunately, their exploratory research was not followed up – it would be interesting if this would be done some day.[20]

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[19] Taken from http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org, accessed 9 May 2017.
[20] For an overview of some cultural values studies that have been undertaken in Africa, see Bobina and Grachev (2016).

Connections between the different approaches

If one surveys what the proponents of the different approaches write about one another, one comes across numerous references where authors point how what others measure is really part of or closely related to what they measure. Hofstede (2001: 221) points out that three of the Schwartz dimensions (which he calls categories) are related both with one another and with IDV. He also feels that Inglehart's survival versus self-expression values have elements of several of his dimensions (2001: 223). In a way, this is logical, as also explained in the next section. These dimensions are constructs that help describe and understand certain aspects of cultures and it is logical that they would be partially overlapping and contain similarities.

3.2.2 Criticisms of the cultural dimensions approach

Geert Hofstede was a much-cited and prolific author. It is no wonder that the Hofstede model and competing models of describing and comparing cultures using a number of dimensions have been criticized in various ways. A broad distinction can be made between immanent criticisms (basically saying that what was done could be done better if handled differently) and transcendent criticisms (basically saying that what was done should not be done at all). I will mention a number of the most salient criticisms of either type and in doing so try to state my own position.

Immanent criticisms

McSweeney (2002) feels that for most countries, the size of the samples used by Hofstede are too small and cannot be seen as representative of the countries as a whole. This is compounded by the problem that initial respondents were all employees of a specific multinational corporation – IBM. Furthermore, the differences found are attributed by Hofstede to differences between national cultures, not to differences in organisational culture within IBM. Hofstede(2002) defends his choices; according to him, organisational culture is related more to practices, whereas national culture looks at the level of values. McSweeney feels this distinction cannot be clearly made. Hofstede also points out that samples can be small, as long as they are well matched and cover many countries. His results do not describe cultures as such, but they do describe relevant differences and similarities.

McSweeney also points out that only certain questions were asked. To derive a description of culture from such a limited set of questions is of

necessity incomplete. This is also a main argument of Schwartz (1992) against Hofstede's method: he feels that it is necessary first to develop a theory that covers the full spectrum of human values, before trying to categorize national cultures. Hofstede (2001) does not deny that additional dimensions could exist – however, he feels candidates should be backed up by empirical evidence.

Hofstede claims that replications have largely confirmed his findings; but McSweeney points out that there have also been replication studies that did not (fully) replicate his findings. He points to the problem that the same question may have a different meaning in different countries.

A further problem that McSweeney points to is the issue that the original questionnaires were distributed in workplace situations; the assumption that the differences found there apply equally in other situations is, in his view, unfounded.

Smith (2002) and others have argued that cultures and cultural values change constantly and that therefore, descriptions based on research done decades ago have little value today. Hofstede (2002) responds to this by saying that value orientations are formed early in life in most people, are transmitted by parents to their children and that therefore, although they change, the pace of change is relatively slow. Beugelsdijk et al (2015) have shown that although values change, the differences between cultures do not, or less so.

Dahl (2014) feels that Hofstede uses a descriptive and essentialist approach to culture. He sees value in this for describing cultural differences, but feels that it ought to be complemented by what he feels should be a 'dynamic constructivist' approach.

Minkov (2018b) has proposed a major revision of the Hofstede model; in his analysis, PDI forms part of the IDV dimension. He proposes to only keep IDV and his *Monumentalism versus flexhumility* as meaningful dimensions.

Transcendent criticisms

A first type of criticism is the point of view that culture, let alone national culture, is not a useful concept at all. Saint-Jacques (2012: 48) posits: 'A nation or an ethnic group cannot be considered as a single unit.' Anderson (1991) feels nations are 'imagined communities'. Wallerstein (1990) is 'sceptical that we can operationalise the concept of culture (...) in any way that enables us to use it for statements that are more than trivial' (p 34) (both cited in McSweeney, 2002). McSweeney points out that it is only useful to talk about national culture if it actually explains or predicts something, such as educational achievement or levels of corruption. However, he feels that in most if not all cases, non-

cultural (e.g. economic or political) elements may have a greater explanatory power (p 109). Even where cultural factors do play a role, these may be determined by subcultures within nations, rather than by a national culture as such. Hofstede (2002) does not deny this, but maintains that national culture is a legitimate unit of study as well, and often the only one available for comparison.

McSweeney further argues that any questionnaire distributed internationally will produce differences in response patterns. However, it is wrong to assume that these differences point to the existence of different national cultures. This cannot be established through questionnaires alone. Therefore, the fact itself that differences are found does not justify the conclusion that those differences are due to differences in national culture. Hofstede (2001) concedes this point to the extent that questionnaires should not be the only way of measuring cultural differences – however, he maintains that they do yield reliable approximations if matched samples are used.

McSweeney also points out that it might be quite acceptable in societies that individuals switch between different value systems, a point which Hofstede would miss. Even if uniform national cultures would exist – which McSweeney doubts – it is wrong to assume that these cultures could be measured and recorded via narrow sets of questions or that Hofstede has in fact managed such a feat. Smith (2002) makes a slightly different but related point. He suggests that measuring national means might be useful where cultures are relatively homogeneous, but that it might say little in countries or cultures where the differences within a population are very large.

Jackson (2011) criticizes Hofstede's theory for not providing an indication for what action should be taken and for its inability to deal with multi-layered multicultural contexts. He feels that in studying cultures, it is all too easy to overlook power relationships and to ignore interactions between different levels. He therefore calls for an analysis that looks at cultural interfaces at organizational and individual levels, rather than at cultures as distinct entities. Following Flyvbjerg, he criticizes positivist social science in general and calls for a more action-oriented, context-specific type of social science. He calls attention to the need to look at what happens at cross-cultural interfaces and feels this is particularly relevant for Africa. He feels that answers from Hofstede-type questionnaires fail to make sense in such situations. However, Jackson's alternative has not proven itself yet. My position is that even in multicultural contexts (and perhaps especially in such contexts), an instrument that provides a way of describing and discussing the different cultures at play is an important starting point. However, more research into how intercultural competences play a role in multicultural

societies and where the possibilities and limitations of such competences lie would seem useful.

Smelser (1992: 20) holds that a positivistic, objective description of cultural traits is an illusion, as it is always also determined by the viewpoint of the observer of that culture. He also points to the eternal vagueness of the concept. However, he does not go so far as to say that culture cannot or should not be studied at all. Rather, he sees culture as a 'heuristic device' in scientific investigation (p. 23). However, he does feel that 'certain rules for the empirical description of culture' can be developed. Parts of a culture should, he suggests, be disaggregated and treated as variables, rather than as global attributes of a society or group. Hofstede (2001: 2) would in fact seem to agree with this approach, in the sense that he also holds that cultures are indeed constructs, that do not 'exist' in an absolute sense.

Fougère and Moulettes (2007) dig deeper, using a postcolonial perspective. They contend that ''Hofstede discursively constructs a world characterised by a division between a 'developed and modern' side (mostly 'Anglo-Germanic' countries) and a 'traditional and backward' side (the rest)" (p1). Illustrative of their critique is the title of one of the sections in their paper: 'Power Distance: Being modern is being equal' (p 8). Through their critique, they hope 'to open up for an alternative knowledge production that includes rather than excludes and banalises rather than exoticises the other.' (p 16) This critique is relevant: in fact, it holds true for all approaches that aim to map or categorize value patterns across nations. There is no value-free or culturally neutral way of doing these types of comparisons. The best one can hope for is to be open to criticisms and open about one's own background. However, the same is true for almost any other type of work in this area, including qualitative work. Spivak (cited in McLeod, 2010: 222) has come up with the notion of 'strategic essentialism'. As long as the type of knowledge production Fougère and Moulettes call for has not yet gained pride of place, then some strategic – or in Smelser's term, heuristic way of dealing with cultures and their values can still be productive.

Inglehart and Welzel (2005) hold that the WVS shows that all cultures evolve and converge towards greater self-expression and more secular-rational values. Tausch (2015) has re-analysed the WVS data and other data as well and criticizes Inglehart and Welzel as well as Hofstede for their assumptions that the value of religion and spirituality is declining. Tausch confirms a number (but not all) of the Hofstede dimensions and suggests a number of additional dimensions, such as economic permissiveness.

3.2.3 Conclusions; my position

In the above, I have already given pointers to my position. I think the criticism that 'culture' as a concept is unusable, though understandable from the point of view of its conceptual diffuseness, is not good social science. People feel and experience culture and cultural differences and because they do, it is a legitimate topic of investigation. Even if we maintain that people can switch between different cultural identities in our globalizing world, that does not mean that those individual identities or cultural patterns disappear. With Smelser and Hofstede, I think cultures can and should be studied as constructs that say something about social reality. This can never be done in a vacuum – the postcolonial critique of one-sided, 'Anglo-Germanic' discourses should be taken into account. I think, though, that this criticism is more valid for the WVS and for Schwartz than for Hofstede – although his approach is not immune to it either.

The critique that it may be wrong to assume the existence of a 'national' culture especially in multicultural and multi-ethnic countries should also be taken seriously, especially for Africa. It could be that in some countries, something akin to a distinct national culture has in fact emerged. In others, this may not have happened at all, or to a much lesser extent. This makes my research all the more relevant.

Of the three approaches outlined above, my preference is the oldest of these methods, the Hofstede/Minkov approach. This is because it is the only approach that arose from serendipity: the Hofstede dimensions of culture were distilled out of a data set that was not set up with the express purpose of finding such dimensions. In that sense, it is the most bottom-up of existing approaches. It is also in principle open to new contributions: Hofstede has taken on board the contributions from the Chinese Values Survey and from Michael Minkov and is open to further developments in and amendments to his theory, which is grounded in an empirical approach.

The Schwartz approach is a theory-first approach. This has an inherent drawback, in that it is closed to representations of reality that might not fit within the theory. The Inglehart/Welzel approach, in my view, suffers from a heavy ideological bias that sees Northwestern Europe as the apex of civilisation. This is visible most clearly in Welzel (2013). In his view, human emancipation is what everybody wants – and what is most advanced in Europe, but spreading from there to the rest of the world.

Both Minkov (2018) and Inglehart and Welzel seem to favour reducing the data to two dimensions. For the time being, I do not want to go along with this idea. I think it may not offer sufficient differentiation

between cultures and therefore lead to over-simplification and to a tunnel vision that tries to squeeze everything into its approach. A two-dimensional approach also does not take account of the experience of cross-cultural management, which makes good use of more dimensions. With Venkateswaran and Ohja (2019), I do not believe that cross-cultural studies have reached their apex in the work of Hofstede and Minkov. It is very well possible that future research may show up different, additional or fewer dimensions. For the time being, though, I think it is the best we have.

In the following section, I will first give a brief treatment of some of the literature on cultures in Africa, with a focus on Ghana and on Southern Africa – to what extent does the literature tell us something about the emergence of new cultural autonomy that Vansina has predicted? I will show that the literature offers little recourse here. After that, I will present the results of using a cross-cultural approach, using three slightly different but complementary 'lenses'.

3.3 Africa's cultural landscape – an exploratory look

As argued in the previous section, cross-cultural psychology provides a way of discussing perceived differences in culture – defined as a value system that serves as common points of reference to a people – at a level that looks at larger groups of people: the level of a 'cultural tradition', a 'nation' or indeed at the level of 'national culture'. However, one can wonder if cross-cultural psychology is the *only* way for saying something meaningful at this level. In view of the amount of sociological, ethnographic and anthropological literature on Africa, this is a difficult question to answer. In order to explore the topic a little bit, I have looked at some of the literature on (national) culture from Ghana and from South Africa and its immediate neighbours Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini (Swaziland).

Ghana was chosen because it has clear distinctions between North and South, and yet at the same time a long history of interactions between the different peoples that make up present-day Ghana. At the same time, it has a long history of interaction with colonial powers but was also the second country in Sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence. Thus, it could be a country where the dynamics of cultural change can be seen and where it might be possible to discuss processes leading to (changes in) cultural autonomy and national culture.

South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini were chosen because of the peculiar circumstance that three ethnolinguistic groups each straddle two countries: South Africa and one other country (the Sotho

also live in Lesotho, the Swazi also in Eswatini and the Tswana also in Botswana). Are cultural differences at the national level now more important than those at the ethnolinguistic level? What could that mean for cultural autonomy? These are questions that seem interesting to explore.[21]

3.3.1 Ghana

The anthropological literature concerning Ghana – or at least the selection I read – suffers from a few problems that stand out when trying to analyse cultural similarities and differences. Perhaps the most important of them is that most books and articles discuss a single ethnolinguistic group and that no systematic comparison is undertaken with other groups. What is frequent is that anthropologists take issue with earlier or other anthropologists. Thus, ascertaining who might be closest to the truth becomes a matter of judging who writes more convincingly - attempts at outside validation are lacking.

Another problem I have is that the dialogue between those studied and the student is missing. Toumey (1993: 70) has coined the term of the 'anthropologist as entomologist'. He uses it in the sense of the anthropologist describing his or her objects of study in a dispassionate way. This may be equally unjust both to the anthropologist and to the entomologist. But there is another sense in which the term can be used: the type of anthropology that does not take the trouble to consult those studied on their findings.

Of course, nowadays Ghanaians are quite capable of reading what is being written about them and of reacting. An early example of this can be seen in the work of E.A. Ammah (2016). In this book, there is a review first published in 1941 of a book published in 1940 by British Anthropologist M.J. Field on the Ga people and customs. On p. 111, Ammah directly challenges a number of assertions Field makes about the Ga, for example that their identity is a relatively recent construct and they do not have a paramount chief (and therefore belong to the group of acephalous societies). He also challenges Field's description of many Ga activities being imbued with magic.

This example illustrates the difficulty with trusting the anthropological gaze: the distinction between a hierarchically organized society and one that has a more grassroots organisation is an important cultural distinction, also in the Hofstede model. So which one are we to believe?

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[21] This section is based on sections 6.1.6 and 6.2.1 of my Master thesis (Van Pinxteren, 2018b).

The importance of the spiritual is an example of the difficulty of analysing cultural differences and similarities using anthropological literature. In many cultures all over the world, the spiritual domain is an important element of culture and identity. But how to describe and discuss this – does one stress the commonalities, or rather look at the differences? Many anthropologists have a tendency to create separate cosmologies for the cultures they study, thus (perhaps inadvertently) erring on the side of 'intimate specificity' as pointed out by Mamdani (1996:11). Ammah, on the other hand, stresses the practical aspects of some of the rituals and shows how they fulfil functions that are common to most societies, in ways that do not depend to the extent suggested by Field on spiritual notions.

It could be (but there is no way of being certain) that this same problem applies to the work of Müller (2013). She goes to great lengths to explore and explain the religious/spiritual aspects of Asante chieftaincy, using the concept of 'Sunsum', roughly equivalent to soul (of a person, but also of the nation). In a similar vein MacGaffey's 2013 book about the Dagbon gives a history of chieftaincy developments in the Dagbon area. It criticizes earlier anthropology and seeks to explore the spiritual dimension of chieftaincy, asking for more attention to the position of the 'Tindana' earth priests. It shows how the recent scarcity in land has increased conflicts in the region and changed chieftaincy. MacGaffey argues that power in Dagbon society essentially comes through 'Nam', the spiritual power that is created through the rituals. He points out that some of this magic is so dangerous that it is best not talked about. This type of discourse could also be seen as erring on the side of 'intimate specificity'.

MacGaffey shows the similarities in many ways between the Dagbon and neighbouring peoples: the Nanun, Mamprugu and Tallensi.

By contrast, Ghanaian authors, such as Tonah (2016) analyse chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana in terms of conflict theory, without recourse to descriptions of Sunsum or Nam. Likewise, an author like Nugent (2005) argues that the Ewe ethnic identity is a relatively new and fluid phenomenon. In the same volume, Agbedor and Johnson (2005), through an analysis of naming practices, show the commonalities of the Ewe value system.

Müller (2013: 12) does provide an indication that suggests that the Asante (Akan) may be very much on the Fixed side of the Fixed-Flex spectrum: she points to the importance of the Adinkra symbol of the crocodile, which according to her means that one should stick to one's own divine function regardless of the environment .

Nevertheless, taking everything together, the conclusion must be that it is difficult to say much about cultural similarities or differences within Ghana by surveying the literature.

3.3.2 South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini

Southern Africa is one part of Africa that can be characterized by a centuries-old history of dramatic and violent changes. In South Africa, the settler model of colonialism has led to particularly trenchant attempts at social engineering that can be understood as direct attacks on previously existing indigenous cultures. This has been accompanied by massive economic change and upheaval. The entire process has found its apex in 'Apartheid', a unique system of institutionalized racism that has profoundly influenced developments on the entire Southern African subcontinent. It has also led to sustained, sophisticated and diverse forms of resistance.

It is impossible here to give an overview of the literature on South Africa. In order to sketch a general framework, I will make use of the work of Mamdani (1996) and attempt to give a very sketchy characterization of the literature. I will then examine a few aspects of Tswana, Sotho and Swazi culture as evident from the literature.

South Africa: the manipulation of ethnic and racial categories

Mamdani's 'Citizen and Subject' (1996) is interesting, because it discusses the South African experience as part of the broader African experience with colonialism, thereby linking South Africa to the rest of the continent. His central thesis is that in South Africa (but elsewhere in Africa as well), ethnic identity was reproduced and bent to suit the objective of dominating a rural population at minimal cost, using manipulated versions of 'customary' law. Racial identity, on the other hand, was needed in order to separate the 'modern', 'democratic' sector from the dominated and ethnically fragmented sectors of society. Understanding this mechanism, Mamdani argues, is key to building a successful counter-movement. However, following the line of reasoning of Neocosmos (1995: 43), who discusses and critiques the 'Invention of Tradition' school of thought of Hobsbawm and Ranger, this does not mean that ethnic identity is by definition artificial – a point also made by Spear (2003) and by Reid (2011) - or that ethnically-based movements are all anti-democratic.

Historically, anthropology has been very much influenced by the prevailing government needs and intellectual climate, as was shown for example by Gewald (2007) for Rhodesia and Leach (1984) more

generally. Nowhere was this evident more strongly than in South Africa, where a whole strand of Afrikaner anthropology ('Volkekunde') developed that has now been relegated more or less in its entirety to the scrapheap of history.[22] Unfortunately, as Sharp (2002) has shown, the countermovement in anthropology has tended to denigrate the importance of indigenous cultures, in favour of an assimilationist approach that equally seems to miss the mark.

How have attempts to manipulate race and ethnicity, different in rural and in urban areas (but of course not unconnected to each other), as well as attempts at resisting this, influenced present-day perceptions of cultural diversity in South Africa? What has been the influence of the end of Apartheid? Has the Apartheid experience helped to forge a new national identity in South Africa? What has this meant for the cultural identity of groups like the Sotho, Swazi and Tswana, that now live in two different countries? What seems certain is that the autonomy of these cultural traditions, in the sense used by Vansina (1992) must have been seriously compromised. It is difficult to move much beyond that statement on the basis of the existing ethnography, encumbered as it is by the tremendous weight of competing ideologies.

Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini

What is clear from my look at the historical literature on the three countries is that throughout the colonial period, the leaders of these countries were acutely aware of the existential threat that the Boer advance and the expansion of colonial South Africa posed to them. The threat of Boer domination served to unify them, to mobilize their resources, to develop their skills in warfare as well as in diplomacy – and it also drove them in the hands of the British. In order to safeguard even a limited degree of independence, they were forced to make and to accept huge concessions. Thus, large and fertile stretches of land that were once part of the Sotho, Swazi and Tswana polities are currently part of South Africa.[23]

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[22] This is probably unfortunate, because there may have been work done that still has analytical value today. One example is Van Warmelo (1937), who discusses the difficulties involved in classifying cultural groups in Southern Africa.

[23] An interesting description of what this meant for one of Botswana's groups is given in Morton (1985).

For these countries, the struggle to retain cultural autonomy and the way in which culture has helped to adapt to changes can be seen most clearly in the work of Gulbrandsen (2012).[24]

In his book, Gulbrandsen contrasts the relative success of Botswana as a nation state with the difficulties experienced by many other African nation states and seeks to find an explanation. He feels Botswana's success should be understood as the result of the interplay between Western (global) forces and indigenous structures of power. He points to the importance of 'symbolic conceptions and hierarchies of authority rooted in indigenous polities'. (p 1) In my terminology, therefore, he looks at the importance of Tswana culture, although Gulbrandsen does not to use that term and does not share my understanding of it. In my view, the 'social', as mentioned in the title of the book, should be seen as shorthand for 'symbolic conceptions', 'rooted in indigenous polities' – in my words, then, the book tries to explain the success of Botswana out of the interplay between worldwide developments and the autonomous reaction of Tswana culture.

In the analysis of Gulbrandsen, the key to the success of Botswana as a state lies in the fact that immediately before and after independence, traditional and modern elites came together in a 'grand coalition', based on an 'obsession with the accumulation of cattle' (p 111). It is because this coalition was in place that the state was able to deal productively with the later wealth that came from diamond mining, in contrast with the situation in other diamond-rich African countries.

This analysis, in my view, is too easy. Are the Tswana the only ones in Africa that are interested in accumulation of cattle? Of course not – there are many cattle-based polities in Africa. What, then, makes the case of Botswana so unique? Gulbrandsen points to a unique combination of historical and geographical circumstances that allowed the 'grand coalition' to form and to profit from them. In my view, geographical and historical circumstances have created opportunities all over the continent at different points in time, but the explanation of why elites in Botswana were able to take them and others not must be related to its continued cultural autonomy, an autonomy that was broken almost everywhere else.

I see evidence of this in Gulbrandsen's analysis of the countervailing forces in Botswana. Gulbrandsen shows how the 'grand coalition' led to a great increase in wealth for elite sections of society, at the same time increasing inequalities in the country. This inequality leads to resistance, a resistance that is possibly capable of undermining the

[24] I am grateful to Prof Gulbrandsen for commenting on an earlier version of this text. However, the discussion of his work shows my reading of his work – others who read it may come to different conclusions.

state. Here, Gulbrandsen uses the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari, and calls attention to threats to the state that can occur outside of the state, with 'war machine'-like potentialities, in the form of 'assemblages of power of a rhizome type that are antihierarchical, deterritorializing and operating in highly unpredictable ways from the point of view of the state' (p17). The example he gives is the series of events following the tragic murder of Segametsi in 1994. This girl is alleged to have been murdered in order to use her body parts to magically give additional strength to already powerful people in the community. The outrage created by this, seen by Gulbrandsen as the emergence of a class consciousness, was the start of popular opposition to the continuing enrichment of the elites and their growing corruption. He explains the role played by indigenous notions of occult practices in light of the specific cosmologies of power among the Tswana and the Sotho-speakers in general (p 292/308).

What makes the Botswana case specific, then, is more than the fact that people in Botswana are interested in cattle accumulation. The specificity of the Botswana case lies in its relative cultural homogeneity: in Botswana, state formation that is rooted in indigenous conceptions of authority is possible because these conceptions are known to a large majority of the people living in Botswana. Likewise, resistance to this authority can also be rooted in indigenous conceptions, for the same reason, the relative cultural homogeneity of the country. Gulbrandsen alludes to the cultural homogeneity in Botswana when he discusses the attitudes in the country towards egalitarianism (in my terms, Power Distance). He points to the cultural unity of Botswana in this respect, in that none of the communities in the country subscribe to radical egalitarianism, 'the San-speaking peoples being an obvious exception' (p284).

It is interesting to compare the approach of Gulbrandsen with that of Eldredge (2007) on Lesotho. Both stories relate the struggle of the peoples of Botswana and Lesotho to retain a maximum of independence and to ward off the danger of being incorporated into the Union of South Africa. However, Gulbrandsen's approach is broader than that of Eldredge, looking among others at the cultural and spiritual side of things (the 'social'). Eldredge takes a more limited historical approach, focusing on the diplomatic efforts of the Sotho leadership and on the power struggles that went on in SeSotho society and between the SeSotho and the British – the discourse of power. Thus, on p 151, Eldridge mentions that chief Letsienyana 'set up housekeeping with a woman ineligible to become his wife', without elaborating (it is explained in Machobane (1990)).

One of the elements of the Tswana tradition, as Gulbrandsen points out, is the extensive use of public debate and consultation through the kgotla assemblies. Leaders in the Tswana tradition, should follow the oft-quoted maxim that the kgosi (king) is the king by virtue of the people (p 196). The colonial period has not been able to destroy the kgotla system.

In sum, then, Botswana society is by no means free of conflict and change. However, by and large, it has been able to keep its autonomy (in the sense meant by Vansina) intact. Because of this, it has been able to make use of the opportunities that presented themselves. In terms of explaining Botswana's success, its cultural integrity can be seen as a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for success.

The comparison of the literature on Botswana with that on Lesotho and Eswatini brings to light a number of similarities, but differences as well. In all three countries, it has been possible to keep a degree of cultural autonomy intact. Eldredge (2007), Machobane (1990) and Gillis (1999) all describe how the British tried in various ways and with various degrees of success to impose their own model of governance on these communities (the famous Lugard-style 'indirect rule'). All these attempts were met with tenacious resistance and the authors demonstrate how cultural autonomy has been kept (although they do not use that term). Nevertheless, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini were of course affected by the tremendous changes over the period, including the loss of land and the impact of developments in South Africa. The effects of these changes were not the same in the three countries. Thus, Botswana is now a republic; Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy with a ceremonial function for the monarch; Eswatini is a monarchy with considerable powers for the king and the royal family.

As Eldredge (2007: 12) says, 'Part of the project of colonizers was to destabilize African cultural systems, to undermine them, and to replace them.' For Lesotho, she shows the centrality of African initiatives and agency in trying to preserve indigenous SeSotho culture, values and institutions. Machobane (1990) shows this in greater detail for the SeSotho legal system, where he discusses the origins, changes to and uses made of the Lerotholi code, an codification of the indigenous legal system. The SeSotho were united in their defence of their autonomy and tried to resist the imposition by the British of a system that sought to give chiefs ever greater authoritarian powers. However, in other respects, they were divided among themselves and there were also major divisions between the ruling families and ordinary people; the convergence of interests that was evident in Botswana never really took place in Lesotho.

Gillis (1999: 4) points to some of the differences between Swazi culture and other cultures in the area. One of these is that the wide consultation process that was part of Sotho culture was not part of Swazi and Zulu traditions in the same way. In the case of the Swazi, this may in part explain the tendency for an oligarchy to develop, centred on the royal Dlamini family, that could lose touch with the wider population. As a comment in the Times of Swaziland puts it: 'The underlining factors behind all these crises can be traced back to bad leadership, corruption and mismanagement, which has kept Swaziland into perpetual underdevelopment in spite of all the efforts to give the country a breath of development.'[25] Nevertheless, as Gillis stresses, the Swazis place great value on their independence, which is tied in their minds to the King and the royal house.

It is difficult to draw very precise conclusions from the literature in terms that are relevant for my cross-cultural psychology approach. However, it seems logical to assume, as Malan (1985: 33) already pointed out, that the cultural unity of the SeSotho, Swazi and Tswana has been broken. It has been preserved in Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini. The Sotho-Tswana, who once were part of one cultural tradition, were fragmented. It could be, though, that they have still preserved some common cultural features. One difference between the Sotho and Tswana one the one hand and the Swazi on the other that has been pointed out is the tradition of popular consultation through the Kgotla system that is part of the Sotho-Tswana tradition, but not of that of Eswatini. Does that mean, for example, that Power Distance is lower in Botswana and Lesotho than in Eswatini?

For South Africa, a new cultural identity must have emerged after the loss of cultural autonomies that existed earlier. How can this be characterized? Are there still differences between different groups of Black South Africans? These are some of the questions that the next sections will seek to explore, using the approach of cross-cultural psychology.

3.3.3 Conclusions

From the literature, it is impossible to give an answer to the question whether or not and if so, to what extent a recognizable national culture has formed in a country like Ghana. The picture that emerges from the literature on South Africa is that it is at least likely that the different experiences in South Africa and neighbouring Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini must have had some effects on the cultures in those countries.

[25] Times of Swaziland, 12 March 2018, p 19.

However, it is difficult to say anything more about them. Thus, important questions on cultural and national identity remain unanswered in the current literature. The challenging question then becomes: is it possible to say something meaningful using the approach of cross-cultural psychology? That is what the following sections will seek to explore.

3.4 Hierarchical cluster analysis[26]

The first lens that cross-cultural psychology provides for looking at the relevance (or otherwise) of national culture is inspired by Minkov and Hofstede (2012). Their hypothesis was that if national culture were important, then a cluster analysis by in-country region would lead to regions clustering together on a national basis; if, on the other hand, national culture were not important, then regions would not cluster together to form meaningful national clusters. They developed their argument by using World Values Survey data from 299 in-country regions from 28 countries in East and Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Anglo world.

For Sub-Saharan Africa, Minkov and Hofstede examined seven countries, together representing 64 administrative regions. They found that 58 of the 64 African regions, or more than 90%, clustered together with the other regions of their nation, forming homogeneous national clusters (p 148). This led them to conclude that national culture is a meaningful concept, even in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This section starts by discussing the specific approach chosen by Minkov and Hofstede and its limitations and difficulties. It continues by suggesting an extended and complementary approach, based on ethnolinguistic groups (instead of administrative regions) and on a different, much more comprehensive dataset (the Afrobarometer survey). The methods section presents how this is done. The study then presents the results of a cluster analysis that is based on this alternative approach and contrasts the results with those obtained by Minkov and Hofstede. The section ends with a discussion and some recommendations for further research.

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[26] This section is an adapted and somewhat shortened version of: Pinxteren, B. van (2020a). National Culture and Africa Revisited: Ethnolinguistic Group Data From 35 African Countries. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *54*(1), 73 - 91. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069397119835783. I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers and the one anonymous assessor for their comments.

3.4.1 The Minkov/Hofstede approach, its limitations and difficulties

The basic reasoning used by Minkov and Hofstede is sound: if disaggregated data on subnational units coalesce at the national level, then clearly this national level must have some meaning. On the other hand, if disaggregated data does not show coherence at the national level, then the concept of national culture may be an artificial one. Hofstede et al (2010) have taken a similar approach by looking at the level of individual states in Brazil. There, they find that sub-national differences in Brazil aggregate into five regional cultural clusters within Brazil.

However, from the methodological point of view, the approach Minkov and Hofstede have taken is not entirely convincing. My main doubt is about the validity of taking in-country regions as the basic unit of study. Administrative regions have been designated in historical and political processes in ways that are very different from country to country. Administrative regions may or may not conform to cultural or ethnolinguistic areas as they existed in precolonial times. Thus, Minkov and Hofstede use 12 regions for a small and homogeneous country like Rwanda, but 5 regions for a large and diverse country like Ethiopia. In some countries, regions may be formed in such a way as to split up, rather than unite ethnic groups. In those cases, it should come as no surprise that the regional averages are not very different from the national averages. If country A has two ethnic groups that are spread equally over two administrative regions, then the score for each region will be the same as the national score, no matter how different the two ethnic groups may be in reality. In some countries, this way of forming regions may have been employed, in others not. This obviously has the potential of hiding real within-country cultural differences from sight.

Minkov and Hofstede find that three out of the 13 regions from Burkina Faso and three out of the 9 regions from Zambia do not cluster neatly with the other regions from those countries. This therefore begs the question – what picture would emerge if more countries were included and if one were to look at the ethnolinguistic level? This is what has been done in this study.

3.4.2 Method

Minkov and Hofstede relied on the World Values Survey for their data, meaning that they could only get information on seven countries. A much larger dataset is available on Africa in the Afrobarometer

survey.[27] This is a representative survey that has been carried out at regular intervals since 1999. The research in this study is based on round 6 of the survey, which was implemented in 2014 and 2015. It included 35 African countries, of which 30 are Sub-Saharan.

Using this dataset obviously has the advantage of providing a much larger coverage than the seven African countries included in the World Values Survey. The disadvantage is that the Afrobarometer's primary focus is on attitudes towards democracy and governance, not directly on the values that determine national culture. However, cultural differences 'shine through' in just about any batch of questions asked in different countries. Furthermore, as demonstrated by Inglehart and Welzel (2005), political attitudes are related to culture. Therefore, between and within-country differences in response to Afrobarometer questions also provide insights into cultural differences and similarities. However, using the Afrobarometer survey for this type of analysis is not entirely straightforward, because of differences in the purpose of the questions and differences in the questions asked themselves. For this study, an approach was chosen that is related as closely as possible to the original Minkov/Hofstede study. In order to distinguish ethnolinguistic groups, two Afrobarometer questions were used: in most cases, Q87: 'What is your ethnic community, cultural group or tribe?'[28] However, in some cases Q2 was (also) used: 'Which language is your home language?' For Algeria and Morocco, Berber-speakers were analysed as a separate group. For Burundi, Cape Verde, Egypt, São Tomé and Principé, Sudan, Eswatini and Tunisia no ethnolinguistic splits could be made on the basis of these two questions. For South Africa, Q102 (race) was taken into account as well. For coloureds and whites, Q102 was combined with Q2, giving separate data for Afrikaans- and English-speaking whites and coloureds. Hofstede (2001: 463) recommends a sample size of at least 20 and preferably 50 per group. In order to include as many groups as possible and for pragmatic reasons, I have taken a minimum sample size of 39 as the cut-off point for including ethnolinguistic groups in the analysis.

Neither the WVS nor the Afrobarometer makes any claims about the samples being representative at the ethnolinguistic group level and in fact, they are not – it is not a requirement in the sampling protocol. Therefore, some form of correction was necessary in order to ensure a fair comparison of like with like.

At the ethnolinguistic group level, it is possible to control for gender, age, education, income level, urban/rural as well as for other variables.

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[27] http://www.afrobarometer.org

[28] http://afrobarometer.org/data/merged-round-6-codebook-36-countries-2016 retrieved 13 February 2018.

However, increasing the number of such variables has its disadvantages: it introduces an upward pressure on the minimum sample size that is needed for every ethnolinguistic group; it also increases the number of weights applied in individual cases. Weighing factors introduce a certain level of artificiality to the data, because it means that certain groups are made more important than in the actual data, others less important. Another issue is that, of course, real differences may exist within countries for example in the education levels of specific ethnolinguistic groups. Compensating for that could mean that perceived differences on the ground, although perhaps partly due to differences for example in educational level, are glossed over. In addition, differences such as in educational level might themselves be related to differences in value systems between ethnolinguistic groups.

For these reasons, I have chosen to introduce weighing factors only for two variables: age (below thirty and thirty and above)[29] and gender. I have split all ethnolinguistic group samples into four subgroups: men under 30, men 30 and above, women under 30, women 30 and above. I have weighed the data from each subgroup in such a way that the composition in terms of age and gender corresponds to the national average in the sample. Because of demographic differences within South Africa, weights were determined not based on the national sample, but based on the 'Blacks', 'Whites' and 'Coloureds' as separate groups.

In their study, Minkov and Hofstede did not use all World Values Survey questions. Using a trial and error approach, they arrived at a set of 26 value-based questions. They contain a number of questions on what parents think children should be taught, questions derived from the theory of cultural dimensions as developed by Schwartz (2012) and six personal values. These questions are not asked or not asked in the same way in the Afrobarometer survey. However, in spite of the differences in survey questions, some questions do address underlying value orientations in different ways. In order to determine which questions would be the most relevant for my research, I made use of the recent cultural dimension scores that were published by Beugelsdijk and Welzel (2018), based on a combination of European and World Values Survey data from different rounds. Beugelsdijk and Welzel have attempted to synthesize the Hofstede/Minkov dimensions and those of Inglehart and Welzel into a three-dimensional model. In their work, they

[29] It would also have been thinkable to choose a different cut-off point or to make a split over several categories. This cut-off point splits the samples from most countries reasonably well and was therefore chosen for pragmatic reasons.

publish scores on thirteen African countries that have also been included in the Afrobarometer survey. Therefore, there are 13 common cases: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In total, they have published scores for 16 African countries. Like Hofstede and Minkov, Beugelsdijk and Welzel work with a scale that runs from zero to 100. They show greatest cultural similarity among the countries from Sub-Saharan Africa on their 'collectivism-individualism' dimension: the range is 18 points. The range is considerably greater on their 'duty-joy' dimension: 50 points. On their third dimension, 'distrust-trust' the range is 30 points. From their work, then, it seems that there is considerable cultural diversity within Sub-Saharan Africa, although the pattern is not the same for every dimension.

In order to arrive at a cluster analysis based on the Afrobarometer survey, the first step was to select a longlist of 43 questions that at face value seem they might be related to one of these three dimensions. Comparison of the scores for the 13 countries that are included in the Beugelsdijk/Welzel data led to a shorter list of 32 questions that show at least a weak correlation (Pearson $r > |0.3|$) with one or several of the Beugelsdijk/Welzel dimensions. These, then, are questions that have some relation to cultural differences.

For a cluster analysis, all variables need to have a value. Missing values were estimated by taking values from countries assumed to be comparable (details are given in table A3 of the appendix for this chapter). A hierarchical clustering analysis was performed, using the same method as that used by Minkov and Hofstede: the average linkage (between-groups) method, using the Pearson correlation distance measure with *z*-score standardization by variable.

3.4.3 Results

Minkov and Hofstede initially requested a number of solutions equal to their number of countries (7). I did the same, requesting 35 clusters. In cases where regions of more than one nation appeared in one and the same cluster, Hofstede and Minkov relied on the dendrograms supplied by the cluster tool to identify subclusters that correspond to nations. I have followed the same strategy. (Because of its size, the full dendrogram has been included in the appendix for this section.)

Some African countries are known to be almost or entirely monolingual, in spite of the ethnic differentiations that the Afrobarometer survey uses for these countries. One would expect that groups from these countries cluster together. They do:

- Botswana has nine ethnolinguistic groups; together, they form one cluster, with no other members.

- Lesotho has seven ethnolinguistic groups that together form one subcluster.
- Madagascar has six ethnolinguistic groups that together form one subcluster.
- Mauritius has four ethnolinguistic groups that together form one cluster, with no other members.

One would also expect to see some similarity among the Arab countries. Indeed, the analysis puts Algeria, Egypt and Morocco in the same cluster. However, Tunisia and Sudan are in different clusters.
The situation for Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, South Africa and Eswatini is summarized in the tables below. The information for all 35 countries can be found in the appendix for this section.

Country	**Country code**	**Number of groups**	**Cluster number(s)**	**Largest number of groups in one cluster:**
Botswana	BW	9	13	9
Eswatini	SZ	1	6a	1
Ghana	GH	5	25b, 30a	4
Lesotho	LS	7	16b	7
South Africa	ZA	13	7a, 12b, 12d	8

Table 1: Selected countries, number of ethnolinguistic groups, cluster membership

By cluster, the situation is as in table 2.[30] (Sub)clusters that group an entire country have been marked in **bold**; countries that entirely fall into one (sub)cluster are in **bold** as well.

Cluster	**Subcluster**	**Groups**
6	**6a**	**Eswatini**
7	7a	South Africa: "Coloured" Afrikaans, "Coloured" English, Indian, Pedi
12	12b	South Africa: Shangaan, Sotho, Swazi, Tswana, Venda, "White" Afrikaans, "White" English, Xhosa
	12d	South Africa: Zulu
13		**Botswana:** Karanga, Kgalagadi, Kgatla, Kwena, Mmirwa, Ngwaketse, Ngwato, Tswana, Tswapong

[30] Note that the Afrobarometer group designations do not imply any judgement by the author on their appropriateness or otherwise.

16	**16b**	**Lesotho:** Letebele, Mofokeng, Mohlakoana, Mokoena, Mosiea, Motaung, Motloung
25	25b	Ghana: Dagaba
30	30a	Ghana: Akan, Dagomba, Ewe, Ga

Table 2: Ethnolinguistic group clusters, selected countries

It is also possible to give a direct comparison of the results with those obtained by Minkov and Hofstede. Minkov and Hofstede used 7 countries, of which five are also in the Afrobarometer dataset: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, South Africa and Zambia.
For Burkina Faso, they had 13 regions, of which ten fell into one cluster. In my analysis, there are three ethnolinguistic groups, falling into one cluster. For Ghana, they had ten regions, all falling into one cluster. I have five ethnolinguistic groups; four of them fall into the same cluster. For Mali, they had six regions, all falling into one cluster. I have seven ethnolinguistic groups, of which four fall into one cluster. For Zambia, they had nine regions, of which six fell into one cluster. I have four groups, all in different clusters. For South Africa, they had nine regions, all falling into the same cluster. In my analysis, there are 13 ethnolinguistic groups, divided into three clusters. Of these, eight fall into one cluster and four into another. The comparison is summarized in table 3 below.

Country	**Admin. regions**	**Number in same cluster**	**Ethnolinguistic groups**	**Number in same cluster**
Burkina Faso	13	10	3	3
Ghana	10	10	5	4
Mali	6	6	7	4
South Africa	9	9	13	8
Zambia	9	6	4	1
Total	47	41 (87%)	32	20 (63%)

Table 3: Comparing administrative region-based clusters with ethnolinguistic group-based clusters

Looking only at these five countries, my results, using a different dataset and a different unit of analysis, are roughly similar to those of Minkov and Hofstede, although they show a greater differentiation. This difference becomes more pronounced if we examine the extended set of countries that is in the Afrobarometer dataset.

There are 26 countries in the Afrobarometer dataset that are in Sub-Saharan Africa and for which data from different ethnolinguistic groups are available. There is data on 187 ethnolinguistic groups from these countries. Out of these, 126 or 67.4% cluster together with other ethnolinguistic groups of their country, forming homogeneous national clusters – as compared to a figure of 90.6% found by Minkov and Hofstede (p 148). Besides those countries that are dominated by one ethnolinguistic group (Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar) there are seven other countries of which all ethnolinguistic groups fall into the same (sub)cluster. Note that this might not be the whole story: in all of those countries there could be smaller ethnolinguistic communities that show a different cultural profile but who have not been sufficiently sampled in the Afrobarometer survey.

This means that there are 16 countries from which not all ethnolinguistic groups cluster together at the national level. In five, the majority fall into one (sub)cluster, with only one or two ethnolinguistic groups that seem to be an exception. This leaves eleven countries with considerable in-country cultural diversity.

What this means is that there is not one common pattern that applies across Africa. There are not even regional patterns. For many countries, there is support in this study for the conclusion by Minkov and Hofstede that national culture is a relevant concept and worth studying, even in ethnolinguistically diverse countries such as those found in Africa. However, the present study also shows that there is a significant number of countries in which ethnolinguistic groups do not cluster at the national level. This also means that statements about Africa in general are meaningless here. The subset of countries chosen for the Minkov/Hofstede study is not representative of Africa as a whole, nor can this be assumed for the much larger Afrobarometer subset.

This study has shown that for some countries in Africa, it is now possible to use data on national culture. In others, it is not. Every country and ethnolinguistic group will have to be examined on its own merits. However, the survey approach that is common in cross-cultural psychology does help to produce meaningful data on ethnolinguistic groups in Africa, just as it does in other parts of the world.

3.4.4 Discussion and conclusions

The analysis presented here shows that at least for some countries, the ethnolinguistic group distinctions from the colonial times seem to have lost some of their relevance, because no matter how large their differences may be, they are not visible in a cluster analysis that compares them with ethnolinguistic groups from other countries. The analysis also shows that in some countries, considerable cultural

differences remain, whereas in others, something approaching a national culture seems to be emerging. This is in fact in line with Vansina's predictions.

It is good, though, to be aware of the limitations of the approach chosen here.

Cluster analysis is a data reduction technique. It is a good tool for preparing broad estimates, but not for detailed analysis. It does not lead to full descriptions of cultures; those have to be obtained through other methods. But this approach can help to make sense of the cultural landscape of a larger area. In that sense, as pointed out by Minkov (2013: 5), it can be a cognitive tool that helps to understand the complex world around us. However, there are a number of further steps that could be taken to lead to a more precise image.

One step that would make sense would be to include a survey instrument that is more specifically designed to measure cultural differences and similarities in the Afrobarometer survey. One such instrument is the Values Survey Module,[31] as described by Hofstede and Minkov.

Another step would be to re-examine the ethnolinguistic categories used in the Afrobarometer survey. For some countries, such as Lesotho, one wonders what the value is of keeping in these questions. For others, it might be possible to reduce the number of ethnolinguistic groups. In all cases, it would be useful to take steps to ensure a better level of representativity at the ethnolinguistic group level.

A last step, easier said than done, would of course be to extend the coverage of the Afrobarometer survey to the maximum number of countries.

In any case, important cultural differences in Africa remain and it is important to create new knowledge on what these differences are and on where the main distinctions lie. Without such knowledge, attempts to build stronger pan-African collaborations or stronger grassroots-based democratic structures will remain founded on quicksand.

In the next section, an attempt will be made to examine these issues in a bit more detail, by looking at individual cultural dimension scores.

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[31] See http://geerthofstede.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/VSM-2013-English-2013-08-25.pdf. Note that there have been several editions of the Values Survey Module (VSM).

3.5 Dimension scores[32]

In the previous section, we took an initial look at cultural differences and similarities in Africa by employing the technique of hierarchical cluster analysis. I used essentially the same method as Hofstede Minkov did in 2012, but with several improvements. These included using the more recent Beugelsdijk/Welzel data as the benchmark for the analysis and looking at ethnolinguistic groups, rather than in-country administrative divisions. Using this approach, it was possible to demonstrate how indeed, national cultures seem to be developing in some African countries, but not in others. The traditional ethnic group distinctions seem to have lost their meaning in some countries, but not everywhere.

This section looks at the same problem in a bit more detail, attempting to tease out information on ethnolinguistic group differences on several of the Hofstede/Minkov dimensions, again by a re-analysis of Afrobarometer data. I have attempted to do this for the three dimensions proposed by Beugelsdijk and Welzel, but was not able to do this in a way that yielded reliable data. However, I have also looked at the original Hofstede/Minkov dimensions and their scores, and there I was able to find corresponding information in the Afrobarometer data set. This yields dimension scores for over 200 ethnolinguistic groups in 35 African countries.[33]

3.5.1 Method

As was pointed out in the previous section, the original Minkov/Hofstede scores cover only a few African countries. In order to increase this coverage, I sought to extend the data, by looking for corresponding information in Afrobarometer data for those countries that have been sampled by both surveys. The process by which new data can be linked to existing Hofstede/Minkov scores was described as 'anchoring' by Hofstede (2001: 464). Because the aim of the exercise was to achieve an optimum correlation between an existing and a new data set, traditional forms of factor analysis were not considered appropriate.

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[32] An adapted version of this section will be published as 'Cultural Autonomy and Cultural Dimensions in Africa
– as evidenced from the Afrobarometer Survey' in: *Méthod(e)s, African Review of Social Science Methodology (01/2021 - forthcoming).*

[33] A different approach that nevertheless follows the same general idea is the research undertaken for different regions in Europe by Kaasa et al (2014); they base themselves on the European social survey.

Factor analysis is a computer-aided data reduction technique through which latent variables in a data set are suggested, that then should correspond in some way to a theory-based interpretation that the researcher gives of the data. In this case, the approach had to be different: the latent variable (the Hofstede/Minkov dimension) is taken as a given and variables in the new data set are sought that correlate in larger or smaller measure with these dimensions. They are then given different weights (somewhat comparable to factor analysis), with a view to maximising the correlation. More information is given in appendix 3.5-b.

However, before any of this can be done, it is important to first get a data set with as large a number of overlapping countries or groups as possible. For the Afrobarometer data and the published Hofstede/Minkov data, that is not directly possible: the number of overlapping countries is not more than a handful, and that only for the dimension of IVR. Therefore, an indirect approach was necessary, using the World Values Survey as intermediary step. World Values Survey data are appropriate, because there are between 31 and 47 counties for which both World Values Survey data and Hofstede/Minkov scores are available.

This led to a four step – approach, detailed in appendix 3.5-b. As a result, I was able to obtain individual scores on four out of the six Hofstede/Minkov dimensions that correlate with already known data for countries and ethnolinguistic groups at correlations of between .87 and .91, $p < 0.001$. These dimensions are fixed versus flexible (or LTO), Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR), Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV); and the Power Distance Index (PDI).

In order to distinguish ethnolinguistic groups the same method was used as that employed in the previous section.

3.5.2 Key results and conclusions

In section 3.3.3, I concluded that from the literature, it is impossible to give an answer to the question whether or not and if so, to what extent a recognizable national culture has formed in a country like Ghana. The picture that emerges from the literature on South Africa and some of its neighbours is that it is at least likely that the different experiences in South Africa and neighbouring Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini must have had some effects on the cultures in those countries. However, it is difficult to say anything more about them. Thus, important questions on cultural and national identity remain unanswered in the current literature. I posed a challenging question to myself: is it possible to say something meaningful using the approach of cross-cultural psychology? It is now possible to answer that question.

Do the data suggest cultural differences between the SeSotho of Lesotho and those of South Africa? Are the Tswana of Botswana now culturally different from those in South Africa? Is a national identity emerging, at least among the black South African population? Table 4 below provides at least the start of an answer.

	Sotho-SA	Lesotho		Tswana-SA	Botswana		SA-Black (combined)
'Fix vs Flex'	77	94		51	49		75
IVR	33	-1		29	28		38
IDV	64	58		55	66		58
PDI	88	69		78	71		86

Table 4 – Dimension scores of cross-border ethnolinguistic groups, Southern Africa

From the table, the picture emerges that the SeSotho of Lesotho and the Tswana of Botswana are no longer culturally the same; they score differently on 'Fix vs Flex' (LTO) and on Indulgence versus Restraint, and less so on individualism.

The South African groups show similarity on the Indulgence, Individualism and Power Distance dimensions and on these dimensions, their scores are in-line with the overall Black population of South Africa. On the 'Fix vs Flex' dimension, the Tswana seem to be an exception, scoring closer to the Botswana average than to the South African average.

Further analysis shows that the South African Swazi also score in-line with the overall Black South African scores. On the whole, I interpret this as tentative support for the idea that in South Africa, a new cultural tradition is emerging, as predicted by Vansina. This is a shared new identity, even though black South Africans speak several different languages.

Is something similar happening in Ghana? The data in table 5 below give the first clue.

	Fix vs Flex (LTO)	IVR	IDV	PDI
Ghana	106	72	87	89
Ghana-Akan	108	84	89	90
Ghana-Dagaba	101	58	86	74
Ghana-Dagomba	98	39	84	86
Ghana-Ewe	114	79	94	70
Ghana-Frafra	91	37	71	77
Ghana-Ga	100	77	90	86
Ghana-Gonja	75	44	82	86
Ghana-Kusaal	77	72	85	65
Largest difference	*33*	*47*	*23*	*25*

Table 5 – Dimension scores, Ghana

It is clear from this data that Ghana is a country with considerable cultural diversity. On all four dimensions, the differences within Ghana are noticeable. However, that may not be the complete story, as is clear from table 6, which shows only the largest ethnolinguistic groups.

	Fix vs Flex (LTO)	IVR	IDV	PDI
Ghana	106	72	87	89
Ghana-Akan	108	84	89	90
Ghana-Dagomba	98	39	84	86
Ghana-Ewe	114	79	94	70
Ghana-Ga	100	77	90	86
Largest difference	*16*	*45*	*10*	*20*

Table 6 – Dimension scores, largest ethnolinguistic groups, Ghana

In Ghana, the Akan make up nearly half of the total population. The four largest ethnic groups together make up more than 85% of the population. Within these groups, the differences are much smaller, with the exception of the Indulgence versus Restraint dimension.
This picture is similar to the result of the hierarchical cluster analysis, as shown below (taken from the full dendrogram in the appendix for chapter 3.4).

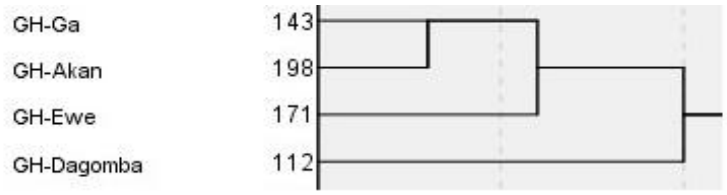


Figure 1 – Hierarchical clusters, largest ethnolinguistic groups, Ghana

What this suggests is that even in a diverse country such a Ghana, a value system (in other words: a national culture) may be developing that serves as common point of reference to all Ghanaians. This value system may be similar to the value system of the Akan, but not quite the same. It could also be that the ways in which people from different ethnolinguistic groups relate to that value system will be different; however, they will share a common understanding and knowledge of the common 'Ghanaian' value system. Put in a different way: people from minority ethnolinguistic groups in Ghana are likely to have considerable intercultural communication skills, allowing them to navigate and switch between the dominant, 'national' way of doing and judging things and the way of doing and judging things within their own ethnolinguistic group.

In comparison, internal differences are much more pronounced in other countries. Thus, in Kenya, on each of the four dimensions, there are large differences between the ethnolinguistic groups, of a size between 26 and 58 points on a 100-point scale. Without further research it is difficult to say much more on this topic, but it could be that for some countries, there is no common point of reference – people may have the intercultural skills to know about other cultures, but it could be that there is no acceptance of any framework that serves as a common point of reference for all ethnolinguistic groups. In those countries, it will not be possible to speak of a 'national culture'.

On the other hand, the Acholi and Lango of Uganda show relative similarity to one another and to the Luo of Kenya; all three groups speak a similar language and they seem to have been able to maintain their cultural integrity, in spite of being divided over two countries.

	Uganda-Acholi	Uganda-Lango	Kenya-Luo	*Largest difference*
'Fix vs Flex'	69	73	81	*12*
IVR	30	23	37	*14*
IDV	74	75	67	*8*
PDI	68	71	78	*10*

Table 7 – Dimension scores, Acholi/Lango/Luo

This seems to show that the process as predicted by Vansina may be happening, but it is by no means even across Africa and it also does not mean that in all cases, it leads to the emergence of coherent national cultures.

In keeping with some of the opinions on Pan Africanism outlined in chapter 1.2, it is perhaps interesting to point out that this same procedure could also be used for WVS countries in other parts of the world. I have done this for the USA, giving results as listed below:

	Fix vs Flex (LTO)	**IVR**	**IDV**	**PDI**
USA	72	83	18	52
USA-'Black'	83	86	29	71
USA-'White'	68	82	13	52
USA-'Hispanic'	83	91	41	52
Largest difference	15	9	**28**	19

Table 8 – Dimension scores, USA

In the US, sadly, cultural differences are aligned to differences in skin pigmentation. It is interesting to note that where in many African countries the largest in-country differences are seen on the Indulgence versus Restraint dimension; this seems to be different in the USA.

This research can be seen as a 'proof of concept': it shows that insights from cross-cultural psychology can be used to make useful statements about African cultures in the same way as it is being done in other parts of the world.

More research into this would be extremely useful, for a number of reasons:

- It would throw more light on where and how in Africa new cultures are developing: is this process even across Africa?

Where is it linked to national borders, where is it not? What are the differences and similarities between different countries?

- What may be cultural issues to consider when considering decisions about where to invest and where, for example, to establish regional offices?
- What are the things to look out for when developing business or other partnerships within Africa and between African countries? What are the do's and don'ts? There is currently a large knowledge gap in this area.

Such research could be done in a more direct way: more reliable results could be obtained if the detour via the World Values Survey wouldn't be needed. Therefore, again, it would be good to include a (version of) Hofstede's Values Survey Module[34] in a next Afrobarometer round. This would allow a more direct calculation of scores and better comparability with already-published scores.

It would also be good to re-examine the ethnolinguistic and language categories used in the Afrobarometer survey. The current list clearly goes back to the colonial period and compares apples with oranges – for example, for a small country like Lesotho, many groups are distinguished with very small differences in scores. For large groups like the Akan of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire or the Yoruba of Nigeria and Benin, no smaller units are distinguished – but for the Shona of Zimbabwe, there are. It would be good if these inconsistent and colonially-based categories would be replaced by a smaller set of cultural designations. At the same time, this would make it easier to ensure some form of representativity of sampling also at the ethnolinguistic group level.

It is probable that there are some commonalities between African cultures and that those commonalities are different from those between, for example, European cultures. At the same time, Africa is not a cultural whole, in the same way that Asia or Europe are not culturally homogeneous. On the other hand, the trope that Africa is an area of almost endless cultural diversity is also not true (Prah 2008: 71). As outlined in this paper, more research in this area is useful for a variety of reasons and it is possible, using the Afrobarometer mechanism. A first step in that direction will be taken in the next section.

[34] https://geerthofstede.com/research-and-vsm/vsm-2013/

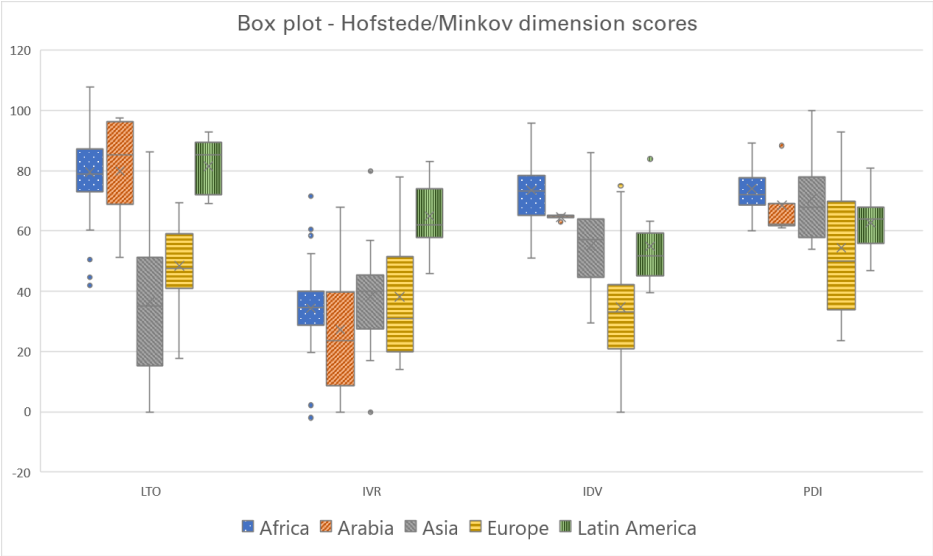
3.6 Africa in the World

The work presented in previous sections has led to new Hofstede/Minkov scores on a large number of African countries. For the first time, then, it becomes possible to use this approach to look a bit more precisely at the question of whether there is such a thing as a common African cultural identity. Is there one for Europe, for Asia, for Latin America? This is certainly a common perception. But how can it be described? Can the cultural dimensions approach be useful here? I think it can, by making a comparison between the range of dimension scores per continent. I have explored this for Africa,[35] the Arab region, Asia, Europe[36] and Latin America.[37] The data used are the national scores, using the Afrobarometer data where they are available, WVS data where there are no Afrobarometer data, Minkov data where available for IDV and LTO (recalculated to a scale between zero and 100) and Hofstede data in the remaining cases. These data sets are strongly correlated, but not identical.[38] Still, I think they are useful for discerning overall patterns, as the box plot below shows. The boxes show the 2nd and 3rd quartile, the 'whiskers' the 1st and 4th and the dots are outlier values. The inclusive median method has been used.

The plot confirms the often-repeated assertion that Africa as a whole is collectivist (high score on IDV) and that by contrast, Europe is individualist. However, note that some countries in Europe are as collectivist as some of the African countries. The plot also confirms that Asian countries are the most 'flexible' in their norms (a low LTO score), although the range is very wide. On indulgence versus restraint, most continents score similar. What is noticeable there is the large spread in values that exist on all continents, with the exception of Latin America, which scores markedly more indulgent. The Arab region seems to be the most restrained, although here, too there is a large spread. Power distance is related to the individualism/collectivism dimension. Here, Africa scores highest, although scores overlap with those of

[35] Sub-Saharan Africa, including Cabo Verde, Madagascar and Mauritius.
[36] For Russia and Turkey, I have taken the capital cities (Moscow and Ankara) in determining in which continent to put them – Europe and Asia, respectively.
[37] Including Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago.
[38] A full list of the scores used and their sources is given in the appendix for this section.

Asian countries; Europe scores lowest. Note, however, the considerable overlap between all continents on this dimension.



Graph 1 – Box plot, Hofstede/Minkov dimension scores

The box plot shows, then, that there are indeed certain commonalities when comparing Africa with other parts of the world and it could be that cosmopolitan people who have lived on several continents perceive a common African identity, in the same way that Europeans perceive this.[39] However, this should not obscure the fact that exceptions to the standard are common and that the diversity within Africa is at least as large as the diversity that exists in most other continents. Another caveat is that the data shows national averages. As Minkov and Hofstede (2012) have shown, this has a meaning for most countries. However, as I have shown in section 3.5, this is likely not to be the case in at least a number of African countries. There are some countries in Africa that are home to very different peoples, with very different value systems that serve as common points of reference to those peoples. In that sense, for those countries, knowing the national averages may have limited meaning at best.

It is interesting here to compare these results with the work of Munene, Schwartz and Smith (2000). Using the Schwartz cultural dimensions

[39] There are many attempts to describe such perceptions in the literature. See for example Etounga-Manguelle (2000) for an attempt using some Hofstede dimensions. These attempts are generally not research-based.

framework, they compared the values of teachers and students in a number of Western European countries with teachers and students in a (small) number of African countries. In order to do this, they first construct an image of what are supposedly common African values, paraphrasing the work of Onwuejeogwu. They then interpret them using the Schwartz framework, and find that African culture emphasizes embeddedness and a 'status-differentiated organization of social groups', opposed to egalitarianism (p342). They immediately make a link to development: 'when these modes of work relations are maintained in the context of a market economy, they seriously interfere with productivity.' (ibid) The authors then go and look for such commonalities in the African countries they have sampled – and find them. They do this not by providing scores on any of the Schwartz dimensions, but by comparing how countries rank within the 54 countries for which they have data. Thus, we do not know whether or not two countries that rank closely together actually also score closely together, or indeed whether the reverse is true.

On a superficial level, the findings of Munene, Schwartz and Smith are not so different from mine: indeed, for most observers coming from Europe, most African countries will seem to score higher on Power Distance and on Collectivism. However, by taking such a Eurocentric view they lose sight in fact both of the diversity that exists within Africa and of the diversity that exists within Europe. Thus, they confirm a stereotypical image of 'Africa as a country' even when their data does show differences within Africa. In their conclusions, the authors shy away from the idea that Africa's slow pace of development is related to its common cultural problems – even though they cite a number of authors who do suggest this. The problem posed by competing world views and different value systems *within* Africa and inhibitions to the development of various culturally autonomous traditions is totally invisible to them.

A decolonial vision, inspired by Pan Africanism should also be Africa-centered in the sense that it takes Africa and its cultural areas as the starting point. The comparative data presented here should be taken to show, in the first place, Africa's internal diversity, a diversity that is in fact as least as high as the diversity that is found in other continents. That being said, the data also provide evidence for a common point of reference that can be taken to be an 'African culture' that many Africans will understand and be able to relate to even though, on the individual as well as on the ethnolinguistic level they may perceive themselves as being quite different from that common culture.

3.7 Conclusions

The purpose of this part of the study was to answer the first research question: how can we describe current large-scale cultural differences and similarities in Africa, using the methods and terminology of cross-cultural psychology? In order to do that, I started by giving a definition of culture, as **a value system that serves as common point of reference to a people**. I then went on to discuss that definition by comparing it to several other definitions or ideas of culture that exist in the literature and explained its meaning in relation to concepts such as nations, peoples and ethnic groups. I then outlined the approach of cultural psychology, discussing the various schools of thought within the field and the criticism to which it has been subjected. In so doing, I also clarified my position as following the dominant Hofstede/Minkov frame of reference, although conscious of the problems associated with it.

After a brief survey of the literature on Ghana and on Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini and South Africa, I came to the conclusion that describing larger-scale cultural differences and similarities in Africa is not very well possible based on that literature. Thus, it is not possible for example to say whether or not national cultures have developed in Ghana or in the countries of Southern Africa mentioned above. Yet, this type of knowledge is important to understand the development of these societies since the colonial period, among other things to assess the potential or otherwise for national democratic debate and consensus-building. The approach of cross-cultural psychology might be able to offer new insights.

I then sought to come to such insights using three related but different lenses. In section four, I used an approach developed by Minkov and Hofstede (2012), the technique of hierarchical cluster analysis. That analysis has shown that the conventional way of describing cultural differences, by describing differences between ethnolinguistic groups as designated in colonial times, has lost its meaning, at least in some countries. It may come as no surprise that in countries like Botswana, Lesotho and Madagascar all ethnolinguistic groups cluster together. However, this is also the case for countries like Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal. In total, this holds for ten out of the 26 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa for which survey data were available. The hierarchical cluster analysis shows that there is not one common pattern that applies across Africa – there are not even regional patterns. In some countries, a national culture seems to be developing; in others, such as for example Kenya or Tanzania, considerable cultural differences remain. I pointed out that cluster analysis is a data reduction technique that can be useful for mapping the cultural landscape of a larger area,

but it also has its limitations, especially when it comes to describing individual groups.

For the second lens, I tried to become a bit more precise, by attempting to derive scores for a number of individual dimensions for ethnolinguistic groups in Africa. The method used was based on the idea of 'anchoring' data sets to one another, as suggested by Hofstede. Using this method, I was able to obtain approximate scores on over 200 ethnolinguistic groups from 35 African countries for four of the six Hofstede/Minkov dimensions: Fixed versus Flexible (or LTO), Indulgence versus Restraint, Individualism versus Collectivism and Power Distance. I was unable to do that for the remaining dimensions of Masculinity versus Femininity and Uncertainty Avoidance. The results confirm, with greater detail and precision, the conclusions from the cluster analysis.

The analysis has shown the dynamic and diverse nature of Africa and of African cultures. In Lesotho and South Africa, the cultural unity that was assumed to exist among the Sotho, no matter in which country they live, no longer seems to exist. The South African Sotho are more like other South Africans than they are to the people of Lesotho. The same is true for the Tswana in South Africa and Botswana and also for the Swazi of Eswatini and South Africa. So I found tentative support for the idea that in those Southern African countries, new identities are emerging. For a country like Ghana, a similar process might be happening. The four largest ethnolinguistic groups in that country, together making up more than 85% of the population, score relatively similar to one another, except for the Indulgence versus Restraint dimension.

In other countries, by contrast, differences are more pronounced. The Acholi and Lango of Uganda show relative similarity to one another and to the Luo of Kenya. Linguistically, these groups are related. So here, it seems that national borders are culturally less relevant than for example in Southern Africa.

All in all, the study demonstrates that the widespread practice of equating ethnolinguistic units with cultural units is in general no longer tenable: for some areas, this might give reasonable approximations; for others, it does not.

The data generated in section five (the second lens of dimension scores per ethnolinguistic group) made it possible to provide a comparison with other world regions in section six, using much more data from Africa than hitherto available. This comparison shows two main things. On the one hand, it shows that the African continent, like the other major world areas, does have some commonalities. It confirms the idea that Africa on average is collectivist and that Europe, by contrast, is

individualist. However, it also shows that within Africa, as in other continents, there is considerable internal cultural diversity. Thus, the most individualist country in Africa is more individualist than the most collectivist country in Europe. There are other differences of this nature as well. Africa as a whole, for example has a 'high' score on power distance. However, the highest-scoring European country scores higher than the highest-scoring African country.

All in all, these three lenses show that it is possible to describe large-scale cultural differences and similarities in Africa using the approach of cross-cultural psychology and this chapter has made a start with giving such descriptions. However, I could not go much beyond a 'proof of concept', pointing the way to the need for much more research. I will return to that in chapter seven.

In chapter one, I pointed to the work of key theoreticians such as Vansina and Prah. Vansina predicted the emergence of several neo-African traditions, and my research seems to show the first signs of that process. Prah pointed to the key role of language and education in that process. This is then the matter to which I will turn next.

4. African Languages in Higher Education

This study is oriented on the historical analysis of Vansina, who has shown that in precolonial times, several distinct cultural 'traditions' existed in Africa, traditions that were essentially destroyed by colonialism, in ways that are unique to Africa. I have taken up Vansina's prediction that neo-African traditions will appear, based in part in African languages. With Vansina, I have argued that such neo-African traditions will be key to reshaping new forms of cultural autonomy or autonomies, healing the wounds that were caused by the colonial period and creating conditions for a development process that is Africa-centred.

I have demonstrated how cross-cultural psychology, a method used widely in other parts of the world but not very much in Africa, offers a way of tentatively mapping these new cultural traditions. I have shown how diverse Africa is in this sense: in some countries, new national cultural identities seem to be emerging. In others, this is not happening, in spite of the massive efforts at 'nation building' over the past 60 years or so. At any rate, it is clear that language, as transmitted in the home but also as used in education can play a crucial role in the process of building new cultural autonomies.

In this chapter, I will focus on the area of language in education. I hope to answer my second research question:

- Why are African languages currently not being used more in higher education as medium of instruction?

The first section gives a more general treatment at the conceptual level, building on the starting points outlined in chapter 1.4. It looks at the theory of languages and languoids and proposes a new conceptual distinction between 'discerned' and 'designed' languages. It examines existing explanations of why African languages are currently not being used more in higher education. The second section offers a new explanation, inspired by Bourdieu and based on an examination of what education systems in various countries are able to deliver, given specific levels of enrolment in education. This will lead to my answer to the question of why African languages are not currently being used more in higher education. I will also argue why this is likely to change in the coming decade or so, at least in some countries.

4.1. The position of African languages

4.1.1 Language or languoid?

There is a school of thought in linguistics, with Pennycook as its best-known proponent, which questions the utility of seeing languages as 'bounded objects' altogether. Instead, these linguists argue in favour of taking language repertoires or language registers as actually used by speakers as the starting point; they prefer to talk about 'languoids' rather than languages.

A very well-developed example of this type of thinking and what it leads to is provided in the work of Lüpke and Storch (2013). Their starting point is a description of the linguistic situation in the Casamance region of Southern Senegal. They show that the linguistic situation in that region is very different from that in Europe or the Americas.[1] In Europe or the Americas, young people are brought up in one language (their mother tongue) and they typically learn additional languages in school. In this part of Africa, though, young people are typically brought up in several languages and they learn to use those languages (or 'registers') in different social situations, depending on the circumstances. They argue that it makes little sense to introduce formal literacy training in standardized local languages under those circumstances. In day to day use, people need more than one language; linguistic variation within every 'language' is considerable; people have little opportunities and little utility for using formal written forms. Instead, they favour an approach that valorises the multilingual abilities of speakers and takes that as a starting point, also in classroom situations.[2] These kinds of multilingualisms, they argue, are rare in other parts of the world, but common in Africa. Therefore, they call for "the adoption of an emic perspective by providing the 'thick description' called for by Geertz (1973) for the related field of anthropology" (p 229).

The approach advocated by Lüpke and Storch has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages operate mostly at the level of languages as spoken. I agree with Lüpke and Storch where they point out that the differences construed by foreign observers may not

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[1] Note, though, that recently they have come under criticism for over-generalizing the experience from one particular area of the Casamance to the rest of the region and indeed to Africa as a whole: see Sagna and Hantgan (2021, forthcoming).

[2] This has given rise to the LILIEMA project, https://soascrossroads.org/2018/01/11/liliema-phase-two-bringing-language-independent-literacies-to-an-international-forum-by-friederike-lupke/ retrieved 4 October 2019.

correspond to the differences perceived by speakers and I also agree that those differences may be much more situational and much less absolute than what the terminology may lead one to believe. Lüpke and Storch criticize the common linkages that are made between languages and ethnic or 'tribal' entities. This criticism is shared by me, as described in chapter three. In addition, a teaching approach that takes the actual linguistic repertoires of learners as its starting point and values them all as resources seems to make eminent sense.

The disadvantages, on the other hand, are mostly at the level of language policy, but they are also related to the general problem I have with some anthropological approaches, as outlined in chapter 1.7. The approach by Lüpke and Storch leads to an exclusive focus on 'what language *actually* is to speakers and hearers' (p 347) and blinds them to the role (implicit or explicit) of language policy and language planning. In a way, they 'otherize' Africa and Africans by situating them in a type of reserve where they live their natural lives, only marginally influenced or affected by governmental or institutional policies (for example in the area of language). These policies are relegated to a vague 'context' that they seem to accept as unchanging and not subject to being influenced by Africans as actors at that level. Where some would see harmonized and standardized languages as a form of social innovation that has its benefits, they see them as a colonial imposition.[3] Even though Lüpke and Storch themselves unquestioningly make use of the advantages offered to them by a conventionalized use of the English language and take these for granted, they seem to deny the utility of conventionalized language to African languages. Yet conventionalized languages are the medium of instruction at the levels of secondary and higher education. Following the analytical framework of Lüpke and Storch would lead to a neglect of language policy and language planning and would lead to an unquestioning acceptance of the political choice to use French and other international languages as medium of instruction in secondary and higher education. As Bamgbose (2011: 6) remarked: 'absence of a policy is indeed a policy, for whenever there is no declared policy in any domain, what happens is a continuation of the *status quo*.' The same could be said of neglect of the policy element in linguistic research: the absence of such research is a policy choice, for neglect of this field means an unquestioning acceptance of the status quo.

My approach has no issue with the analysis of multilingual situations that Lüpke and Storch make for certain areas in Africa and with the recommendations for teaching that they draw from it. However, for a

[3] Of course, language harmonization and standardization are not European inventions: these processes were around in other parts of the world long before they became commonplace in Europe.

discussion of the role of policy, the approach of Lüpke and Storch is inadequate and, I would argue, dangerous. An example of how this type of thinking can in fact be disempowering and can confuse even the brightest minds can be seen in Heugh (2016: 253). She writes:

'From a theoretical perspective, acceptance of diversity and its inevitability requires a different trajectory from one based [on] the diminishing of variability. This last perspective dovetails with a third possibly more profound consideration, an emerging debate which questions the very foundations of nineteenth and twentieth century colonial linguistics.'

This creates a false contradiction. In my view, it is perfectly possible to combine a standard form of language as used in instruction with a great diversity of speech forms (as is indeed the case for the English language). If the result of 'questioning the foundations of colonial linguistics' means that language policies are rejected as irrelevant and going against 'inevitable' diversity, then this leaves African languages worse off than they were before and inevitably will lead to a strengthening of the position of international languages, English first of all. A stark example of such a development is provided by Chebanne (2016a: 295), who shows that the Khoisan languages are threatened because of 'the lack of an adequate language development policy'. In his analysis, '[i]t is important that Khoisan languages go beyond the insular and idiosyncratic developments that have been promoted under the guise of preserving ethnic and linguistic identity. Pursuing this separate, narrow, and myopic approach can only further marginalize these beleaguered languages.' In fact, the same holds true for almost all African languages - more on this in section 6.5.2.

4.1.2 On discerned and designed languages.[4]

There is a well-known maxim[5] saying that a language is a dialect with an army and a navy. For Africa, one might paraphrase this to say that a language is a dialect with a missionary and a linguist, pointing to the large role that missionaries have played in mapping and naming African languages. In any case, this maxim points to the idea that languages are not purely naturally occurring phenomena, but that what is called a language and what not can be and is contested. Conceptually my ideas on what to call a language and on how and why choices can be made here are inspired by proposals put forward as far back as

[4] The ideas in this section were first presented at the Colloquium on African Languages and Linguistics, Leiden, Netherlands, 2 September 2020.

[5] Attributed to the Yiddish linguist Max Weinreich in 1945.

1952 by the German sociolinguist Heinz Kloss.[6] They were published by him in English in 1967.

Kloss (1967) introduces a distinction between what he calls 'Abstand' and 'Ausbau' languages. These words have not been translated into English in the sociolinguistic literature, giving me the freedom to propose the terms of 'discerned' versus 'designed' languages as English approximations. The term 'discerned' (or 'Abstand') languages is, according to Kloss, a *linguistic* concept that refers to all languages, whether they have a developed writing system and grammar or not. He assumes that linguists have a way of determining the 'intrinsic distance' between languages and to decide on the borders between languages using those criteria (p 30). The concept of 'designed' (or 'Ausbau') languages, on the other hand, is not a linguistic concept: it is *sociological*. It refers only to those languages that have been deliberately shaped and built to become standardized vehicles of literary and scientific expression (which could include oral cultures). Many language names are used for both: these are languages for which the same name is used for their discernible form as spoken language and for their literary form. But this is not always the case. Kloss gives the example of Czech and Slovak: at the spoken level, he sees them as one language,[7] encompassing a number of different dialects. However, at the literary level, they have developed different standardized forms and here we have therefore one 'Abstand' (discerned) language at the spoken level but two 'Ausbau' languages at the formal, literary level. The way Kloss describes his concept of 'Ausbau' languages is very similar to the concept of 'intellectualisation'. Prah (2017: 216) quotes the definition of Sibayan from 1999: an intellectualised language is a 'language which can be used for educating a person in any field of knowledge from kindergarten to the university and beyond'. This terminology is also used by Kaschula and Nkomo (2019: 604), who quote Havránek in making a distinction between 'folk and standard

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[6] Kloss started his career as a young scientist in Nazi Germany. His main body of work concerned minority languages in the USA. There is some disagreement about whether or not he distanced himself sufficiently from his earlier thinking after the war – see for example Wiley (2002). My proposals for English-language terms are inspired by Kloss, but the change of emphasis I propose and their application to Africa represents a novel development that bears no relationship to the rest of the ideas or writing of Kloss.

[7] The Ethnologue would disagree with Kloss here, and sees these as two languages, denoted by the ISO 693-3 codes <ces> for Czech and <slk> for Slovak. However, the Ethnologue also asserts: 'All Czech and Slovak dialects [are] mutually inherently intelligible'. https://www-ethnologue-com/language/ces accessed 30 March 2020.

languages' and Sibayan in making a distinction between 'intellectually modernized' and 'popularly modernized' languages. They see intellectualization of languages 'as a counterhegemonic process that seeks to empower communities through language' (p 606). I agree with this approach, but prefer the terminology of 'discerned' and 'designed' languages. The term 'intellectualisation' could be seen as implying a value judgement on those languages that have not been 'intellectualised' and does not help us understand the importance of distinguishing between the linguistic and the sociological aspects of language.

Kloss points out that there is a certain degree of freedom here: forming of designed languages is a historical process that can be sped up or in fact reversed as a result either of shifts in power relationships or of changes in policy or (as will most often be the case) of both. Djité (2008: x) asks: '[I]sn't it the case that some languages have simply not been *allowed* to develop as others have? Isn't it the case that evidence of literacy tradition in some languages has intentionally been destroyed (…), forbidden (…) or ignored (…)?' Kaschula and Nkomo (2019: 607) also make this point:

'The arrival of foreign traders, explorers, missionaries, and colonial settlers resulted in cross-cultural encounters and the transformation of economic, cultural, religious, and political domains, which devalued indigenous knowledge and African thought systems. This not only alienated indigenous people from the socioeconomic and political organizational structures of the new societies, but also de-intellectualized their languages.'

This analysis ties in closely with the assessment of Vansina on the destruction of cultural autonomy as quoted in chapter 2.1. It also means that there may be some scope for reclaiming or re-intellectualizing languages, for example by preparing new renderings of old and perhaps partially forgotten literary texts in African languages. An interesting resource in this regard may be the Verba Africana website.[8]

Kloss stresses that in order to master a designed language a certain amount of formalized learning is always required. This is what Lo Bianco (2008: 114) refers to as 'secondary lingual socialization'. It also helps to explain why in countries that use an indigenous language as medium of instruction this language is also taught as a subject in its own right, usually up to the end of secondary school. Kloss gives the example of German (p35): linguists might disagree as to whether spoken high German *('Hochdeutsch')* and lower Saxon *('Plattdeutsch')* are in fact part of one 'discerned' language or indeed two languages (it

[8] http://www.verbafricana.org, accessed 15 September 2020.

will come as no surprise that the Ethnologue is of the latter opinion). However, speakers of both forms of German use Standard written German as their common 'designed' language, but this standardized version is different from both spoken languages and requires learning in order to master it. However, learning standard written German is easier for speakers of high German and of lower Saxon than it would be for speakers of, for example, French.

It is interesting to tie these concepts to the distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), introduced by Cummins (1979).[9] Cummins points out that these are two relatively unrelated skill sets and that CALP only becomes fully developed in the late teens. He points out that higher proficiency in CALP in L1 makes it easier to develop the same in L2, especially if the two languages are not too different. He defines semilingualism as low CALP in any language. With this concept, it becomes easy to understand how people can have basic communication skills (BICS) in a number of languages and are still unable to function at a more academic level. It is also obvious that developing CALP requires a language that has been 'designed' or intellectualized to a certain degree.

Now that the concepts have been clarified, a further explanation of my shift of emphasis compared to Kloss is in order. The most straightforward translation of 'Abstand' into English is distance. Kloss proposes to use this term for dialects or speech registers that are so distant from one another that it is justified to speak of different languages. The word 'discerned' places a slightly different emphasis, pointing to the act of discerning – the political and social act of pronouncing a dialect to be a language. The word 'Ausbau' means extension or expansion in English. Kloss thus refers to the act of extending a spoken language into a standardized language, including its written form. The word 'designed' in a way reinforces this meaning, again pointing to the social process that is involved here. This reinforcement is intentional. Many languages (including French, German, Italian, but certainly also Bahasa Indonesia or Turkish) have an explicit and strong design element to them. In the Anglo-Saxon world, this design element is much less explicit and remains to a certain extent hidden below the surface. An equivalent of the Académie Française, with its strong mandate of protecting the French language,[10] does not

[9] The concepts of Cummins have been quite influential. Although they have been criticized, for example for being difficult to operationalize in practice, they have also led to important new insights and research.

[10] http://www.academie-francaise.fr/linstitution/les-missions accessed 8 June 2020.

exist in the Anglo-Saxon world (McGroarty, 2008). Yet, the "Queen's English" or "BBC English" is in fact a form of standardized language developed in elite institutions in the UK and actually spoken and used in that form by only a small minority of the UK population.[11] Thus, even if there is no official body 'designing' the language in the Anglo-Saxon world, English as a designed language is (re)produced just as effectively as what happens with other languages. This process can easily be mistaken for a 'natural' development and can create a type of myopia, causing some linguists to overlook the fact that both American and British standard English are created, designed, through social, power-structure mediated processes (in Bourdieu's terms: through a *habitus* that is part of the s*ocial capital* of the English-speaking world) using different mechanisms but with the same effects as with the majority of other designed languages of the world.

The concepts of discerned and designed languages allow us to look differently at the issue raised by the Pennycook school, which prefers to look at language as something people 'do' rather than as something people 'possess'[12] – this may again be related to the peculiar Anglo-Saxon myopia referred to above. At the level of discerned languages, their way of describing things may have some level of descriptive or analytical value: it is certainly true that people use different language 'registers' in different ways and in different situations and that analysing these can help in understanding different social contexts. On the other hand, at the level of designed languages, their concepts fail, because they elide the institutionalized roles and functions of languages. This criticism is in line with the critique of Lecercle as discussed by Ives (2008: 163). Lecercle criticises philosophies of language to the extent that they share a methodological individualism that reduces language to a communicative function. In Lecercle's vision, language should be seen as a form of *praxis*, that understands language as historical, social, material and political.

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[11] In a curious form of English idiom this is referred to as the 'received pronunciation'. Trudgill (2002: 171) claims that it is spoken by around 3% of the British population. Many a bright youngster who has studied English as a foreign language and who has little difficulty in watching for example the BBC World TV station will find to his or her surprise on a first visit to England that he or she has great difficulty in understanding the ordinary English person. Adichie describes a similar phenomenon for her Nigerian characters in their encounters with U.S. English. For an overview of different varieties of spoken English, see the electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English, https://ewave-atlas.org/, accessed 19 June 2020.

[12] Pennycook, 2010: 2.

Using the Pennycook school as a way of looking at languages in Africa is tempting, because there is so little institutionalization of African languages. Yet this hides sight of the extent to which colonial and imperialist power structures are pervading the domain of language and language policy in Africa. Thus, the Pennycook approach actually hides the structural features of current language regimes from sight under the guise of analysing linguistic imperialism. (See Wolff (2008b) for a nuanced but slightly different approach to the same problem.)

Unfortunately, the assumption by Kloss that linguists would find objective and clear ways of distinguishing various 'discerned' languages has never come true. Maybe this is part of the reason why later linguists have sought to re-interpret his concepts in ways that are not necessarily helpful. An example of this is Fishman (1974), quoted in Alexander (1998: 271), who interprets 'Ausbau' languages as artificially separated from larger languages so as to *create* difference – Alexander uses this to describe the separation between closely related language varieties in South Africa. However, this is only one way in which the term can be applied. In a later contribution, Fishman (2008) proposes to rethink the concepts and to move towards a 'continuous and multivariate system'. Fishman starts by building a strawman argument: he posits that Kloss proposed a dichotomy, but that his two concepts are not really on one and the same dimension (p18). In doing so, he chooses to ignore that Kloss himself stressed that his concepts have their usefulness on different levels. Fishman then proceeds to throw away the child with the bathwater, stating that really, the concept of 'discerned' languages 'is entirely unneeded in any language planning typology'. Instead, he advocates to look at the degree of design: from more similar ('Einbau') to more different ('Ausbau'). This allows him to consider different forms in which people actually use languages: more or less informal, more or less puritan, more or less code switching, etc. However, just looking at that element does not give a complete picture either, and Fishman therefore proposes a number of additional dichotomies, such as Vernacularization versus Purification (p 24), thereby bringing back the child into the bath, albeit into waters that have now been considerably muddled, conceptually speaking.

The simpler concepts of discerned and designed languages are therefore helpful in thinking about the different functions of language in different social domains.

In Africa, there are some 'designed' languages. However, their number is relatively small, including such languages as Arabic, Afrikaans, Amharic, Somali and Swahili.

There is a large number of languages where attempts at designing a standardized variety have taken place, but that have not taken off. This

means that in Africa, there is a huge potential for language planning and engineering. For many forms of speech, the borderline between what is a dialect and what is a language is unclear. That means that it would be conceivable to develop 'designed' languages that can serve a number of spoken languages, in the same way that standard written German serves as the designed language for a number of spoken German-like languages. The concepts of discerned and designed languages allow us to see these possibilities more clearly.

Language planning, language design or language development is an area of work on which much work has been done; it cannot be discussed in full here. However, it is possible to briefly examine some issues that are of relevance to this study. Language planning is generally considered to be comprised of three areas: status planning (also known as prestige planning – for Africa, see for example Kamwangamalu, 2016)[13]; corpus planning; and acquisition planning (Kaschula and Nkomo 2019: 602). The latter area deals specifically with language-in-education. Taylor-Leech and Liddicoat (2014) provide a useful overview of the main issues and models for what they call 'Macro-language planning'.[14] They point to the importance of language-in-education, because '[n]ot only are educational institutions the formal transmitters of languages but they also transmit and perpetuate culture' (p 354). What is more, 'language planning decisions in multilingual educational settings are often rooted in wider power relationships and the social, economic, and political interests of dominant groups. The outcomes of these decisions can advance the educational and life opportunities of some, while restricting those of others.'

The problem of the multitude of discerned languages and their relationship to designed languages is not treated as such by them, but they do point out how this problem is handled in practice in many countries: governments and policy makers deliberately decide to use a limited number of languages as 'mother tongues' spoken in the country, ignoring the existence of other discerned languages, or

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[13] In Europe, language prestige is made visible through numerous bits of legislation, permeating all spheres of life – for example, the requirement to list ingredients on labels of foodstuffs in languages that are 'easy to understand' for the customer is given in EU regulation no. 1169/2011. This regulation itself has been published in 24 languages. See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011R1169 accessed 23 September 2020.

[14] Macro-language here refers to the macro- or societal level, not to the term 'macrolanguage' as used by SIL for some languages it discerns that nevertheless have much in common. An example is Akan, used to cover the discerned languages of Fante and Twi. See https://iso639-3.sil.org/code_tables/macrolanguage_mappings/data, accessed 15 June 2020.

relegating them to an inferior position (p 356). Clearly, those decisions are often based on the prevailing power relationships in countries, rather than on any considerations of inclusivity or of human rights. However, this need not always be the case. Thus, Taylor-Leech and Liddicoat cite the example of Slovenia, where schools in minority areas use either Hungarian or Italian as medium of instruction, in some cases combined with Slovenian. These are all very different languages. These models, although not identical in their outcomes, are presented as examples that 'demonstrate that well-resourced, additive approaches to bilingual education can result from language planning that recognises minority language rights.' (p 358) They conclude that a bottom-up approach, rooted in the communities, works best. This issue of *how* language design or language harmonization should be done is largely outside the scope of this work, even though it is important in itself. Suffice it here to point to Makoni (2016), who posits a distinction between language *unification*, as an artificial exercise attempted for example by missionaries, and language *harmonization*, which he describes as more rooted in African approaches. He cautions that community involvement in harmonization projects is necessary, but 'does not necessarily result in successful uptake of the projects in the long term' (p 232).

Unfortunately, community-based examples such as those of Slovenia are hard to come by in Africa. Bamgbose (2011: 5) says:

'Ideally, proper language planning should ensure that all languages have a definite status and specified roles in a multilingual setting. The situation in most African countries, however, is that language planning processes are defective. Commonly encountered situations include policy deficit (usually referred to as absence of policy), propaganda policy, non-implementation, and lack of political will.'

The distinction between languages as discerned (in a linguistic way) versus languages as designed (as institutionalised, sociological phenomena) would have helped Ameka (2017), who discusses the problems of the difference between the standardized or official language and the languages as spoken. He calls for a form of language standardization that takes the differences in spoken language into account; this plea can be accommodated and understood using the discerned-designed distinction. Likewise, these concepts could have served Banda (2009) in developing a more clearly articulated perspective on language planning and policy in Africa. Banda contrasts monolingualism – which he sees as the normal situation in Europe – with multilingualism – which he sees as the normal situation in Africa. He then argues in favour of promoting Africa's already existing multilingual repertoires as a resource for development – so far, so

good. However, Banda is silent on what this would mean in practice, for example for his home country of Zambia. I have two problems with this analysis. The first is that in reality, the distinction between Africa and Europe, in my view, is one of degree, rather than being qualitative. Speakers in a country like Slovenia may have a language repertoire that includes Croatian, English, German and Italian, besides one or more Slovenian dialects (of which there are many). What makes the difference is that Slovenian itself is not only a discerned, but also a designed language: there is an accepted Standard Slovene that is taught in schools. What is more, the neighbouring countries also have standard designed languages and these are also being taught (as subjects or in some regions as medium of instruction) in Slovenian schools. This is where Europe is different from Africa: in Africa, African designed languages are often not used as medium of instruction except for the first few years and the languages of the neighbours are usually not officially taught at all.

My second problem is that just saying that 'multilingual repertoires' need to be taken as a starting point does not lead to a practical application. For that, the distinction between discerned and designed languages is helpful and indeed necessary. In a country like South Africa, it would be possible (as Banda himself points out) to use a standardized form of Nguni as a designed language as medium of instruction for speakers of the discerned languages Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi and Ndebele. In addition, Sotho and English (for example) could be taught as subjects (also as designed languages). This means using a limited set of designed languages. Such a strategy would obviously work to the advantage of students who already have a diverse repertoire of discerned languages that they speak (and would disadvantage monolingual speakers) and therefore would work to the benefit of most South Africans – in the same way that this would work in Slovenia. Still, it could be that South Africans have an even richer spoken language repertoire, including for example youth languages or Afrikaans; these languages would not all be used as taught designed languages, even though students and teachers might use them to their advantage for spoken communication in a school setting. This type of debate is made easier using the discerned – designed terminology as proposed by me and therefore takes off where Banda's proposal ends. As Joswig (2020: 96) rightly points out: 'A language standard adds a written variety to a complex dialect situation, but in itself it does not remove any diversity. Spoken language diversity has proven to be very resilient in the face of written standards.'

Clearly, there is a complex relationship between discerned and designed languages. In that sense, the claim by Kloss that 'Ausbau'

language is a sociological concept, although correct, is not complete. If we accept that linguistics as a discipline also looks at language as written and codified, then studying designed languages can also be an object of linguistic study. It might be possible to maintain that spoken languages cannot be seen as 'bounded and countable objects'; however, for designed languages, the statement is clearly untenable: the fact that they are bounded and countable forms a defining element of what constitutes designed languages.

If an African language would be developed as a designed language and would be used as a medium of instruction up to tertiary level, that would influence the way related discerned languages are used. It would also have an influence on the status and thus on the choices people make for using or not using international languages, for example with their children – and of course this would be worth studying from a linguistic, as well as a sociological perspective. In this context, it is useful to point to the possibility of reverse language shift – the process whereby people revert to using a language that had previously suffered from diminishing use. Discussing the theory of reverse language shift as developed among others by Fishman is outside the scope of this work but see Stroud (2004) for a discussion of reverse language shift theory in African settings.

One of the things this discussion of discerned and designed languages has shown is that learning a designed language requires some form of formal education. But how does that help us to answer the research question? In order to discuss that, it is necessary to examine the issue of 'mother tongue' education next.

4.1.3 Is education in the mother tongue useful – and for who?

Sustainable Development Goal 4 calls for education opportunities for all (UN, 2015). It is perhaps good to stress that this goal itself represents a clear break with education the way it was in colonial times: in colonial times, there was never any attempt at providing education for all. Once we do consider education for all, there is no escaping the overwhelming scientific consensus that yes, education in a designed language that is close to the discerned language spoken by the learners (the 'mother tongue'[15] gives best results at the lowest cost. This has

[15] The term 'mother tongue' or 'L1' as used by me may refer to a discerned language that is different from the one spoken by the mother of the child – in Africa, there are situations where the first language that a child becomes fluent in is not the language spoken by the mother. There may also be children who are fluent from an early age in more than one discerned language; these have more than one mother tongue or L1 in their repertoire.

been the consensus at least since a UNESCO report from 1953, which already recommended education in the mother tongue in Africa. Experts point to a number of advantages (see, for example, the overview by Skuttnab-Kangas (2012), but also Ouane and Glanz (2010), Heugh (2011, 2019), Benson (2015), the Education Commission Report, nd-2016[16] or the impassioned plea by Wolff (2018a)):

- It makes for livelier classroom interaction.
- Children perform better and learn faster.
- It is more efficient, especially if teachers can use their mother tongue for teaching children in that same language (Walter, 2008, 2014).
- It reduces the gap between home culture and school culture.
- Giving children a sound foundation in their mother tongue helps them in acquiring foreign language skills more easily and helps them attain a better level.
- Skills requiring abstract thinking, including arithmetic and mathematical skills are better grounded and will develop more easily.

It is important to point out that formal education in a specific language always involves teaching children to use a language that is different from the spoken word: it involves teaching a designed language in the sense meant above, that is related to but still different from the discerned language spoken at home.[17] Educational systems the world over manage this for most children, but not for all. According to a meta-analysis by McKenzie et al (2016), about 1% of all children are estimated to suffer from intellectual disability (although there is quite a bit of uncertainty about this figure). Intellectual disability means that educational systems to not manage to teach these children to read or write or if so, only to a very limited level. This means that around 99% of all children can be taught basic reading and writing skills. The number of people who can be taught to a high enough level to be considered 'literate' in the sense that they can no longer be considered 'functionally illiterate' is smaller. Functional illiterates, according to Schlechty (2004: 7) are those people who have reading and writing skills that are inadequate 'to manage daily living and employment tasks that require reading skills beyond a basic level'. According to the UK National Literacy Trust, the educational system there does not teach all to a high enough level: one out of six (16.4%) of all adults in England

[16] https://report.educationcommission.org/ retrieved 12 July 2019

[17] Parts of this discussion have also been published in Pinxteren, Bert van (2020b), part 4.3.

are functionally illiterate.[18] In 2019, the World Bank launched a new indicator, dubbed 'learning poverty': 'Learning poverty means being unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10' (World Bank 2019: 6). Even in high-income countries, there is a percentage of children in this category though fewer than 10%; so even with the best education available, not all children can be taught to such a level that they are able to read and understand a simple text.

The inconvenient truth is that learning abilities are not equally divided over the population: some people are more intelligent than others. Tests have been calibrated so that the average IQ is 100 – 50% of all children are supposed to have 'average' intelligence.[19] At the upper extreme, just over 2% of the population score 130 or above. So, some children learn more quickly than others.

For language learning, it is important to note that this division of learning abilities is not one-dimensional: there are different, although interrelated, forms of intelligence. Li (2016) has shown that language aptitude is a valid construct.[20] This construct is related to, but independent of general intelligence. What this means is that some children may be good at language, but hopeless in math. For others, it may be the other way around. Then also, of course, some children are good at both.

Two variables are relevant here from an education system perspective: the percentage of the population that receives formal education to a specific level and the distance between the discerned and the designed language. If an education system needs to reach a large *percentage of the population*, then at a given level of input, it will be most efficient if it can use a medium of instruction (a designed language) that is *as close as possible* to the discerned language(s) that children are already familiar with. So there are two differentials here: teaching more children requires more effort because aptitudes for learning a designed language are not distributed equally over the population; and teaching children in a designed language becomes more difficult as the distance between discerned and designed language increases. How exactly this works in general I do not know; however, below I will examine how it works in actual educational systems.

As argued above, for those who are less gifted in languages, language of instruction matters. Almost everybody is able to master some words in a language he or she is not familiar with; many people can reach

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[18] https://literacytrust.org.uk/parents-and-families/adult-literacy/ retrieved 8 October 2019.

[19] IQ testing in cross-cultural settings is no simple matter. See, for example, Van de Vijver and Hambleton (1996).

[20] See also Wen, Biedroń and Skehan (2017).

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in that language, at least for some domains. However, learning a designed language to a level high enough to be able to profit from more and more advanced instruction in that language takes time and effort. It requires reaching Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in that language. Lower language aptitude means more effort is required. Under colonial education systems, this was not really relevant: education was aimed at selecting those most talented and reached only a minor proportion of the population. Therefore, under colonial education systems, it was not necessary to worry about the language of instruction – any language of convenience could serve equally well. As is well-known, decolonization also brought expansion of educational opportunities – so one would naturally expect a shift to African languages. Albaugh (2014) has shown that this has happened to some extent in primary education, especially since 1990. She shows that this expansion was most marked in Francophone countries, and attributes it to a large extent to the work of Chaudenson and his colleagues, who managed to convince both the French authorities and authorities in Francophone Africa that learning French as a second language works better if there is a better foundation in the mother tongue.[21] Yet in secondary and higher education, such a shift has not happened. Why?

4.1.4 Why have attempts at using mother-tongue education been unsuccessful?

The literature offers many explanations. Djité (2008) discusses this in terms of old and new myths about language and development in Africa. Chaudenson (2006) also provides a useful overview.[22] Reasons include:

- Low status.

Language status is of course man-made, but it provides a powerful discourse. There are many examples of how African languages have been derided and portrayed as backward, undeveloped, old-fashioned, clumsy and unscientific.

- Neo-colonialism.

Former colonial powers still wield power and influence in Africa. The fact that their languages still enjoy official prestige and are still spoken in Africa adds to the prestige and feeling of self-esteem of these former

[21] Note that Djité (2008: 43) feels this analysis is too generous to the French and denies the role of Africans in bringing about these changes.
[22] For another discussion, see Muthwii (2002).

colonial powers. Therefore, they actively seek to preserve the status quo in Africa.[23]

- Low communicative value.

Especially in relation to Africa, the point is often made that some countries are linguistically just too diverse. The Ethnologue, for example, discerns 517 living languages for Nigeria alone.[24] These types of arguments are used to point out that it would be very impractical to set up education systems in hundreds of languages, especially for countries that are not rich anyway.

Related to the point raised above: it is claimed that there are many languages that have only a limited number of speakers. Developing educational materials for them would not be cost-effective and would anyway be of little use, it is argued, because in our globalized world teaching children a language they can only use in their own village will be a disservice to them.

- People want the best for their children – colonial languages as passport to prosperity.

In the current situation, colonial languages are the passports to success and upward social mobility and this is also what parents see and know. As De Swaan (2001) has shown, this has a powerful effect on the choices parents make: they will go to any length to provide their children with the best possible starting position in life. If foreign language mastery is seen as key to a good starting position, parents will do whatever they can to ensure that children learn that foreign language. Thus, parents may choose not to use their own language(s) with their children but to use their second or third language instead. In some cases, this may backfire, in the sense that 'linguistic stunting' may occur: children do not learn any language well enough so that they can easily and adequately express their thoughts, as described for Nigeria by Christopher (2008).

- Ingrained false ideas on language in education.

The popular belief is that in order to teach a child a foreign language, you must start early and in as radical a way as possible. This is one reason why parents seek foreign-language education for their children

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[23] It would be interesting to see if constitutional provisions that African states had at independence sought to cement this position and if any changes have been adopted since. For an overview of the types of language regimes included in national constitutions around the world, see Faingold (2004). For a discussion of the Great Lakes region, see Gilbert (2013).

[24] https://www.ethnologue.com/country/NG accessed 17 July 2019

from an early age or even use only their second or third language when raising their children. However, this belief is largely mistaken. It is true that it is possible to raise children to be bi- or perhaps even multilingual from an early age on. However, this works only if caregivers speak their ***native*** language (and only their native language and not their L2) to the children in their care. In all other situations, multilingual environments serve to hinder, rather than to help children in their language development (Barac and Bialystok, 2012). As Walter (2008) has shown, it is generally better if children first develop Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in a designed language that is reasonably close to the discerned language of the learner – this usually happens only in the teenage years (Skuttnab-Kangas, 2012). A well-developed CALP in one language helps the development of similar competences in another language. This borne out not only by research, but also by comparing the results obtained by educational systems, as discussed further down in section 4.2.2.

- Elite closure: elites safeguard their position.

The colonial inheritance has built a system were elites were formed on the basis of possession of a scarce resource – foreign language knowledge. This enabled them to justify (in their own eyes and to the larger population) a lifestyle that was (and is) far more comfortable than that of their fellow citizens. This means that even in the few countries in Africa that are practically monolingual (Botswana, Burundi, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda) foreign languages are maintained as the official languages as elites are reluctant to give up their positions.

- Multilingual environments.

In many urban and urbanizing areas, harbouring an ever-increasing part of the population in many African countries, people live in mixed areas; many different languages are used. Sometimes, a creole, pidgin or other lingua franca is used; sometimes, this does not happen. How to handle these situations is a real problem.

De Swaan (2001) shows that it is rational for people (including parents, when they make choices for their children's education) to choose languages that have the greatest communication value. He points out how rational choices at the individual level inevitably lead to a strengthening of the dominant languages, especially of English. He also describes the mechanism of elite closure and shows how even in relatively homogeneous countries like Botswana and Madagascar elites have a vested interest in foreign language use. In his 2004 article, he criticizes the idea that linguistic and cultural diversity are tied together

and criticizes linguists for their inclination to want to protect each and every language, calling this 'linguistic sentimentalism'. In his analysis, the net effect of this is only to strengthen the position of English.

What this means is that attempts at introducing mother-tongue education have often been resisted, undermined and abandoned. Partly, this may have been due to reforms that were introduced suddenly and without proper preparation. Bamgbose (2000) describes the common feature that reforms are discussed and proclaimed but never implemented. Altinyelken et al (2014) describe how in Uganda, local languages were introduced as medium of instruction in the rural areas, but English was kept in the cities – naturally leading parents in rural areas to assume that their children would only be receiving second-rate education (p 93/4). In other countries such as Madagascar, foreign languages were kept as medium of instruction in expensive private schools, which were then frequented by the children of the elite – leading to the same consequence (Chaudenson 2006: 29).

What these reasons have in common is that they paint a picture of Africa that in its essence is both *undifferentiated* and *static* and that denies African agency: the reasons given in the literature all point to an unchanging situation that policies will not be able to fundamentally influence or change and that is set in stone for now and the foreseeable future.

However, in my view there is another reason that explains why African languages are not being used more, one that has not yet been pointed out in the literature. It is related to the question of what one can expect an educational system to achieve, given the unequal distribution of language abilities that was pointed out above. This explanation is rooted in an analysis of the dynamics of education in Africa and in the differences that can be seen on the continent and points to a need for planning and for wise policies to be put in place.

The literature about language learning in Africa, including the works mentioned above generally seems to subscribe to an implicit assumption: the assumption that the average effort it takes to teach children to learn a designed language to a specific level does not increase if enrolment increases.[25] If, as argued above, learning abilities

[25] Another implicit but erroneous assumption is that the difference between the L1 and L2 language does not matter. Thus, Heugh (2006: 120), also quoted in Ouane and Glanz (2010) reports: 'First language speakers of Afrikaans in South Africa have become highly proficient in English, i.e. they achieve high levels of bilingual proficiency, where English is taught only as a subject for one lesson per day.' With this she seems to imply that the same result could be reached with a similar programme for, for example, first language speakers of Xhosa – ignoring the fact that Afrikaans and English are much closer to one another

are not distributed equally across the population, then this assumption cannot be true. The following theoretical question needs to be asked: **is the number of people an education system is expected to educate up to tertiary level higher than, equal to, or lower than the number of people an education system can reasonably be expected to teach a designed language to the level needed for such education?** Obviously, the answer to this question may be different depending on the distance between the discerned and the designed languages at play. In Germany, which uses standard German as the designed language of higher education, a language that is close to the discerned languages spoken by most Germans, the answer will be different from the answer in Nigeria, which uses English as the designed language of higher education, a language not close to the discerned languages spoken by Nigerians.

It is possible to ask this question in another way, namely in terms of what one can realistically expect an educational system to achieve. In theory, given infinite resources, it might be possible to teach almost anybody almost anything. However, in practice resources are never infinite. The question what to expect of an educational system can be broken down into two questions: [26]

A) What percentage of the population can an education system educate to a reasonable level of proficiency in a 'foreign' designed language?
B) What percentage of the population is an education system expected to provide with tertiary education?

If percentage 'A' is greater than percentage 'B' there will be no problem in providing tertiary education in a 'foreign' designed language. If, on the other hand, percentage 'B' is greater than percentage 'A', foreign-language tertiary education will not be an option for all of tertiary education. This point is so important that it merits repeating the same in different words: if an education system will educate **fewer** people than the number of people it can teach a foreign language to the required level, then it can use that foreign language as medium of instruction. However, as soon as an education system is expected to educate **more** people than the number it can teach a foreign language, then it can no longer make exclusive use of that foreign language as medium of instruction.

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than Xhosa and English are. This type of problem is discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.3 and (for South Africa) section 6.5.4.

[26] This discussion has been published in Pinxteren, Bert van (2020b: 144).

This theoretical question has never been asked, in part probably because for most parts of the world, it is not relevant; most developed countries have developed tertiary education systems that offer at least parts of the curriculum in a designed language that is close to the discerned language(s) of that country. Another reason why it has not been asked is probably because finding the answer to the question may not be straightforward. Yet, for Africa, a continent that uniformly relies in its tertiary education system on 'foreign' designed languages that are very different from the discerned languages people speak, this is a key question. The position developed in this study is that indeed the number of people intelligent enough to take tertiary education is significantly higher than the number of people able to learn a foreign language at the required level. However, this number is lower than the number of people actually enrolled at the moment in tertiary education in Africa. In other words, the position of this study is that the problem that could theoretically arise in Africa, as outlined above, does not yet occur in practice. Generally speaking, at the moment, there are not enough places in higher education to accommodate everybody who has the required language level. But in future, the situation may be reversed. The next section will show why this is a plausible conclusion by looking at selected educational systems and what they are actually able to achieve.

If, as argued above, not everybody is able to attain a level of proficiency in a foreign language (CALP) that is sufficient for them to follow tertiary education and if for some people it comes easier than for others, then it seems reasonable to assume that the amount of time and effort it takes (both on the part of teachers and of learners) to reach that level increases with declining aptitude. People less apt at learning a foreign language will take longer than those more apt. At some point, the effort required will become so large as to be unrealistic. In general, it is safe to assume that training 10% more children to master a foreign language to a certain level costs more than 10% extra, because language abilities are not divided equally over the population. Again, there will therefore be a natural 'language barrier':[27] at a certain moment, training more students in a foreign language will become more expensive than training them in an indigenous language.

[27] The term 'language barrier' has also been used by Benson (2015: 70), who writes: 'An estimated 2.3 billion people, nearly 40% of the world's population, lack access to education in their own language—a clear stumbling block to their learning that will not be removed by getting more children into the classroom.'

4.2 Enrolment and language –Africa and the world

In section 1.4, I pointed out that there is a link between the participation rate in education (the enrolment) and the medium of instruction and in the section above, I explained this idea in greater depth. This section goes further into detail, looking at available statistical material and comparing developments in selected countries in Africa, Europe and Asia.[28]

Before examining the data, though, a short explanation is needed of what is meant by the various levels of education and what is meant by 'higher' education. This section follows the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 scheme, as developed by UNESCO (2012). According to this scheme, 'tertiary education' is comprised of ISCED levels 5 through to 8. Level 8 stands for 'doctoral or equivalent level', whereas level 5 stands for 'short cycle tertiary education', not to be confused with level 4, which stands for 'post-secondary non-tertiary education'. It is important to note that in this scheme, 'tertiary education' refers to more than what is commonly understood as university education: it also includes education for example by polytechnics at the higher vocational level.

Secondary education comprises ISCED levels 2 and 3 – in some countries, this corresponds to a distinction between two phases of secondary education. Primary education then corresponds to ISCED level 1.

The indicator used here is the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). This ratio is the total enrolment within a country 'in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education' (UNESCO 2009: 9). It is important to realize that in theory, the GER can be above 100: this can happen if more people are enrolled at a certain educational level than there are people in that specific age bracket. A second indicator is the Completion rate at a given level of education: the percentage of the school-age population that completes the education.

As a shorthand for characterizing the functions of education, I will follow the rule of thumb that has been developed by Trow (in Cloete and Maassen 2015: 3): education that is accessible to less than 15% of the population is elite education. Education accessible to between 15

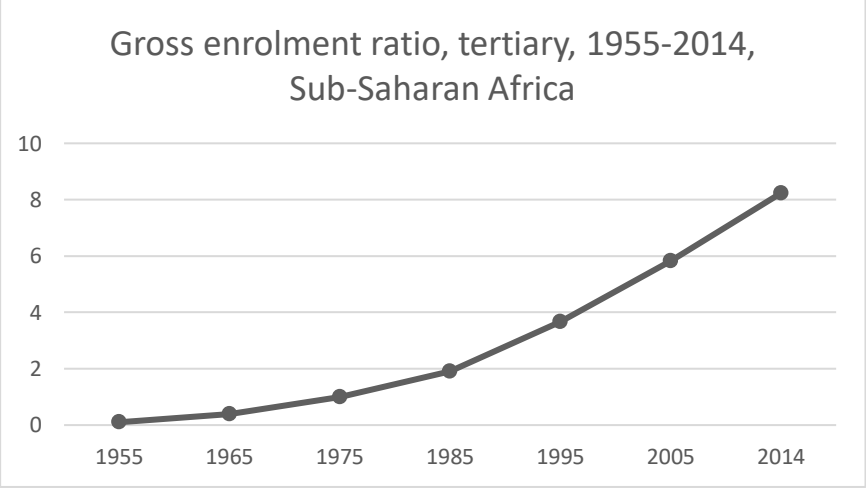
[28] This section was adapted from: Bert van Pinxteren (2018a): What Do Enrolment Data Say About Education? In: A. Breedveld and J. Jansen (Eds.), *Education for Life in Africa*, 35-50. Leiden (Netherlands): African Studies Centre. http://hdl.handle.net/1887/67229

and 40% of the population is mass education. Education accessible to more than 40% of the population is called universal education.

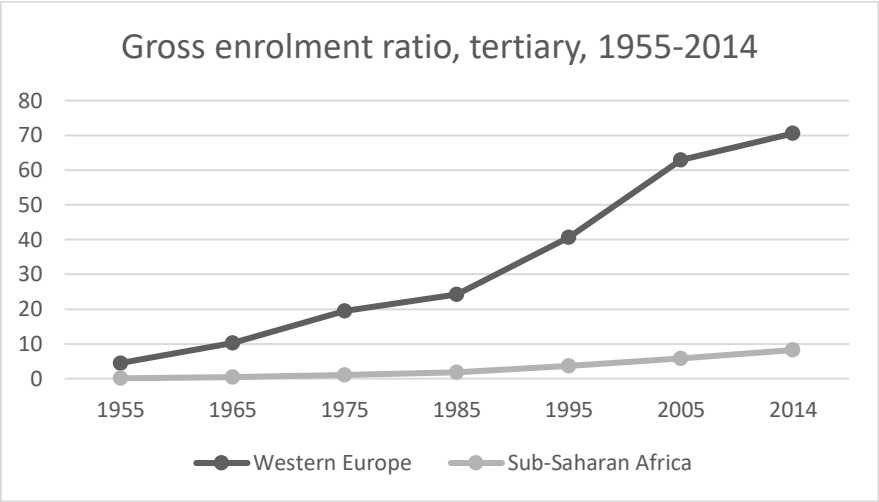
4.2.1 Evolution of Enrolment Data over Time

As shown in graph 1 below, the GER in tertiary education for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole has greatly increased in the past sixty years, rising from 0.1% in 1955 to 8.2% in 2014. However, a similar development has taken place in Western Europe, as shown in graph 2: there, GER has risen from 4.5% in 1955 to over 70% in 2014. In South Korea, it has risen from 6.8% in 1971 to over 94% in 2017. Even though the GER has increased in both regions, the growth in tertiary education in Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole has been greater than in Western Europe.

Today, the GER for Sub-Saharan Africa is approximately at the level that Western Europe had in 1965. In Europe, the function of tertiary education, especially of university education, has changed dramatically compared to the mid-1960s. This did not happen without friction: the wave of student protests that spread over most of Western Europe after 1968 is partly an expression of the changing role of tertiary education in that period. Such frictions are likely to occur in several African countries as well, as will be clear when we take a look at the statistics of individual countries.

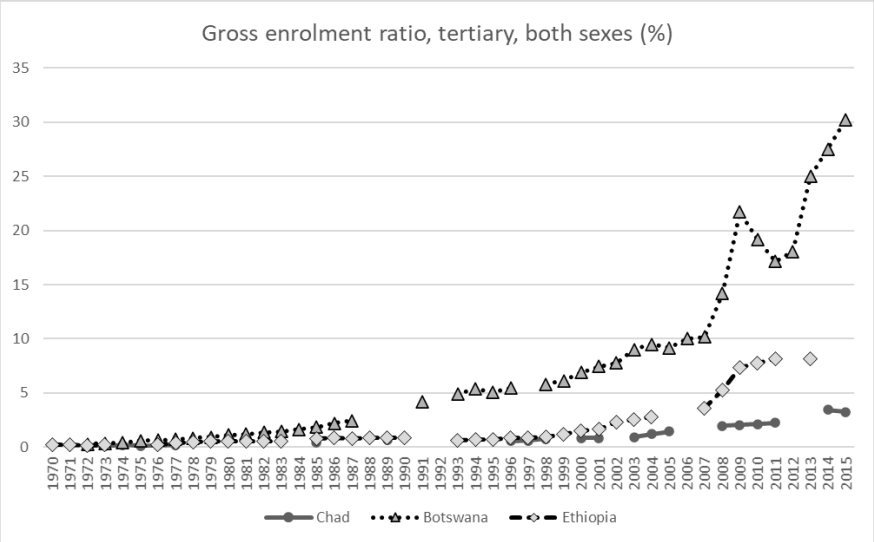


Graph 1 - GER SSA 1955-2014. Sources: Altbach (2012) and UNESCO



Graph 2 - GER Western Europe and SSA, 1955-2014. Sources: Altbach (2012) and UNESCO

Statistics that show an entire subcontinent hide the substantial differences that exist between countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Chad holds the sad position of the African country with the lowest GER in 1972 and in 2014 as well. The countries with the highest GER in Africa include Egypt and some other Arab countries as well as Mauritius. Of Sub-Saharan Africa, the country with the highest GER is Botswana. A country that is near the Sub-Saharan average is Ethiopia. The evolution in GER in these three countries since 1970 is shown in graph 3 below:



Graph 3 - GER, Botswana, Chad, Ethiopia

As is clear from the graph, the differences between countries are considerable. In 1972, Botswana had the highest GER, of 0.3%. Ethiopia stood at nearly 0.2% and Chad at a mere 0.01%. With figures this low, it seems safe to assume that most of the elites did not actually get their education in their own countries, but instead obtained their education abroad. By 2014, tertiary education had expanded in all three countries, growing to a still very low 3.4% in Chad, 8.1% in Ethiopia and nearly 28% in Botswana.

These statistics illustrate a number of key points. For some countries, such as Chad, tertiary education is still a mechanism for elite reproduction. Like in precolonial times, it is likely that these elites will be largely foreign-educated.

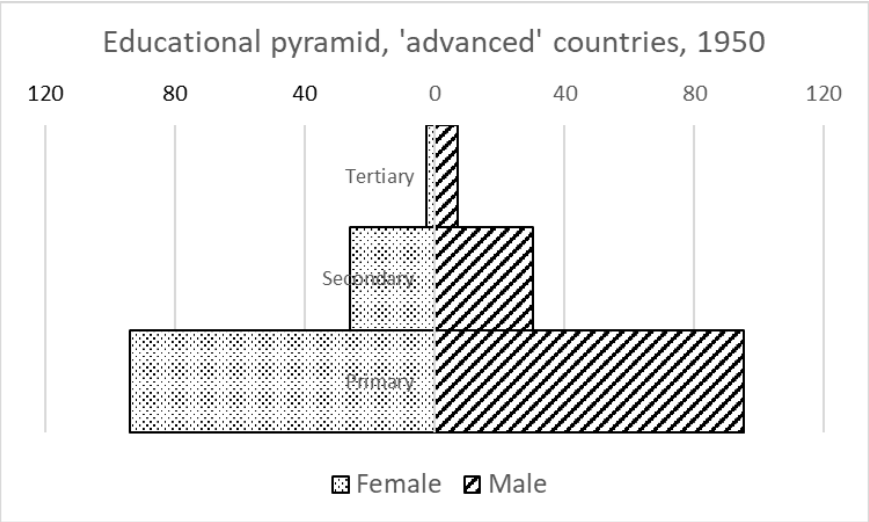
For other countries, such as Botswana but also Ghana, tertiary education is becoming more of a commodity, accessible to the middle classes. Botswana now has a GER comparable to that of Western Europe in 1975. Such countries now offer an alternative to studying abroad for a reasonable proportion of the age group – although the elite probably still invest in a foreign education.

Botswana has shown periods of rapid educational expansion, such as between 2007 and 2009, when the GER doubled. Such a rapid expansion can of course lead to a 'crisis of expectations': it is unlikely that those students who graduated in Botswana from the 2009 intake would find the same job opportunities as those who graduated from the 2007 intake.

Educational Pyramids

In addition to looking at the enrolment ratio in tertiary education, it is relevant to investigate the relationship between tertiary education and other levels of education. This relationship shows the extent to which the educational system works as a selection mechanism.

First, it is illustrative to look at the educational pyramid in the advanced countries, at the time when Bourdieu entered tertiary education, so around 1950. Graph 4 below has been constructed on the basis of the material provided by Barro and Jong-Wha (2015: 16-17). Barro and Jong-Wha give enrolment ratios for three levels of education for the population as a whole and for females. From those, I have computed the male enrolment ratios as well.



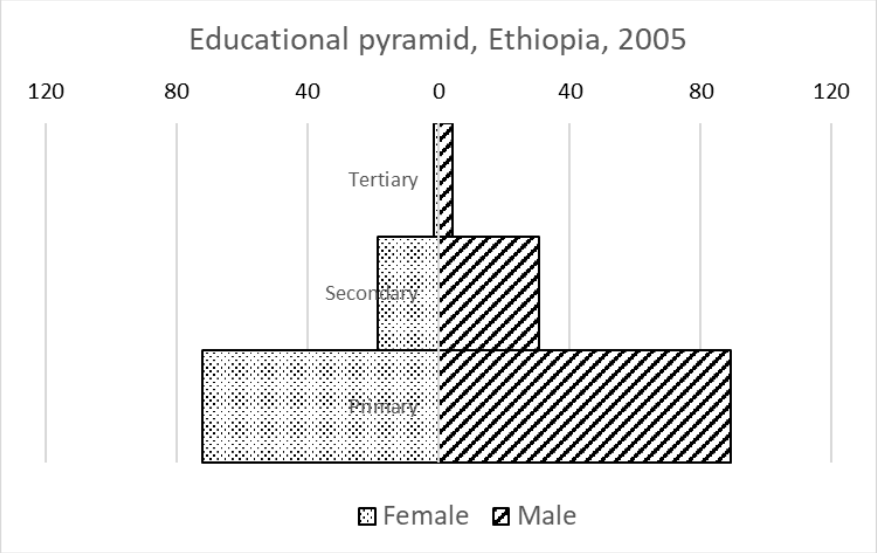
Graph 4 - Educational pyramid, 'advanced' countries, 1950

The graph shows a number of interesting characteristics:

- Primary education at that time was universal;
- Secondary education was not yet universal, but accessible to over 30% of the population, both male and female;
- Tertiary education was clearly for the elite, and considerably more accessible to men than to women.

It is relevant to look at the shape of the pyramid: selection was quite intensive: fewer than half of those who went to primary school could continue to secondary school. Less than a third of the boys and only one-tenth of the girls who went to secondary school could proceed to tertiary education. In other words, there was a large educational gap between the elite and the rest of the population.

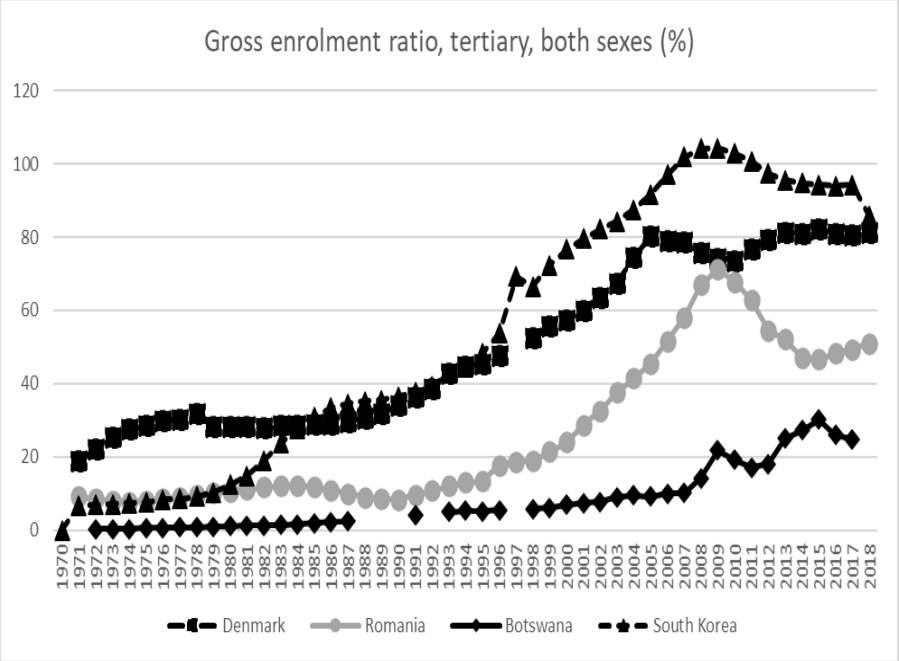
Graph 5 shows the situation for Ethiopia in 2005 . As is clear from the graph, the pyramid of Ethiopia in 2005 is similar to that in the 'advanced' world in 1950, although if anything, the pyramid is slightly steeper.



Graph 5 - Educational pyramid, Ethiopia, 2005

The purpose of this graph is not to show that Ethiopia is half a century 'behind' Europe, but to illustrate that social processes that have been at play in Europe may also be at play in Africa, although the effects and the appearances might be different.

Further insights can be gained from comparing the evolution in Sub-Saharan Africa with the evolution in Europe and South Korea. Leaving aside the European small-island states of Cyprus and Malta, which show a slightly anomalous picture, the commodification of tertiary education in Europe expanded further between 1990 and 2005, growing from an EU average tertiary education GER of 25% in 1970 to 35% in 1990 and around 70% in 2015. The GER in Denmark (the country with the highest GER of the EU) was over 80%. It was still over 50% in Romania (the country with the lowest GER in the EU). In that period, South Korea has managed to overtake the EU, growing from a level of under 7% in 1971 to over 94% in 2015, as shown in graph 6 below.

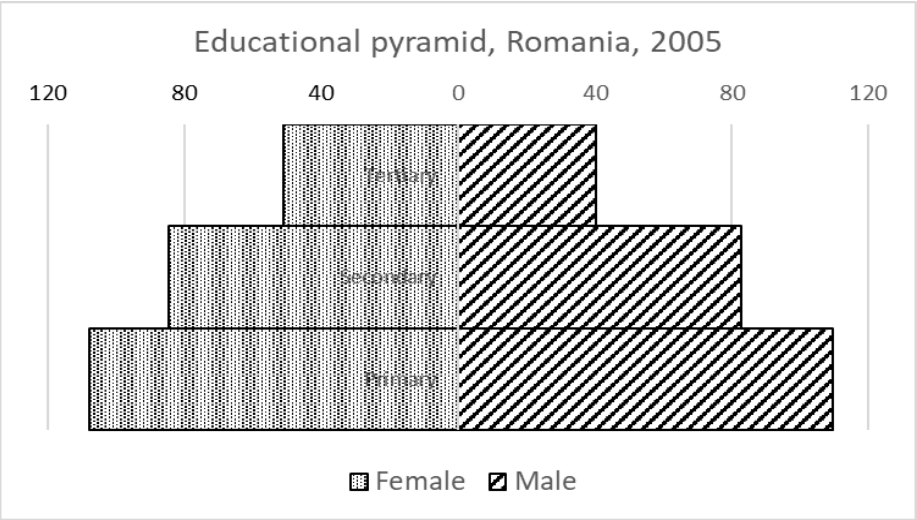


Graph 6 - GER, Botswana, Denmark, Romania, South Korea

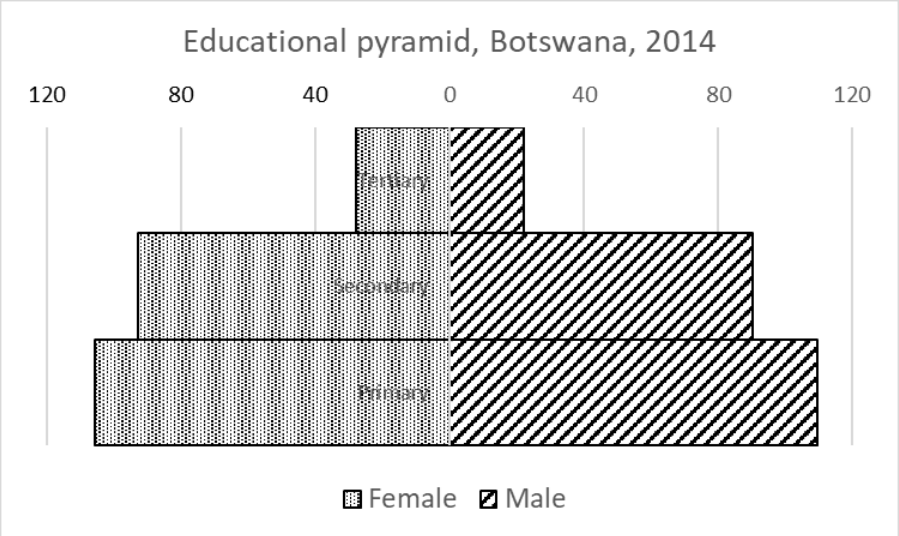
What is clear from comparing graph 3 with graph 6 is that the diversity in Africa in the tertiary education sector is far greater than that in Europe. The lines in the European graph show a much more parallel trajectory than the lines in the African graph. In 2014, the Romanian enrolment ratio stood at 65% of the Danish ratio. However, the Chadian enrolment ratio was only 12.5% of the Botswana ratio. This means that whereas it might be defensible to make general statements about the tertiary education sector in Europe, such statements about Sub-Saharan Africa have much lower validity, if any at all.

Another point is this: a country like Romania was able to double its tertiary education sector from the current level of Botswana (nearly 30%) between 2001 and 2007, so in a relatively short period of time. Even though population growth in many African countries is higher than in Europe, it is still reasonable to expect that rapid further expansion is possible and likely in Botswana and other countries in Africa, given the right political and economic environment. There is reason to expect that at least in some countries, such rapid expansions will indeed take place. This means that the social function of tertiary education in some African countries has changed since independence and is likely to change even more in the years to come. Such periods of rapid educational expansion are likely to lead to a problem of

disillusioned students and are likely to force changes in the educational 'habitus', in order to cater for the changed social function of education. In other countries in Africa, such expansion did not happen and may not happen for some years to come – meaning, of course, that social discontent might show itself in other ways.
It is also illustrative to compare the educational pyramids of Romania and of Botswana, as is done in graphs 7 and 8 below.



Graph 7 - Educational pyramid, Romania, 2005



Graph 8 - Educational pyramid, Botswana, 2014

It is clear that these pyramids show more similarity than do the pyramids of Ethiopia (graph 5) and Botswana. In Botswana as well as in Romania, primary and secondary education can now be said to be universal. Tertiary education has become massive. In both countries, more women than men participate in tertiary education. Even though there is still a considerable gap between those who can go to secondary education and the tertiary education level, that gap is now much smaller than it was some years ago. This also means that the relationship between the elites and the rest of the population has changed: the educational gap between the most educated and the rest of the population is now smaller than it used to be. In other words, in order to be able to do its job of managing the country, the elites now, both in Romania and in Botswana, have to take account of and can rely on an educated population to a much greater degree than was the case a few decades ago. This is also happening in other countries in Africa: table 1 below shows all African countries with a gross enrolment rate in tertiary education above 15%.

African countries with a tertiary education GER > 15%		
Country	**2017**	**2018**
Algeria		51.4
Botswana	24.9	
Cabo Verde		23.6
Egypt	35.2	
Ghana		15.7
Mauritius	40.6	
Morocco		35.9
Namibia	22.9	
South Africa		23.8
Tunisia		31.7

Table 1 - African countries with a gross enrolment rate in tertiary education above 15%

Implications of GER Growth

Above, I have shown GER growth over the years, both in Africa and in Europe. Following Bourdieu and Passeron, this growth implies that as the GER changes, the social function of tertiary education also changes. As long as the GER for tertiary education remains below 15%, this education can be said to have elite reproduction as one of its main

functions. In most countries in Africa (but not in all, as table 1 shows), this is still the case. Thus, as Cloete and Maassen (2015: 6) state: 'There has been a common misconception that a major problem in African higher education is that it has massified without resources. In reality, nowhere on the continent is there a differentiated and massified system; there are only overcrowded elite systems.' The word 'nowhere' seems a slight overstatement in light of the statistics above, but on the whole, their statement seems valid.

It is to be expected that as the social function of education changes, the power relations within educational systems will also change. Change in power relations is almost never completely peaceful: it implies a certain measure of social strife. In the 'advanced' countries, the GER in tertiary education rose from 4.7% in 1950 to 24.6% in 1970 and 45.3% in 1990. It is no surprise that in that period there were also waves of student unrest and protest in a number of countries in Europe and elsewhere. It is entirely likely that such struggles will also occur in Africa. It partly explains what is happening in South Africa, struggling to increase access to tertiary education after the end of Apartheid. If GER changes rapidly, for example if it doubles in under a decade, then its effect can clearly be felt within a generation: children at the end of primary school have certain expectations of what a university education will deliver that can no longer be met by the time they reach university-going age. The same is true of parents who in many countries need to make considerable sacrifices to give their children a good education. It would be worthwhile to study these relationships more in-depth, but that is outside the scope of this analysis.

Increased enrolment rates in Africa are more difficult to achieve than in other parts of the world, because Africa has higher population growth. However, given the rate of expansion of tertiary education in other parts of the world and given the history of expansion in Africa, further phases of rapid expansion, at least in some countries, can be expected.

As indicated above, this growth is accompanied by even greater expansion especially in secondary education: the pyramid is becoming less steep. The steepness of the pyramid can be expressed as the ratio of enrolment in primary education in any particular year divided by the ratio of enrolment in tertiary education in that year. Thus, a higher value means a steeper pyramid. For the graphs given above, that yields the picture as in table 2 below:

Country	**Year**	**GER primary/GER tertiary**
Advanced countries	1950	20.1
Ethiopia	2005	29.2
Romania	2005	2.4

Botswana	2014	4.3

Table 2 - Ratio of enrolment in primary education in any particular year divided by the ratio of enrolment in tertiary education in that year

In many cases, GER growth will be achieved without commensurate budget growth. It is clear that this is likely to lead to a drop in the quality of education. However, the type of education that was offered to elites in earlier decades is perhaps not appropriate for the broader class of academics of tomorrow. In line with the ideas developed in the previous section, GER growth may also have a bearing on pressures on the language of instruction. Let us examine that issue a bit more closely in the next section.

4.2.2 The Language Barrier

In just about all countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, the medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education is a former colonial language that is not the L1 of the great majority of students. This is a legacy of a colonial system that was always intended to provide elite education, rather than education for the masses. Students must learn this colonial language in primary and secondary education and they should attain a level of proficiency that is sufficient for the tertiary level. But what is a sufficient level? There are three main systems used internationally for assessing foreign language ability.

In the U.S. there are two, related scales: the guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)[29] and the ILR scale. The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale has five broad levels, ranging from zero to five.[30] The Council of Europe uses the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale, which has six levels.[31] Attempts have been made to relate the U.S. and the European scales to one another, but these alignments are approximate at best. For tertiary education, a level corresponding to at least the CEFR B2 level is considered to be necessary. This level stands for 'upper intermediate' - it is the level used by many universities, although the University of Cape Town in South Africa uses the higher C1 level as its minimum requirement[32] - still below the highest 'C2'

[29] https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012 accessed 20 July 2019.

[30] https://www.govtilr.org/ accessed 20 July 2019.

[31] https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/home accessed 20 July 2019.

[32] http://www.students.uct.ac.za/students/applications/admission-requirements/language accessed 20 July 2019 gives the requirement as an

level. In the ILR terms, this means at least Level 3, or 'Advanced High' in the ACTFL terms.[33]

Language level and the amount of effort (both from the learner and from the educational system) are often not taken into account in economic studies looking at language learning. Thus, Athanasiou et al (2016: 214) discuss a number of economic studies and models showing that common simplifications include the assumption that an individual either 'speaks' or 'does not speak' another language and that the cost of learning another language is the same for all learners (p 216) and independent of the similarity or difference between the languages learnt. In European or U.S. situations, where foreign language learning is done by a portion of the population at best and where at best only a handful of other languages will be learned these simplifications might do. For African situations, however, where the assumption is that increasing numbers of people will learn a foreign language to a level high enough to enable them to receive tertiary education in that language, these models are inadequate.

Unfortunately, research into language levels reached in Africa and the associated cost is scarce indeed. Still, the question needs to be asked: what percentage of the population and of the secondary school population can an educational system reasonably be expected to teach to reach at least the B2 level of proficiency at the time of school completion?

Chaudenson (2006) uses his own measure for minimum language learning, SMIC[34]: 'Seuil Minimal Individuel de Competence en francais', or minimum individual threshold of competency in French. He is not explicit about the alignment between his SMIC and the DELF/CEFR levels,[35] but he does say (p 183) that the end of the second year of primary school should lead to level A1, the lowest of the CEFR levels. He adds that this level is not obtained by the great majority of pupils - yet instruction changes to French in year 3, requiring level B1 or B2 (p 184).

Given the dearth of material on Africa, another productive avenue might be to look at Europe, where the European Commission has a policy of stimulating learning of other European languages. Thus, in 2011, the European Commission for the first time investigated second-

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IELTS score of at least 7.0, which corresponds to the C1 level as outlined at https://www.ielts.org/ielts-for-organisations/common-european-framework.

[33] https://www.efset.org/english-score/ accessed 20 July 2019.

[34] This is a play of words with the more common French use of the abbreviation SMIC, which stands for minimum wage.

[35] DELF is the French language certification system, which is aligned to the CEFR.

language proficiency of secondary students in the last year before their final exams, in reading, writing and listening (European Commission, 2012).[36] They found tremendous differences in performance within Europe, ranging from Malta (60% of students at B2 level) to France (5% of students at this level). One of the best-performing countries, doing better for example than the Netherlands, was Estonia, with 41% of the secondary school students at the B2 level. Note that Estonian[37] is the designed language used as medium of instruction in secondary education in the country – English is taught as a subject. Note also that over four-fifth of all children in Estonia complete the second (upper) stage of secondary education: the completion rate in 2013 was 82.7%. This means the Estonian education system is able to educate almost 34% of its youngsters to a B2 level of proficiency in English, high enough to take tertiary education in that language. Estonian and English are very different from each other as languages - and yet Estonia manages to be among the top performers in Europe. Let us therefore take the Estonian educational system as a benchmark for what an educational system is able to achieve in terms of teaching a portion of the population a 'foreign' designed language to a level high enough to allow students to be taught in that designed language at tertiary level. As we have seen, this level is 41% of secondary school students and 34% of all Estonian 18-year olds. Where do African education systems stand in comparison?

Can Ghana, for example, match Estonia? Would it be possible that a third of all children reach B2 level in an international language by the end of their secondary school career, as Estonia has managed to achieve? How ambitious would that be?

An estimate for Ghana could be calculated by multiplying the completion rate for senior secondary education by the percentage of students that obtain a high enough examination result in English. In Ghana, the final exam at the end of secondary school is the WASSCE examination.[38] In this system, the lowest so-called 'credit pass' is the C6 pass. According to information on the sites of a number of UK Universities,[39] the WASSCE C6 level is roughly equivalent to IELTS 6.0

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[36] The survey material is still available online via http://www.surveylang.org/, accessed 6 June 2020. The survey has not been repeated.

[37] The Ethnologue puts the number of L1 speakers of the two discerned Estonian-like languages at approximately 1.25 million. https://www-ethnologue-com/language/est accessed 29 March 2020.

[38] https://ghana.waecdirect.org/

[39] See for example https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/study/international/international-entry-

and this is roughly equivalent to the CEFR B2 level. According to information from the US Embassy in Ghana[40] this level is reached by 54% of those who sit for the WASSCE examination. A further 27% receive a passing grade that is lower than C6 (D7 or E8). UNESCO gives the completion rate for senior secondary education in 2018 as 35.7%. That means that currently, the Ghanaian education system is able to educate just under 20% of its youngsters to a B2 level of proficiency in English, compared to 34% for Estonia.[41] So yes, matching Estonia would be an ambitious goal indeed for a country like Ghana.

Another approximation can be found in Albaugh (2014: 221).[42] She gives estimates of the portion of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa speaking a European language. The averages vary between 37% for the 'Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking' countries and 17% for the 'English-speaking' counties. For these estimates, Albaugh bases herself on a large number of sources, using any number of definitions and methodologies. The figures for the 'francophone' nations (average: 18%) are the most comparable, because there she is able to use data collected by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).

The OIF uses what it calls a common-sense definition of a francophone in Maurer (2015: 3): 'a person able to express him/herself in French, no matter what his/her level may be or his/her mastery of other competences such as writing or reading.' (My translation.)[43] It is not immediately obvious how to map this on to the CEFR levels, but it clearly includes many more people than those who are at the B2 level, which stands for an ability to 'interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.'[44] One of the interests of the OIF is clearly to make the French language look large and important.

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requirements/english-language-requirements/tier-4-qualifications retrieved 6 November 2019.

[40] https://gh.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/THE-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OF-GHANA-2019.pdf retrieved 6 November 2019. See also p. 88 of the Education Sector Medium-Term Development Plan 2018-2020, available online at https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-05-education-sector-medium-term-development-plan_2018-2021.pdf

[41] But see Stoffelsma and De Jong (2015) for a more pessimistic perspective.

[42] An abridged version of this discussion of the estimate of the number of 'francophones' in Africa has also been published in Pinxteren, Bert van (2020b).

[43] 'Revenons donc au sens commun, qui entend par « francophone » une personne capable de s'exprimer en français, quelle que soit son niveau ou sa maîtrise d'autres compétences comme l'écriture ou la lecture.'

[44] https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale retrieved 7 September 2019.

Therefore, it probably would include also those who are at the A2 level: those able to 'describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.' It is illustrative to note that in 2007, 62.4% of teachers in Mauritania had level A2 or below, a level considered in the document to be insufficient for teaching in that language (p 31). The document also recalls (p 83) that in order to become naturalized as a French citizen in France, the minimum level that is required is B1.

Albaugh estimates the average 'francophone' population in Sub-Saharan Africa at 18%. To emulate Estonia, 85% of all children should complete secondary school and 40% of those children would attain the B2 level. In that case, eventually, 35% of the entire population would attain B2 level. In order to achieve such a level, it would be necessary to give the opportunity to all children to start secondary school and to learn French there. Probably, given differences in motivation and ability, some children would not learn enough French anyway to reach the A2 level. However, it is quite likely that 35% at B2 level would mean a much larger base at A2 and B1 levels; perhaps as much as 70% altogether. Even though this line of reasoning is speculative, I think it is nevertheless reasonable to conclude that, going by the OIF definition quoted above, there is potential for quadrupling the number of 'francophones' (so going from around 18% to around 70%) in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Would it be possible for Ghana to go even further, and reach for example the level of Malta? Malta is unique in the EU, in that it was a British possession until gaining independence in 1964 and it has retained English as an official language, alongside Maltese. English and Maltese are very different languages. Yet, English is so present in Malta that Maltese children are familiar with English from a very early age. Perhaps one can argue that English is a Maltese language – the eWAVE considers Maltese English a separate variety of English.[45] Whereas in Estonia around 34% of 18-year olds speak English at the B2 level, this is almost 48% for Malta. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in tertiary education in Malta in 2013 was only 43%, as compared to 73% in Estonia.[46] Yet, Malta's College of Arts, Science and Technology does

[45] https://ewave-atlas.org/languages/12, accessed 11 June 2020. eWAVE is the Electronic Atlas of Varieties of English – see Kortmann, Lunkenheimer and Ehret (2020).

[46] The lower percentage for Malta compared to Estonia may be related to the fact that more Maltese than Estonians go abroad for their tertiary education.

teach partly in Maltese and has the possibility to allow students to present assessment work in Maltese.[47]

Perhaps one could argue that in urban areas in Ghana, English is just as prevalent as it is in Malta and indeed, eWAVE also recognizes Ghanaian English (as distinct from Ghanaian Pidgin English) as a separate English variety.[48] In addition, language learning does not stop at the end of secondary school – students continue to learn in their first year(s) in tertiary education. Therefore, it might be logical to keep (Ghanaian) English as one of the languages that is used as medium of instruction in higher education, alongside other Ghanaian languages. However, continuing to use ***only*** (Ghanaian) English and emulating the Maltese education system would mean that the Ghanaian education system would have to educate three times as many children to reach the B2 level in English as it currently does. And still: if the level of enrolment in tertiary education would approximate the levels found in Estonia and in the rest of the global North, a (partial) transition to indigenous languages would be necessary.

If enrolment rates in secondary education stay below a certain level and selection criteria are such that all students have the required language level in order to profit from teaching in whatever medium of instruction is used, then using a foreign language as medium of instruction is not a problem.

However, if the selection mechanism is not efficient, for example because it selects students that do not have the required language level, or if the enrolment ratio becomes higher than the percentage of students that have the required language level, then using a foreign language as medium of instruction will become a problem. At that stage, children will not fully understand what the teacher says, even if in principle they have the required intellectual abilities. At that point, it will be necessary either to introduce an additional stream in which the medium of instruction is a language the children do understand sufficiently or to change to a local language for all secondary education. In both cases, the foreign language can be taught as a subject, but can no longer be used efficiently as medium of instruction for all students.

Estonia has chosen to use Estonian as medium of instruction in secondary education (Santiago et al, 2016: 55). English is taught as a

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[47] https://www.mcast.edu.mt/wp-content/uploads/DOC_003_CORP_REV_F_-PROGRAMME-REGULATIONS-MQF-LEVELS-1-3-2.pdf accessed 7 June 2020.

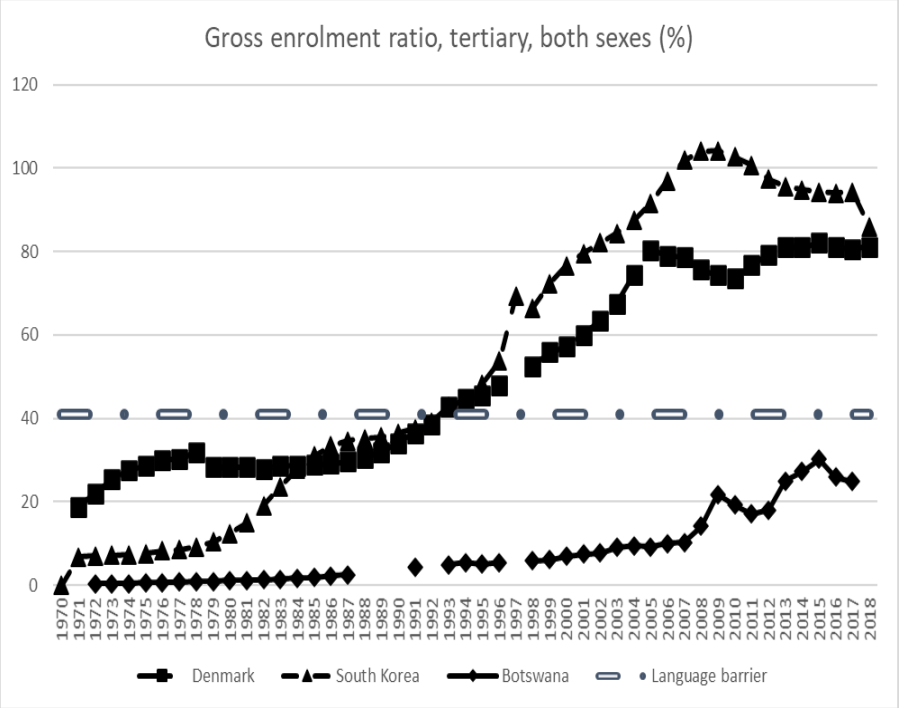
[48] https://ewave-atlas.org/languages/39, accessed 11 June 2020. I am grateful to Dr Dodzi Kpoglu for suggesting this possibility to me.

subject.[49] For Estonia, this ensures the best results not only in English, but in mathematics and other subjects as well. The Estonian system, then, offers living proof of a point that seems counter-intuitive to many Africans: not using English as the medium of instruction paradoxically leads to better English-language learning outcomes than using it as medium of instruction. Developing CALP in Estonian gives the basis for developing CALP in English in the most efficient manner. Note as well that the levels of English-language proficiency reached in Estonia are only achievable if there is a larger base of students who do not achieve this level, but still reach lower levels. This is possible because English is not used as the medium of instruction, but is taught as a subject instead.

As shown above, a level whereby 40% of all students in secondary school age reach the B2 level of competence in their second language by the end of their secondary school is a very challenging benchmark to aim for in Africa. In chapter 1.4, I argued at the theoretical level that there will exist a 'language barrier' in any educational system that uses a foreign language as medium of instruction. Due to the uneven distribution of language abilities over any population, there will be a point at which teaching high enough numbers of students to a high enough level of foreign language ability will put unsustainable demands on the system. For the time being, and until further research has shown things to be different, I propose as a ***working hypothesis*** that there is a 'language barrier' approximately at the level of a GER of 40% for the highest level of secondary education and at the start of tertiary education. Below this level of enrolment, any language can be used as medium of instruction. Above this level, a switch to a designed language that is close to (one of the) discerned mother tongue(s) becomes necessary. This is what I call the 'language barrier' in tertiary education.

If we map this level on graph 4 above, the consequences become clear, as shown in graph 9.

[49] Estonia does have a sizeable Russian-speaking minority. Therefore, a number of schools also offer a Russian-language curriculum. English and Finnish are used as medium of instruction in a few schools only.



Graph 9 – Tertiary enrolment and the language barrier

It is clear that for countries in the global North, providing tertiary education in a foreign language to all students would be almost impossible: the language barrier prevents it. It would be very costly and inefficient to bring all students that enter tertiary education up to the required level of proficiency. In fact, they would also have this problem if the language barrier would occur at 60%. African countries do not (yet) have that problem. However, it will become a problem for a country like Botswana in the next decade or so, as Botswana approaches the 'language barrier' threshold. Of course the precise level of the barrier is not fixed and can be influenced by policy choices countries make. The basic point is, however, that such a barrier does exist and will become manifest through social tensions, lower pass rates for exams, disillusioned students, parents and teachers and other ways. In Tunisia, where the Gross Enrolment Ratio in tertiary education is around 35%, this transition is indeed happening: Tunisia has embarked on a phased (and not uncontested) Arabization exercise. Most studies in Tunisian universities are currently entirely taught in

Arabic, instead of the French that was used in the colonial period (Akkari, 2008).[50]

The quantitative analysis of this section thus drives home the conclusions from the analysis presented in the previous section: if African countries aspire to providing tertiary education to their populations at levels comparable to those in the global North, then sooner or later they will have to offer at least part of the curricula in local languages. The alternative would be to dramatically lower the standard of education being offered, but doing so would be inefficient and it would mean a great disservice both to the countries and the students involved.

4.3. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have set out to answer my second research question: the question why African languages currently are not being used more in higher education as medium of instruction.

In order to discuss this issue, it was important first to clarify the conceptual framework. To do that, a distinction between discerned and designed languages was proposed as a useful way of looking at languages as spoken versus languages as used in more formal domains such as writing and writing-based activities. The term discerned refers to the human and social act of pronouncing a speech register to be a language. The term designed refers to those languages that have been deliberately shaped and built to become standardized vehicles of literary expression – languages that are protected and developed through policy and that are acquired through a process of formal learning. I call for explicit and increased attention to the role of language policy in Africa and have criticized approaches that tend to neglect or underplay the importance of this role in Africa.

I have reviewed the existing explanations for not using African languages more that are given in the literature, such as in Zsiga et al (2014), and weighed these against the compelling arguments that scientists have advanced for almost 70 years in favour of 'mother tongue' instruction. My conclusion is that the reasons given in the literature do not sufficiently explain the phenomenon and do not take account of the dynamic nature of educational systems in Africa, thus denying African agency. I have shown that there is an additional

[50] I am grateful to Dr Mirza Emirhafizović for pointing out the Tunisian experience to me.

explanation which in my view points to the need to changes in policy in the coming decade or so, at least for a number of African countries. This explanation is based on the fact that education systems will be unable to deliver language teaching to a sufficient level to sufficiently large numbers of students if enrolment levels in higher education start to approach those of the global North. If enrolment increases, a transition to local languages will become inevitable. A counter-intuitive result of such a transition is that it will also lead to improvements in the learning of international languages (taught as a subject).

I ask the question what educational systems in Africa can reasonably be expected to deliver in terms of teaching children a foreign designed language to a high enough level. I point to the example of the Estonian education system, which is one of the best-performing systems in Europe. It is able to educate a high percentage of the population to tertiary education level (in the Estonian example: 70%). This percentage is in fact much higher than the percentage of the population that the Estonian educational system is able to teach a foreign language at a level high enough to be able to take education at tertiary level (in the Estonian example: 34%). In Europe, multilingual Malta is an outlier: its educational system is able to give 48% of its 18-year olds a high level of English-language knowledge. However, in Malta only approximately 43% of 18-year olds then continue to higher or tertiary education – therefore, in Malta this education can be delivered in English. Estonia, however, with a participation rate in higher education of around 70%, is not able to do that. This means that in that country, tertiary education is for a large part in Estonian, even though there are only around 1 million native speakers of Estonian in the country. Currently, all African countries have relatively low participation rates in higher education. Therefore, this education can currently be delivered in any designed language. However, in future, Africa potentially has a big problem: it will not be able to develop its full human potential making use of non-indigenous languages; sooner or later, a shift to increased use of African designed languages will become a necessity. At the moment, however, this is not yet the case – it is possible to continue with the colonial language in education policies. This provides my explanation of why African languages are currently not used more in higher education.

My research into the achievements of education systems and into the evolution of enrolment rates in education points to idea that there must be a 'language barrier': a point at which a switch to indigenous designed languages becomes a necessity. However, more research would be needed to determine where this barrier lies in individual countries and how policy choices could influence it. For the time being,

my working hypothesis is that this barrier is at a gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education of around 40%.

It is good to stress that the consequence of such a transition, for most African countries, will be that higher education would be provided in several languages (as is currently the case in a number of countries already for primary education). At the start of the transition, the former colonial language might remain as the single medium of instruction in a large number of fields. Then gradually and over time, other languages will be added as medium of instruction for more and more fields. However, it is entirely possible that the former colonial language will be maintained as an optional or even as the sole medium of instruction for some fields of education. The end result will also not be uniform: it will be different, depending on the linguistic situation of individual countries.

Using Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) as the theoretical starting point and after examining the available data, several additional points become clear:

- No discussion on education in Africa is complete without looking at the sociological parameters of that education. Researchers should always bear enrolment statistics in mind when studying education in countries outside of their own: if not, their research is likely to be tainted because, consciously or subconsciously, they are likely to use the situation in their home country and at the time they themselves went to university as the norm. In so doing, they will assume a form of cultural capital and a habitus in the foreign educational system that does not reflect the actual situation on the ground.
- An implicitly European frame of reference when discussing higher education in Africa can lead to misleading or even false ideas and conclusions about the nature of education in Africa.
- Tertiary education in Africa is more divergent than in Europe. Analysis must start from the country level, because generalizations are more difficult to make about education in Africa than about education in Europe.
- Differences in enrolment ratios in Africa mean that the social function of tertiary education in society is different from country to country.
- Developed societies need more than an educated elite – those elites also need an educated general population. This means that if Africa is to become more developed, it needs to educate more people to a higher level (of course in an appropriate manner). In order to achieve that, it will need African languages.

Now that I have demonstrated that at some point, it will become necessary to start using designed languages that are easier to learn for most Africans than the ones currently employed in higher education, the next question becomes: what instruments do we have for making rational language choices? That is the topic of the next chapter.

5. Rational choices for Language in Education

In chapter 4 I have outlined the reasons why in future, it will become necessary to make more use of African languages in secondary and higher education. I have proposed a new pair of concepts, namely the distinction between discerned languages – spoken languages as identified for example by the Ethnologue – and designed languages – the standardized forms that have been developed for some languages.
This chapter builds on the material of the previous chapters and examines the last of my research questions: what possibilities are there for rational language-in-education policies in Africa?

5.1 Language policy and citizenship

Mamdani, in his landmark 1996 book 'Citizen and Subject' has decisively influenced how the word 'citizen' must be interpreted in an African context. Citizens are people who are enabled to participate in democratic decision making – subjects are not. However, this understanding is not specifically African. Smith (2013) uses the similar notion of 'meaningful citizenship', derived from the works of Charles Tilly and James Tully and asserts that 'the analytical lens of citizenship has rarely been deployed in many parts of the developing world.' (p. 19) In chapter 1.5, I pointed to the notion of 'republican citizenship' as used by Grotenhuis (2016) to denote the importance of how people as citizens feel they are part of a 'nation', rather than only being subjects of a 'state'. All agree that citizenship implies access to information and to political discourse in a language that is accessible to the citizen. In this context, Heugh (2014) has used the term 'linguistic citizenship'. It is good to note that this is not only a linguistic issue, though: it is also a cultural issue. Teaching and learning are affected not only by the medium of instruction, but also by the cultural backgrounds of teachers and learners.[1] Thus, it is easier if teachers and learners share a similar cultural background, or at least are knowledgeable about those backgrounds. This is of course more likely to happen if teachers and learners share the same linguistic background as well.
In the colonial period, the language of administration was the colonial language and this was fine, because the colonial authorities never had any intention of giving access to the administrative, court or political systems to ordinary people – in Mamdani's terms, the ordinary people

[1] For an overview, see Hofstede (1986).

were subjects, not citizens. With independence and democracy, this changed, at least notionally. The aim became that all citizens have access to the state institutions meant to service them. If those institutions function in a national language, then all citizens should be given access to that national language. Albaugh (2014) points out that in Europe, the reasons for developing and enforcing national languages were not primarily moral ones. She points to the differences in state building between Europe and Africa. In Europe, rulers needed to tax their citizens (for which a common language was useful) and they needed to wage war and therefore needed large conscription armies (for which a common language was also useful). This was also good for industrialization. Albaugh demonstrates that in Africa, citizens are hardly taxed: tax comes from trade tariffs. In addition, the colonial borders are secure, so large armies are not needed. Therefore, a common language is less necessary and the fiction of the colonial language as 'unifying' may be useful and in the meantime, keeping people divided by using local languages may be useful as well, in addition to safeguarding the rift between elite and population. Alamin Mazrui (2019: 432) points out how in general, this process does lead to a slow decline in general proficiency in the ex-colonial languages. He also points to the undemocratic character of using a national language that the majority does not have direct access to, calling this 'denial of voice' (p 434), similar to the reasoning of Smith (2013). Chaudenson has sharply criticized existing educational arrangements in Africa and has shown how universal access to the national language has remained fictional: teaching methods are inadequate, the change from local languages to French generally happens too soon, there is no assessment of actual levels of language learning reached and where there are such assessments they generally show that the levels reached are dismally low for most children. However, instead of concluding that the project should be abandoned, Chaudenson goes the other way: he says much more needs to be done if children are to be brought up as effective citizens who have access to the national language. Measures he proposes include better language teaching, but his main plea is for a far greater exposure of children to French through the media, for example through TV programmes aimed at helping children to learn French in a playful and attractive manner.

This brings us back to De Swaan (2001), who has pointed how choices that may be rational from an individual point of view may lead to less desirable results from a social point of view.

In general, language learning is helped by starting early, by greater exposure to a language in many different ways, by greater time investment, by higher motivation (both on the part of children and of

parents) and by a better basis in the mother tongue. However, all of this represents choices that reflect on the one hand preferences by individual parents but on the other hand replicate existing social inequalities. In general, the extent to which parents have access to these different strategies for helping language learning is different for different social strata (although there are individual differences as well).
For certain areas of Africa, it is important to take into account that multilingualism is prevalent. Many people speak two or even more languages, a point emphasized by Lüpke and Storch (2013). Dorvlo (2008: 6) has studied children who have Logba as their mother tongue in Ghana. This is a small language, spoken in an area where another, larger language (Ewe) is dominant. This means that in fact all Logba-speaking children are exposed to Ewe from their earliest days and can be considered bilingual from birth. It is good to note that in general, multilingualism is an advantage: Barac and Bialystok (2012) have shown that multilingual children perform certain tasks more quickly and more easily than monolingual children.[2] This is a situation that may occur for more people in Africa and that could help in devising equitable language policies.
Buzási (2016) has developed the Index of Communication Potential, based on information on second- and third-language knowledge taken from the Afrobarometer survey. She shows that there are several countries in Africa where the former colonial language could be dropped without any major loss to the potential of people in those countries to communicate with one another. However, this is not a general situation in all countries of Africa. Furthermore, the fact that people have a certain linguistic repertoire in more than one language may overlook the issue of at which level people can express themselves in these different languages. Some African authors have a tendency to extoll the multilingual virtues of Africans. Of course multilingualism *is* a resource, but we should not be blinded to the fact that many multilingual Africans may only have restricted repertoires in each of their many languages, suitable only for the different domains in which they speak (not: read or write) each one of them. An example of this type of reasoning is Bokamba (2014). Wolff (2016: 227) points to the problem of 'semilingualism', or insufficient competence in any language. Piller (2016: 124) uses the more emotive but, in my view, clearer term of 'linguistic stunting'. In addition, it is an open question what multilingualism may mean for intergenerational language transmission; could it be that multilingualism in some situations is actually an early indicator of intergenerational language loss?

[2] I am grateful to Dr Azeb Amha for pointing this out to me.

In other parts of the world, the benefits of multilingualism have been pointed out. Grin (2003) looks at multilingualism in education in Western countries, notably Canada and Switzerland and tries to employ an economic analysis. One of his conclusions (p39) is: 'The application of basic economic concepts then suggests that society is likely to be best off not when it tries to eliminate diversity, nor when it attempts to embrace limitless diversity.' He sees economic benefit in learning more than one language and feels the cost is moderate (p 54):

'in certain contexts, moving from a unilingual to a bilingual school system means that pupils will be able to get education in a language that they understand well, instead of a language that they understand poorly. This has the following effects:

- a decline in the repetition rate (children taking the same class twice because of failing grades), which entails a reduction in costs;
- a decline in the dropout rate (children leaving the system because of failing grades), which entails an increase in costs;
- better results in terms of cognitive acquisition, entailing higher productivity and ultimately

a more prosperous economy and higher tax revenue.'

For Switzerland, he shows that the extra earnings associated with foreign language knowledge increases with level of fluency. However, these increases are not the same for every part of the country, nor for both genders.

Now, let us suppose for a moment that social inequalities would not exist. Even in a world of perfect equal opportunity, language learning outcomes will be unequally divided over the population, due to differences in language aptitude that are a common feature of any human population. In fact, this is the narrative that is common to all soft power exercised through meritocratic discourse: those who are better off are better off not because of any injustice, but because they deserve it in reward for their God-given talents.

A rational language policy that aims at being decolonial will be based on creating equal opportunities for all children, and creating equal access to state institutions and to political debate for all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status. On what principles should such a policy be based? This is explored in the next section.

5.2 Principles underlying rational language policies

Language policy is important: as Smith (2013: 94) points out, one 'of the most basic and central aspects of our daily life is choreographed by the

state, regardless of whether an official language policy is formally articulated or left implied.' What is more, 'there are significant democratic costs to ignoring language diversity or pursuing a policy of linguistic domination.' (p 118). She points out that any language policy needs to deliver three types of political goods to its citizens (p 95/6):

1. Access to information: 'A democratic language policy, whatever we decide that is, should provide all citizens equal access to the information, education, and opportunities of all others, following the principle of equality.
2. Autonomy: A number of multiculturalist theorists have identified autonomy as a prerequisite for democratic participation. This means that citizens must have not only the freedom to make their own choices, but also what scholars generally refer to as a sufficiently wide range of meaningful options and opportunities from which to choose.'
3. Recognition, as symbolic affirmation of citizen identity.

Skuttnab-Kangas (2013: 82) goes further than Smith, stating that the way people who use 'indigenous, tribal, minority and minoritised (ITM)' languages are taught constitutes a violation of human rights and can even be called a form of genocide and a crime against humanity. Unlike De Swaan, she feels 'that linguistic diversity and biodiversity are correlationally and causally related.' (p 114). Roy-Campbell (2019: 40) asserts: 'As long as African countries continue to educate the continent's future leaders primarily through foreign languages, they will remain dependent.'

Obviously, the political goods mentioned by Smith are often not delivered by language policies currently pursued in Africa. In fact, Africa is not unique in this. Reviewing examples from six countries in four continents, Taylor-Leech and Liddicoat (2014: 358) conclude that 'when language planning flows from top-down, centralised, non-consultative decision making motivated by political pragmatism, it invariably results in unsatisfactory provision'. However, 'When planners are motivated by the desire (..) to promote social inclusion, tolerance, and/or cultural integration, the resulting programmes and provision can be beneficial'. What does that mean for education?

In the previous chapter, we have argued that education in Africa is still largely based on the colonial model, which was highly selective: it is aimed at servicing primarily those children who are gifted in language. A number of these children will also be gifted in mathematics; those children gifted in mathematics but not gifted in language will face difficulties. The system disregards those children not particularly gifted in either language or mathematics. By expanding educational systems

based on the colonial model, they have become inefficient and wasteful, both in terms of resources (spending money to teach children in ways not suited for them) and in terms of talent (not making the best use of the talents of the majority of a nation's children). The World Bank (2019: 17) gives a stark statistic: in sub-Saharan Africa, no fewer than 87% of ten-year old children suffer from 'learning poverty', as opposed to under 10% for children in high-income countries. Systems based on the colonial model are wasteful; furthermore, they tend to reproduce and accentuate existing inequalities in society, favouring the urban and already well-to-do.

In order to get away from this, a different approach is needed, one that starts not from the needs of an intellectual elite but from the needs of the population as a whole. Put in another way, instead of conceiving the 'educational pyramid' in a top-down way, it has to be thought through in a 'bottom-up' way.

But what can that mean in practice and what does it mean from the language point of view?

A first issue that needs to be explored is the issue of which languages to use. Many policy makers and scientists have tried to wriggle out of this problem by saying that all languages should have equal status, without necessarily enumerating those languages; some also say that the same institutional support currently given only to the former colonial language should be extended to 'all' indigenous languages, without saying which. This what the African Union has done by designating 'any' African language as 'official'.[3] Ndhlovu (2015: 188), influenced by Pennycook, is against seeing languages as 'countable objects' altogether and argues for basing policy on 'ignored lingualisms', without becoming more concrete. Kamwangamalu (2016) and others shy away from the problem: they simply do not pronounce themselves on it. However, if such statements are made without becoming more concrete, the net effect is likely to lead to a strengthening of the position of the former colonial languages. The distinction between discerned and designed languages as outlined in section 4.1.2 can be helpful in overcoming this type of disempowering language discourse.

In line with the concepts of discerned and designed languages, the **first principle** that I would propose is that it will be necessary to develop a **limited number** of designed languages for education. This idea was suggested already by Chumbow (2005: 177) and also by Brock-Utne

[3] https://au.int/en/about/languages accessed 20 July 2019.

(2017). It is not practical, but also not necessary, to aim to develop all discerned languages into designed languages.

The **second principle** that I would propose follows from the first: these designed languages should be chosen in such a way that they are **easy to learn** for as many speakers of discerned languages as possible – a principle that was already suggested by Nwoye (1978), as cited by Laitin (1992: 154).

As a complement to the second principle, the **third principle** would be to strive for **inclusivity**, in other words, to choose the various designed languages in such a way that, as much as possible, all have to exert a relatively low but relatively equal effort to learn them.[4] Thus, for speakers of Occitan, standard French might be relatively easy to learn as a designed language. For speakers of lower Saxon, standard German might serve the same purpose. Using standard German as the designed language for speakers of Occitan would place them at a disadvantage compared to the speakers of lower Saxon. Therefore, both French and German are needed in order to ensure inclusivity. Another strategy is thinkable: mandarin Chinese could be chosen as the designed language for both groups, which would make learning extremely but equally difficult for both. Such a strategy would be very damaging to France and to Germany, because it would effectively bar large sections of the population from gaining access to meaningful education and to public discourse and would therefore stunt the possibilities of both countries for economic and social development. Of course, this is precisely the strategy that is currently presented as the only rational alternative for many African countries. It is not what I propose.

Lastly, a **fourth principle** seems appropriate: namely that of making use of **existing bilingualism** as a resource. Multilingualism in Africa should be seen as a resource to be mobilized to advantage. As hinted to above, this is probably useful only for a minority of cases: true bilingualism is difficult to achieve and depends on significant exposure to the two languages from a very early age. However, there may be areas where this exists. There could be situations where finding an easy to learn

[4] This principle is related to the second principle of what a multicultural state should look like, as described by Kymlicka (2003: 150). This entails the requirement that all citizens should have equal access to state institutions, without linguistic barriers imposed on some but not on others: 'The state accepts an obligation to accord the history, language and culture of non-dominant groups the same recognition and accommodation that is accorded to the dominant group.'

designed language for discerned language 'A' is difficult or impractical, but if those children also speak language 'B' it might be possible to find a cost-effective, inclusive solution.

Broadly speaking, the results of any system of education can be improved in two ways: by increasing the funding available to it and by improving the methods used in education / reducing the inefficiencies in the system. Applying the principles outlined above should go a long way towards improved methods and reduced inefficiency and wastage in education. They should also lead to a better use of African talent and therefore contribute to a society that offers chances for a productive and rewarding life for all of its citizens.

In this chapter, I want to explore the idea that it should be possible to arrive at rational choices for language in education, based on designed languages that are easy to learn for all. [5] Using these languages will help in regaining cultural autonomies as discussed in earlier parts of this study.

5.3 Which languages are easy to learn?

The first and second of the proposed principles hinge on the availability in Africa of designed languages (or languages that can become designed) that are easy to learn for speakers of several discerned languages.

As a thought experiment, one could make for any language a matrix of surrounding languages, more or less like this:

La - medium	Lb - easy	Lc -easy
Ld - medium	L1	Le -hard
Lf - medium	Lg - medium	Ln - hard

[5] The ideas for the next section were first presented at the ECAS19 Conference in Edinburgh, UK, from 11 to 14 June 2019. A slightly different and abridged version of sections 5.3 and 5.4 has been published in Pinxteren, Bert van (2020b: 137-143).

(Of course, in reality, in many situations the 'borders' around these language boxes will be fuzzy to a greater or lesser extent.) A similar matrix could be prepared for La, Lb, Lc etc. This might lead to what would theoretically be the best choices for any African country for designed languages to use as medium of instruction: those languages that present the least difficulties for the largest numbers of speakers. So in the end, one would end up with a limited list of designed languages best suited for use in education and with an estimate of the number of L1 and (potential) L2 speakers of those languages. It might be that there are some communities speaking language isolates where bilingualism is not frequent and that have only a small number of speakers – but then at least we will know the size of that problem, which is likely to affect only a very small percentage of all Africans.

Of course, the actual language choice will depend on many criteria in addition to what would theoretically be best if one would follow this model. However, this model would provide additional information relevant for making an informed choice, information that is currently lacking. Note that this approach is a departure from the idea that language choices could be based on looking for 'mutual intelligibility', as advocated for example by Prah. As outlined in chapter 1.3, the concept of mutual intelligibility itself is difficult if not impossible to operationalize. But in addition, once we admit that learning a designed language always requires a certain amount of formalized learning, it becomes thinkable to choose designed languages that are not mutually intelligible for speakers of the discerned languages they serve, but that are nevertheless easy to learn.

But how can we know if a language is 'easy'? How can that term be operationalized?

The literature on language learning is fairly clear about the general principle: languages that are close to one another are easier to learn than languages that are very different from one another. In other words, the **distance** between any two languages can be taken as an indicative or rough measure for how easy or difficult it may be to learn another language for a speaker of a given language.

The measure of linguistic distance as indicator of easy or difficulty of language learning has advantages, as will be shown further down in this chapter, but it also has limitations. Thus, the relationship is not necessarily bidirectional: it may be easier for somebody who speaks language A to learn language B than it is for a speaker of language B to learn language A. This can happen for example if language A has more sounds (phonemes) than language B and there are no sounds in language B that do not also occur in language A. In that case, speakers of language B will have to familiarize themselves with the new sounds

that language A has, but speakers of language A do not have that problem if they want to learn language B. The same can be true for the grammar of a language: if language A has a more difficult or strict grammar than language B, it may be easier for speakers of language A to learn language B than vice versa. Other factors influence ease of language learning as well, such as for example the *perceived* ease or difficulty, as related for example to the relative status of the languages involved – for an overview, see Gooskens (2018).

Then, there are various ways of measuring the distance between languages, all of them with their own problems and imperfections. Ginsburgh and Weber (2016) give a useful overview of ways that have been found of measuring linguistic distance.[6]

One way they describe is by comparing languages in terms of their relatedness to a common ancestor, starting from the idea that there once existed one language and that all existing languages have branched off from that common root. By counting the number of 'branchings', the distance between languages can be computed, in the same way that family distances are traced through the distance from a common ancestor. This is often called *cladistics* (Ginsburgh and Weber, p 142).

Another way of measuring distance between languages is through *lexicostatistical* methods. These methods are based on measuring the common roots of words in the vocabularies of various languages. These are based on a limited list of words that are assumed to exist in almost all languages with the same meaning. The most famous of these lists is the one developed by the American linguist Swadesh, last published in 1971. Levenshtein (1966, cited in Ginsburgh and Weber 2016: 148) has suggested a way of using these word lists for comparing distances between languages by computing the number of changes that need to be made to turn one word (such as the English word 'night', but spelled phonetically) into its equivalent in another language (such as 'nuit' in French, also spelled phonetically).

The cladistic method has the advantage of taking into account more than just vocabulary. However, it relies on a classification of language families that is imprecise at best and therefore gives only very rough results (p 149) (see also Dimmendaal, 2019 for a critical discussion of genealogical models of language differentiation).

The most precise and most comprehensive tool for computing language distance currently available uses a lexicostatistical method with a simplified 40-item word list derived from the Swadesh list and

[6] See Schepens, van der Silk and van Hout (2013) for convincing research on the relevance of linguistic distance for the achievement levels of learners of Dutch.

using Levenshtein distances, also known as Normalized Edit Distances (NED). As Gooskens et al (2008) have shown for Scandinavian languages, Levenshtein distances provide a good indicator of mutual intelligibility. An early attempt at using this approach for Cameroonian languages can be found in Chumbow et al (2007). Moran and Prokić (2013) give a useful overview of how Levenshtein distances have been used extensively in a variety of other situations and use it themselves for a classification of Dogon languages. Building on the Swadesh list and the Levenshtein distances, Wichmann, Holman and Brown have developed the Automated Similarity Judgment Program (ASJP) and its associated database, started in 2008.[7] It was developed in an experimental way and its results were compared with the expert knowledge of relevant linguists and refined based on their feedback. The ASJP database currently contains word lists from 5,067 discerned languages[8] and is able to compute the degree of similarity between any pair of these language, yielding for each pair a distance measure they call the Levenshtein Normalized Distance Divided (LDND).[9] To give credit to their work, I will call this the ASJP distance.

As Ginsburgh and Weber point out (p 152), it would be better to have a system that is based on how much time it would take an average speaker of one language to learn a given other language. They cite the work of Chiswick and Miller from 2007, who developed such a measure for a limited number of language pairs. However, they also point out that it would be almost impossible to do this for all possible language pairs in the world. Therefore, in order to continue with the thought experiment and to show that it in principle it should be possible to make rational choices in this area, I will continue, using the ASJP database as a starting point in order to provide indications of ease or difficulty of language learning.

5.4 Ease of language learning: the ASJP database

So far, Levenshtein distances have been used to classify languages and dialects and to estimate degrees of mutual intelligibility. However, I

[7] https://asjp.clld.org/ accessed 23 July 2019.

[8] ASJP website, 23 July 2019. Note that SIL is the registrar for an ISO norm that tries to list all of the world's languages, ISO 693-3; this can be seen as listing all the more than 7,000 currently discerned languages of the world. See https://iso639-3.sil.org/about for more information.

[9] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Automated_Similarity_Judgment_Program for a brief explanation (accessed 18 September 2020).

propose to use them for a related but different purpose, namely to estimate the ease or difficulty of language learning. Without further work it is unclear what the ASJP distances mean in terms of ease or difficulty of learning a language. In order for them to have practical relevance for this purpose, it is necessary to benchmark them against a schema for language learning and to see if there is any relationship between the ASJP scores and such a schema. The schema I propose to use is one that has been developed by the US Government.[10] It has published a list of language pairs, giving for each the number of weeks of full-time formal instruction needed for a talented native English speaker to reach the IRL S-3/L-3 proficiency level in a given other language. The S3/R3 level is equal to basic 'vocational' proficiency, roughly equivalent to the CEFR C1 level.

In some cases, it also gives the number of weeks needed to give a student who already speaks a certain language the same level in a related language.

The mapping looks like this:

Language pair	**Weeks**	**US classification**	**ASJP score**	**My classification**
Czech – Slovak	10-12	Closely related	32	Very easy
Bulgarian – Macedonian	10-12	Closely related	32	Very easy
Indonesian –	10-12	Closely related	15	Very easy
Lao – Thai	14-18	Related	53	Very easy
Portuguese – Spanish	14-18	Related	68	Easy
Dutch – German	18-22		49	Very easy
Bulgarian – Serbo-Croatian	30-36		48	Very easy
English – Dutch	24	Cat I	61	Easy
English – Italian	24	Cat I	90	Medium
English – French	30	Cat I	92	Medium
English – German	36	Cat II	69	Medium
English – Haitian	36	Cat II	94	Medium
English – Swahili	36	Cat II	97	Difficult

[10] https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/247092.pdf accessed 21 July 2019. Cysouw (2013) has used a slightly less complete of this schema before to assess ease of language learning, but he has not related it to ASJP scores.

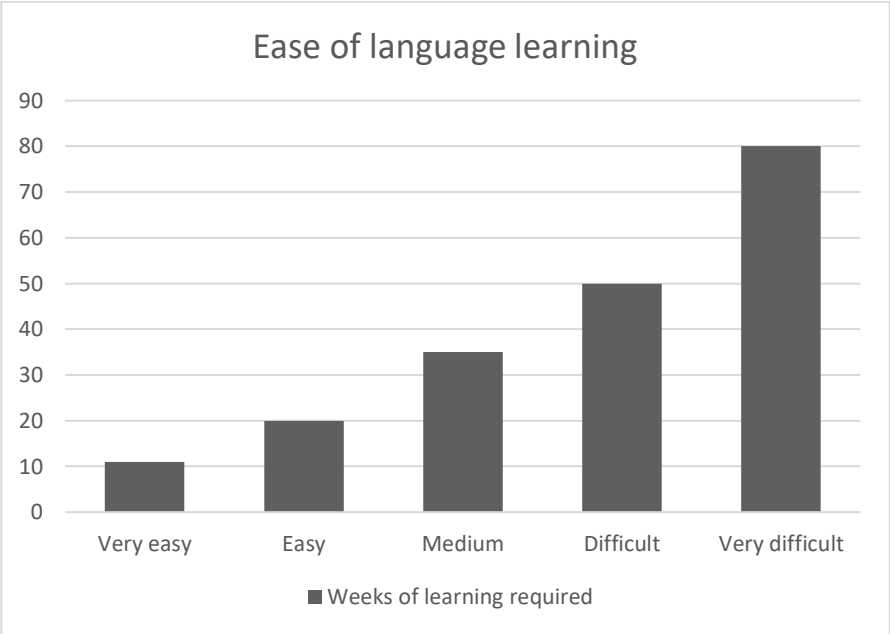
English – Amharic	44	Cat III (hard)	96	Difficult
English – Hausa	44	Cat III (hard)	98	Difficult
English – Somali	44	Cat III (hard)	103	Very difficult
English – Japanese	88	Cat IV (super hard)	98	Difficult
English – Korean	88	Cat IV (super	99	Difficult
English –	88	Cat IV (super	102	Very difficult

Table 1: US and ASJP-derived schemas for language learning

As is clear from the table, the US Government-based classification and my classification based on AJSP scores do not provide an exact match, but they are still reasonably close. The difference between the two systems is never more than one adjacent category. What is also clear is that the ASJP scores do not form a scale with equal distances between points: at the higher end of the scale, the difficulty level increases faster than at the lower end of the scale. This is in line with Heeringa (2004: 281), who concludes that 'logarithmic Levenshtein distances (…) correlate most strongly with the perceptual distances'.
In summary, my classification goes like this:

ASJP distance	**Category**
< 60	Very easy
≥ 60, < 90	Easy
≥ 90, ≤ 95	Medium
> 95, < 100	Difficult
≥ 100	Very difficult

It is good to note that the difference in language learning between 'easy' and 'difficult' represents a substantial difference in terms of the effort that is required. The graph below illustrates this, although the number of weeks should be taken as an indicative value only. In addition, this is based on language learning of US adolescents. It could be that the differential is different for African children – this is an area that has not been researched and would deserve further work. It could also be that the differential varies for people with varying language aptitudes.



Graph 1 – Ease of language learning

We can tentatively operationalize the second principle proposed in section 5.1 above (the principle that the designed languages chosen as medium of instruction) should be as close as possible to the discerned language of the learners) then as follows: ideally, the designed language of instruction should be very easy (ASJP score of below 60). In cases where this is not practical, the next best choice would be to provide instruction in a different designed language that is less close to the mother tongue but that is still easy to learn – so with an ASJP score of below 90. The ASJP score for the English-Estonian language pair (used in chapter four) is 99, making English a difficult language for Estonian speakers (and vice versa). In cases where this is practical and convenient, it may be possible to start primary education in a very easy language and to teach a second, easy to learn language as a subject. At some point in time, it may then be possible to switch to this second language as medium of instruction – as indeed suggested by Laitin and discussed more in detail below.

This benchmarking and categorization has the advantage that it leads to an approximate assessment for the easy or difficulty of learning a language for any language pair in the ASJP database. It can therefore be used in order to make a rough assessment of the equitableness and inclusivity of a given language regime and of the efficiency of developing a given discerned language into a designed language. This

can be done without any knowledge of the actual languages. However, it is not more than that: any initial assessment of this type would have to be validated against the expert knowledge of local speakers and learners of the languages involved.

To illustrate the power of this approach, two examples will be given, one from Africa and one from Europe.

First, let's examine the Gbe languages, spoken in Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria. Prah (1998) has claimed that Gbe is really one language. The ASJP database has sufficient word lists for six discerned Gbe languages. As can be seen from table 2 below, most language pairs are 'very easy'; some of them are 'easy'. Developing either Aja Gbe or Wudu into a designed language might yield a designed language that is very easy to learn for all speakers of Gbe languages.

2 SYNONYMS, AT LEAST 28 WORDS						
LOANWORDS EXCLUDED						
LDND						
	ADANGBE	AJAGBE	EWE ADANGBE	FONGBE	GEN	WUDU
ADANGBE	0					
AJAGBE	37	0				
EWE ADANGBE	17	41	0			
FONGBE	66	57	67	0		
GEN	36	41	40	63	0	
WUDU	24	30	21	60	30	0
	ADANGBE	AJAGBE	EWE ADANGBE	FONGBE	GEN	WUDU

Table 2: ASJP database output for Gbe languages

For those readers who have a more Eurocentric frame of reference, it is illustrative to compare this output with the results for the 10 Dutch-like languages discerned in the Netherlands (plus English) for which there are sufficient word lists in the ASJP database. As can be seen from table 3 below, Dutch is very easy to learn for all speakers of Dutch-like languages (whereas English is marginally more difficult, falling into the 'easy' category). It makes sense that in the Netherlands, Dutch is used as the designed language. It also explains why Dutch are often praised for their generally good command of the English language – it is an easy language for them to learn.

2 SYNONYMS, AT LEAST 28 WORDS											
LOANWORDS EXCLUDED											
LDND											
	BRABANTIC	DUTCH	ENGLISH	FRANS VLAAMS	FRISIAN WESTERN	GRONINGS	LIMBURGISH	SALLANDS	TWENTS	WEST VLAAMS	ZEEUWS
BRABANTIC	0										
DUTCH	44	0									
ENGLISH	66	61	0								
FRANS_VLAAMS	43	38	61	0							
FRISIAN_WESTERN	57	52	67	59	0						
GRONINGS	58	38	71	58	56	0					
LIMBURGISH	54	46	66	57	58	44	0				
SALLANDS	61	35	69	50	62	40	54	0			
TWENTS	63	47	63	59	64	48	55	37	0		
WESTVLAAMS	50	43	64	29	65	55	56	48	60	0	
ZEEUWS	47	37	67	27	61	51	56	48	59	34	0
	BRABANTIC	DUTCH	ENGLISH	FRANS VLAAMS	FRISIAN WESTERN	GRONINGS	LIMBURGISH	SALLANDS	TWENTS	WEST VLAAMS	ZEEUWS

Table 3: ASJP database output for Dutch-like languages

This categorization also helps provide a nuance to Laitin's proposal of rational language repertoires for Africa (Laitin 1992: 18). He predicts that in a small number of African countries, there will be one national or official language – these will be the countries that are largely monolingual, such as Botswana, Somalia and Madagascar. Some other countries, in his opinion, will move towards two languages: indigenous languages for use within each linguistic community and an international language for nationwide communication; these countries would include Angola and South Africa, for example. However, according to Laitin, most countries in Africa will move towards what he calls the 3 ± 1 model: a local indigenous language (used in primary education), an indigenous lingua franca and an international language. For those whose mother tongue is the lingua franca, two languages would be needed; for those whose mother tongue is different from the indigenous language used in primary education, four would be needed. Laitin does not explicitly discuss the possibility of a country using multiple indigenous languages and translating between them (as happens for example in Belgium, Canada and Switzerland).

Applying the distinction between designed and discerned languages, it is clear that learning to use a designed language *always* requires some level of effort and learning, no matter how close the designed language is to the learner's mother tongue. However, in order to create as much equality of opportunity as possible, it is important to use a language in primary education that is as close as possible to the discerned language of the learners. In terms of the classification proposed above, it would be important to use a language that is *very easy* but it does not have to be the discerned language itself. This does not mean that speaking the designed language in school would necessarily have to be enforced – if

the registers of the learners are close enough to the designed language, then there could be sufficient mutual intelligibility in the classroom to allow children to speak in a way that seems most 'natural' to them.
For secondary and tertiary education, using an easy language will be necessary in order to efficiently reach the largest number of learners; it may not always be possible to use a *very* easy language, but it should still be as easy as possible; in many cases, such an easy language will also be a *lingua franca*; if not, if the language becomes widely used in secondary education in a particular area, it might develop in that direction. It will be necessary to introduce that language as a subject in primary school. Likewise, in later years, it might be helpful to also introduce an international language and/or a second indigenous language as a subject.
Laitin writes about the number of 'languages a citizen needs'. He does not specify *which* citizens need those languages and at *which level* (s)he needs to be able to communicate in them. Clearly, to allow citizens to participate as widely as possible in a national democratic process, all citizens need to be able to interact with state institutions (the judiciary, legislature and executive branches) in a language they have mastered to a sufficient level. As argued in the previous chapter, this will usually not be an international language; for many African countries, the Laitin 3 ± 1 model and the two-language model may not lead to inclusive results: the ultimate solution may have to be found in using more than one official indigenous language and to translate between them.

5.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have examined the last of my research questions: what possibilities are there for rational language-in-education policies in Africa?

I started my reasoning by arguing that a rational language policy that aims at being decolonial will be based on creating equal opportunities for all children, creating equal access to state institutions and to political debate for all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status.
I call into question the implicit assumption in much of the literature that anybody can learn any other language with equal ease: I point to the fact that linguistic capabilities are not distributed equally over the population and that it is not one-dimensional. Thus, there are people who are gifted in a number of ways, but not in language learning.

Because learning occurs to a large extent through language, it is important especially for those less gifted in language to use a designed language that is as easy for them to learn as possible – in other words, to use a language that is close to their discerned 'mother tongue'.
This, in combination with the possible increase in enrolment rates that was discussed in chapter four requires a shift towards African languages. However, in order to make such a shift practicable, I propose four principles:

1. It will be necessary to develop a **limited number** of designed languages for education. It is not practical, but also not necessary, to aim to develop all discerned languages into designed languages.
2. These designed languages should be chosen in such a way that they are **easy to learn** for as many speakers of discerned languages as possible.
3. Strive for **inclusivity**: choose the various designed languages in such a way that all have to exert a relatively low but relatively equal effort to learn them.
4. Make use of **existing bilingualism** as a resource.

In order to develop a way of thinking about how to work with these principles, I made use of the ASJP database; the associated software is able to calculate a measure of distance between two languages that is based on Levenshtein or Normalized Edit distances; such distances have been used widely to assess mutual intelligibility of related dialects and languages. However, I have made new use of them, by benchmarking ASJP distances to an extensive US Government schema for easy and difficult language pairs, leading to a division into five categories, going from very easy (around 12 weeks of instruction needed to reach a level sufficient for tertiary education) to very difficult (around 80 weeks of instruction needed to attain the same level). This yielded a new way of approximating which languages are 'easy' or 'difficult' and for whom.
It now becomes possible to study rational choices for language in education, choices that as chapter four has shown are bound to become inescapable for several African countries in the next decade or so.
In chapter two, I already quoted Vansina, who has discussed that there used to exist a limited number of 'cultural traditions' in Africa, much more limited in fact than the number of discerned languages or of ethnolinguistic groups on the continent. He predicts that in future, new cultural traditions will emerge, but those will also be limited in number. In chapter three, I came to conclusions that seem to support Vansina's

predictions. In chapters four and five, I outlined why in future, a change to African languages, considered to be important for the development of such new cultural traditions, will become unavoidable, at least in some countries and to some extent, in the foreseeable future. I developed a way of looking at how it would be possible to make rational choices in this area for a limited number of designed languages. In the next chapter, I will try to bring together those strands (to the extent of my limited abilities and knowledge) through a few case studies.

6. Five case studies

The previous three chapters of this study examined three research questions, all three related to the central theme of language, education and identity in Africa. This has led at least to a 'proof of concept', showing that rational choices for language in education in Africa are both possible in principle and unavoidable, at least for some countries. Increased use of African languages will also be necessary for a continued process towards new cultural autonomies in Africa, although at present it is difficult to pinpoint how these processes are taking shape. What does seem certain is that the picture will not be even across Africa.

In this chapter, I will try to take this study one step further by examining five countries in a bit more detail. These are two countries already discussed earlier: Botswana (partly in its Southern African context) - and Ghana. To these are added three further countries. These are Tanzania, as a rare example of a country that is already using an indigenous language in more domains than most countries in Africa; Ethiopia, as the country in Africa with the language policy that is perhaps the most supportive of indigenous languages; and the Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), as an example from Francophone Africa.

The structure of all brief case studies is roughly the same: a short general introduction, including a mention of the current official language policy; a reference to the cultural and political situation, to the extent made possible by the research presented in chapter three; an overview of (the evolution of) enrolment figures in education; an examination of the language situation and the options for rational choices for language in education;[1] and some conclusions and recommendations. Section 6.6 tries to bring together the lessons learnt from all five studies.

6.1 Tanzania

Tanzania is the only country that has purposefully and successfully introduced an African language for national use. Was this a rational

[1] Information on the language ecology of these countries is contained in country-level spreadsheets of Levenshtein distances between language pairs, as generated through the ASJP database and programme. The full spreadsheets are available on request from the author.

choice, what improvements might still be possible and could this model be replicated in other parts of Africa as well?

Tanzania is a county in East Africa with a population of around 61 million people.[2] The country is linguistically diverse, just like many other African countries. However, it is unique in that it has adopted an African language (Swahili) as its official language, used in parliament, in the lower courts, primary education and teacher training colleges (Skattum 2018: 68) (see Temu, 1998 for an overview of how this came about).

6.1.1 Cultural and political situation

The Ethnologue currently discerns 125 languages spoken in Tanzania.[3] Although Tanzania is a country of considerable cultural diversity, it would be misleading to speak of 125 culturally different entities in the country. In the cultural dimension analysis of chapter 3.5, I was able to analyse information on 18 ethnic groups. On all four cultural dimensions discussed there, the differences within Tanzania are greater than 20 points – such differences in culturally relevant survey question results are likely to correspond to noticeable differences in practice as well. The differences are largest in the Indulgence vs Restraint dimension, with the Luguru and the Hehe scoring on the very restrained side and the Haya and the Iraqw scoring relatively on the indulgent side. Large differences also occur on the 'Fix vs Flex' (LTO) dimension, with the Luguru, the Gogo and several other groups showing as very much on the 'Fixed' side and the Fipa relatively on the 'flex' side. In Tanzania, there is no direct mapping of cultural differences possible onto language clusters. A one on one identification of language with culture does not hold here. This image is supported by the hierarchical cluster analysis of chapter 3.4, which arranges the 14 groups distinguished for that analysis into six separate clusters (not all of the same size). This is an area worthy of further investigation.

Blommaert (2014) shows how the promotion of Swahili was coupled with the state ideology of 'Ujamaa'. This ideology, he argues, was based on overly simplistic and utopian ideas of pan-African values, based on an idealized communal village life which supposedly was the cradle for 'African Socialism' (p 15). He points to the contradiction between these utopian ideas and the actual situation on the ground: the actually existing cultural differences within the country were seen as potentially divisive, were branded as backwards and were consciously

[2] https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/tanzania-population/ accessed 26 July 2019

[3] https://www.ethnologue.com/country/TZ accessed 25 July 2019

ignored or played down, not studied and not used as the basis for developing the 'Ujamaa' ideology (p 32). The idea, therefore, was to build a new Tanzanian nation and citizenry, with the Ujamaa ideology and the Swahili language as unifying factors. Blommaert shows that this in fact failed: the idea of a new Tanzanian nation built around Ujamaa greatly underestimated the 'cultural resilience' of the 'common man' (p 40).[4] However, establishing Swahili as the dominant language in the country did not fail: it was a big success and now seems unchallengeable (p 148). Why? Why was it possible to establish Swahili in this way, but not to build a culturally homogeneous nation? Blommaert doesn't provide an answer, his analysis stops at this point. Topan (2008: 264) lists a variety of factors explaining the choice for and success of Swahili: the existing caravan routes; the use by the Germans and the British of Swahili; the use by missionaries; the fact that Swahili was not the language of a dominant ethnic group; and lastly, the role of Julius Nyerere. These are all factors that explain the initial choice for Swahili, but they do not fully explain its continued success. My analysis suggests that in fact, an obvious explanation is available, one that may be unique to Tanzania. I will return to that below.

6.1.2 Educational situation

Blommaert demonstrates that the educational system that was inherited from colonial times was left intact. Therefore, it continued to serve the purpose of selecting those who were intelligent enough (in language aptitude terms) to be recruited into the national elite. In order to do this (although it was never explicitly stated as a purpose), the medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education remained English (p 61).[5]

To this day, the educational system in Tanzania remains highly pyramidical, as shown in graph 1 below.

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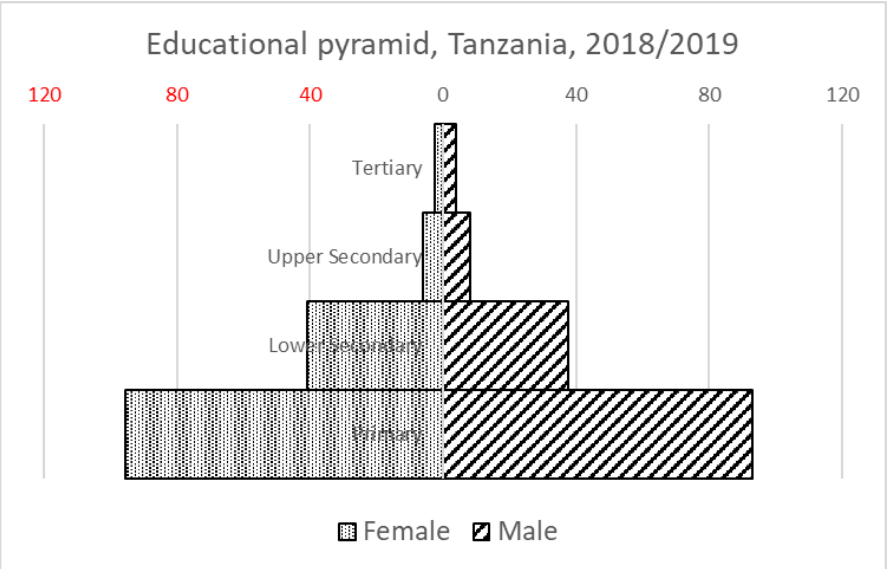
[4] There is an important literature discussing how and why African countries post-independence were forced in some way to take account of precolonial institutions and structures. See for an important overview Boone (2003).

[5] Even though today, for example at the University of Dodoma some of the Swahili-language courses are actually taught in Swahili – see for example https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HLJ3wpeOVq4lPZwdf_jPkgprZiJjtx9_/view p 218, retrieved 13 February 2020.



Graph 1 - Educational pyramid, Tanzania, 2018 (Tertiary education: 2019)

The ratio of GER in primary education to tertiary education is 30.5 – as was shown in chapter four, this makes the Tanzanian educational sector highly pyramidical, with a large gap between those who receive higher education and those who do not. Note that slightly more girls than boys are in primary education, but in tertiary education boys dominate.

This selective nature is even more clear when one examines secondary education. In Tanzania, secondary education is divided into the Ordinary level (the first four years) and the Advanced level (the last two years). There is a selective exam after the first four years, leading to a sharp fall in attendance rate between the O and the A level. This is aggravated by the fact that O-level education is free and A-level education is not.[6] In 1995, the Gross Enrolment Ratio for the O-level was below 7%; by 2010, this had risen to 40% (accompanied by a sharp drop in exam pass rates, as cited in the RISE report 2017, p 3). The same ratio for the A-level was less than 3% in 1990 and less than 9% in 2010. So, in 2010, fewer than 25% of the children who completed lower secondary education got to progress to the advanced level.[7]

Still, with a GER for the initial level of secondary education at around 40%, one can expect that the policy of secondary education in English will come under increasing pressure, as is indeed the case. For many

[6] This was at least the case in 2015. It could be that the introduction of school fees at this level helps to explain the gendered difference in enrolment.

[7] http://data.uis.unesco.org/# , accessed 26 July 2019.

children, the switch to English at the start of secondary education will come too soon: their level of English will not be good enough to understand the teaching in that language, even though they would understand the teaching if it would be in Swahili – as illustrated by Mwinsheike (2003) and more forcefully by Qorro (2013). The net effect of this has to be that those children who are less gifted in language or who come from a background less favourable to learning English or who are hampered by a combination of both factors learn less in school than they could learn if the teaching would be in Swahili. In other words, the Tanzanian model leads to a built-in wastage in the system which means children do not reach their full potential. In fact, changing to Kiswahili for secondary education has been declared an official policy, but this policy has never been implemented. Tibategeza and Du Plessis (2018) explain why this is not likely to happen yet: they signal that intentions from the past have not been implemented and that there is no political will at present. '[E]ducation stakeholders still think that English is a language of global business, science and technology and would therefore wish their children to be instructed in that language for them to master it. Additionally, parents still hold misconceptions (…)' (p. 96).

6.1.3 Language situation and language choice options[8]

Blommaert (2014) has described the role of language and state ideology in building Tanzania as a culturally coherent country. He sees language as a 'mosaic' of registers (p 1) and tries to show such a mosaic also in his study of Swahili. In chapter 1.3, I have argued that this type of approach, that is different from the distinction between discerned and designed languages that I propose, tends to downplay or overlook the role of language policy. For Tanzania and Swahili, it is impossible to overlook the role of language policy, because Swahili has been heavily shaped into its designed status, requiring considerable state intervention, joined by an active intellectual elite. This intervention has, as Blommaert shows, been tremendously successful in establishing the hegemony of Swahili in the country. For Blommaert, this is a matter of 'homogenisation from above', of 'institutionalised ideological constructs' (p 3) - terms that seem to denote something negative, instead of something legitimate and normal in modern society.

The ASJP database discerns 106 languages spoken in Tanzania, to which I have added English. Some of these may be different word lists

[8] Elements of this case study have been published in Pinxteren, Bert van (2020b: 145 – 152).

for what some might say is the same language, leading to ASJP scores that show very easy to learn language pairs, for example for the different varieties of Swahili discerned by the database.

A first thing to note when examining the Tanzanian matrix in light of the above discussion is that English is a difficult or very difficult language to learn for speakers of any Tanzanian language.[9]

A second key characteristic of Tanzania is that indeed, given the criteria developed in the previous chapters, Swahili is a rational choice as a language for Tanzania: it is 'easy' or 'very easy' to learn for speakers of more than 90 other discerned Tanzanian languages.[10] Note that other choices would have been possible as well – there are a number of other Tanzanian languages to which the same applies and which could also have been chosen. What this means is that for the great majority of Tanzanians, Swahili is far easier to learn than English. In terms of the U.S. schema discussed in section 5.4, it is the difference between 15 weeks of full-time instruction for a linguistically gifted person and 80-plus weeks for such a person.[11] Still, this means that using Swahili as the designed language requires learning for most, if not all speakers of related discerned languages. Yet, the common misconception also quoted by Blommaert (p 63) is wrong. Blommaert writes that the consequence of the nationwide adoption of Kiswahili was ''that most children in non-urban inland areas, where Swahili was not the mother tongue of the population, were faced with a 'hidden' language barrier when they entered primary school: that of Swahili. For them, Swahili was as foreign a language as English (a fact already observed by Khamisi 1974: 290) – in spite of the fact that it had become the national language and in spite of the widely heard argument that 'everyone spoke and understood Swahili'." This point could be read in two ways. One could say that the sentence postulates a dichotomy between mother tongues and all other languages – the 'foreign' languages. In such a reading, English and Swahili are both equal in the sense that they fall in the category of 'foreign' languages. One could also say that there is a distinction of degree: some languages could be more 'foreign' (or more difficult to learn) than others. My benchmarking of ASJP distances suggests that this second reading is more appropriate: some languages are a good deal more 'foreign'. For the great majority of

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[9] All ASJP scores are above 95, a good number above 100.

[10] 'Very easy' being defined as an AJSP score of below 60, 'easy' as below 90.

[11] These figures serve to illustrate the order of magnitude we should be thinking about when comparing between easy or difficult to learn language pairs. Precise values for specific language pairs and specific countries and educational systems can only be established through further research.

Tanzanians, Swahili is far easier to learn than English. Here we find the answer to the question posed in the preceding section: this is why even though the cultural unification project failed, the linguistic project of Swahili could become an enduring success.

The borders of Tanzania are not linguistic borders, though. What is true for the Tanzanian languages also holds for most if not all of the languages of the Narrow Bantu language family, as the table below shows.

2 SYNONYMS, AT LEAST 28 WORDS								
LOANWORDS EXCLUDED								
LDND								
	GIKUYU	KOONGO	LINGALA	LUBA	SOTHO SOUTHERN	SWAHILI	SHONA	ZULU
GIKUYU	0							
KOONGO	93	0						
LINGALA	87	78	0					
LUBA	86	84	80	0				
SOTHO_SOUTHERN	96	89	83	83	0			
SWAHILI	90	80	80	69	83	0		
SHONA	89	78	90	77	83	73	0	
ZULU	96	83	89	82	75	79	82	0
	GIKUYU	KOONGO	LINGALA	LUBA	SOTHO SOUTHERN	SWAHILI	SHONA	ZULU

Table 1 - ASJP database output for selected Bantu languages[12]

It is interesting to note that this similarity is hidden from view by a well-known language classification system such as the Guthrie classification, as updated by Maho (2009). The Guthrie/Maho classification groups Narrow Bantu languages into 16 zones, divided into groups, divided into individual languages. Under this classification, Bantu languages spoken in Tanzania come under the E, F, G, J, P and M zones, giving the impression of a much greater differentiation than what the ASJP database suggests.[13] (Thus, Swahili is seen as part of the G40 group,

[12] Note that the scores are not for correlation but instead for ASJP distance. The legend was given in section 5.3 above; higher numbers mean greater distance.

ASJP distance score	Difficulty
< 60	Very easy
≥ 60, < 90	Easy
≥ 90, ≤ 95	Medium
> 95, < 100	Difficult
≥ 100	Very

[13] Banda (2016: 273) calls this 'caging languages into zones'.

Sukuma as part of the F20 group – suggesting they are completely different. The ASJP database also shows them as different, yet this is an easy language pair, ASJP distance 70.)

It is good to realize that in respect of languages, Tanzania and Kenya are two very different countries. Kenya has far more numerous groups of speakers of Nilotic and Cushitic languages than Tanzania does. As the Tanzanian matrix shows, Swahili is a far more difficult language to learn for Nilotic and Cushitic language speakers than for Bantu language speakers. This factor alone may help to explain why pleas such as those by Kanana (2013) to make Swahili the single official language for Kenya as well have fallen on deaf ears.

A third specificity of the Tanzanian situation is the fact that this is a country with two extreme situations; in contrast with a country like Ghana, there are almost no language pairs with 'medium' learning difficulty. So, on the one hand we see a large group of languages that are close to one another. On the other hand, there is a small group of languages that are neither close to one another nor to Swahili. These languages deserve to be examined separately.

The largest group is made up of Nilotic languages. These fall into two clusters:

- Maasai. Also spoken in Kenya. It has over 650,000 speakers in Tanzania and in total is spoken by around 1.5 million people. For Maasai speakers, Swahili and English (and indeed all other languages spoken in Tanzania) are roughly of the same level of difficulty.
- Datooga. Number of speakers estimated by the Ethnologue is around 160,000. The ASJP database discerns four varieties, mutually very easy to learn. However, there is no other language spoken in Tanzania that is easy for them; for them, Swahili and English are roughly equally difficult. The Datooga – Maasai language pair is difficult as well.

Then, there are a few Cushitic languages spoken in Tanzania:

- The largest Cushitic language in Tanzania is Iraqw, number of speakers estimated to be above 600,000. The others are Alagwa (around 50,000) and Burunge (around 28,000). Kieβling and Mous (2003), cited in the Ethnologue, report 'relatively high similarity' between Alagwa and Burunge. The ASJP database suggests that these language pairs are indeed 'very easy' or 'easy'. For Iraqw speakers, Swahili is somewhat easier to learn than English (it falls into the 'medium' category). Gorowa is

another Cushitic language spoken in Tanzania, but it is not in the ASJP database.

Then, there are two language isolates:

- Sandawe. There are few language isolates in Africa, but this is one of them. As with Datooga, no other language spoken in Tanzania is easy for them, Swahili and English are roughly equally difficult. Number of speakers estimated by the Ethnologue around 60,000.
- Hadza. Again, a language isolate in the same situation as Sandawe, but the number of speakers is estimated at only around 1,000. It is seen as threatened by the Ethnologue.

Lastly, there is one mixed language:

- Mbugu (or Ma'a). Mbugu is unique, in that it is a mixed language that is made up of Bantu and Cushitic elements. The ASJP database gives separate word lists for 'inner' and 'normal' Mbugu. 'Normal' Mbugu has the Bantu vocabulary, and is therefore closer to Swahili than 'innner' Mbugu. Mous (1995: 199) suggests that Mbugu was originally a Bantu language, but that the additional elements were added because the Mbugu needed to set themselves apart from their neighbours. It has around 7,000 speakers.

It is to be expected that educational results of those native speakers of the minority languages listed above who are not bilingual from birth will fall below those of the Bantu speakers. Because Tanzania publishes its exam results at the school and district levels, it might be possible to substantiate this through research. However, this means controlling for such factors as bilingualism, linguistic mix in schools, general socio-economic factors and school-related factors such as the ratio of (qualified) teachers to students and the enrolment ratio in the district. A quick comparison of 2019 primary school results shows an average score for three districts that have at least a large proportion of non-Bantu speakers that is 89% of the score of three districts with mostly Bantu speakers. This seems significant, given the fact that many schoolchildren in Tanzania are exposed to Swahili from a very early age.[14]

[14] The comparison is between Bunda, Hanang and Kondoa districts (non-Bantu) versus Ikungi, Manyoni and Singida Rural (Bantu) districts. See https://www.necta.go.tz/ for information on the exam results.

To sum up: Swahili is difficult or very difficult for less than 2 million or 1.5% of the Tanzanian population. For all others, it is easy or very easy to learn. However, learning an 'easy' designed language still requires formal schooling and a reasonable amount of effort, even for those gifted in languages.
What does this mean for rational choices in education in Tanzania?

6.1.4 Conclusions and recommendations

A number of conclusions and recommendations seem obvious, keeping in mind the general principles that have been outlined in chapter 5.2.

1) The choice of Swahili as a designed language of (primary) education in Tanzania is a rational one (although not the only one that would theoretically have been possible): this language is easy or very easy to learn for over 98.5% of all Tanzanians. It should be noted that for most speakers, Swahili still requires a fair amount of learning, although far less than learning for example English.
2) It is to be expected that sooner or later, the pressure to switch from English to Swahili in lower secondary education will increase. Given the current enrolment levels near what I have defined as the 'language barrier', this would be a rational step to take that is bound to increase efficiency in education.[15] However, it is important that this transition should not be undertaken overnight but that it be planned carefully. If and as enrolment figures increase in senior secondary education, a change to Kiswahili at that level will also be necessary, but at the moment it is not.[16]
3) Compared to the current language policy, this means that English will be taught as a subject up to the end of secondary education; Swahili will replace English as medium of instruction at that level. In tertiary education, the current English-only language policy will have to change as well. Swahili will become more and more important, as an increasing proportion of tertiary education will use Swahili as medium of instruction. If this occurs in parallel with an increase in enrolment levels, then the paradoxical result of this will be, as demonstrated in chapter 4.2.2 that the proportion of the population that have a

[15] For a convincing description of the benefits of this, see Brock-Utne (2013).
[16] For an interesting perspective on this by an education practitioner, see https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/magazine/success/1843788-4009890-ygpdwpz/index.html accessed 8 August 2019.

command of English at a reasonable level will increase, compared to the current situation.

4) The current monolingual education system is wasteful in terms of talent and resources, especially regarding speakers of non-Bantu languages. Again, this should be changed in a gradual and well-planned way.[17] For the smaller population groups, existing levels of bilingualism might be used as a resource, but the limitations of this case study do not allow definite conclusions on this point.
5) Topan (2008: 266) argues that by now, the success of Swahili and the extent of intermarriages within the country have reduced the dangers of 'tribalism'. Quoting Batibo, he argues that liberalization and decentralization may help in checking the erosion of indigenous languages in the country. Indeed, as recalled above, cultural boundaries do not coincide with linguistic boundaries in Tanzania. Therefore, it should be possible to introduce further efficiency gains without threatening national unity. This can be done by gradually introducing instruction using local languages as medium of instruction at the primary level, especially for those native speakers for which Swahili presents relatively greater difficulties. The wide consensus among scientists is that early education in a language that is closest to the one spoken at home yields best results.
6) These recommendations mean that the study and teaching of languages spoken in Tanzania besides Swahili should be taken up in the country, as recommended by Muzale and Rugemalira (2008). Students should be encouraged to study a Tanzanian language besides Swahili and language departments should be set up for other Tanzanian languages, to start with the minority languages. It is telling that the Swedish-funded 'Languages of Tanzania' project that ran until 2008 was located in the 'Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics' of the

[17] The task may not be trivial; thus, Trudell and Adger (2014) point to problems related to Maasai orthography as developed in the colonial period that would have to be addressed.

> University of Dar-Es-Salaam – the University had no department for the study of other Tanzanian languages besides Swahili.[18]

In general, this first case study demonstrates that the approach developed in the previous chapters shows promising results, also when compared to existing literature, at least for Tanzania. Swahili is a rational choice for education in Tanzania. Are other African countries in a position to make a similar choice? Is it possible to say something about that using this approach? For that, we will need to look at a few more cases.

[18] Currently, though, there is research into 'other Bantu languages' within the Department of Swahili Language and Linguistics: https://www.udsm.ac.tz/web/index.php/institutes/iks/department-of-swahili-language-and-linguistics accessed 28 August 2020.

6.2 Republic of Congo

In the previous case study of Tanzania, we have shown how in that country, the choice of Swahili as a designed language to serve a large number of relatively similar discerned languages was indeed a logical choice, given the proximity to one another of the great majority of the languages discerned in Tanzania. Most people in Tanzania speak a discerned language that is part of the similar family of Narrow Bantu languages. However, these languages are spoken in many more countries in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa. Would a choice like the one made for Tanzania be possible for other countries as well? In this case study, we will look at a country with a different colonial history but with a similar linguistic makeup: the Republic of Congo (also known as Congo-Brazzaville). All languages discerned for the Republic of Congo belong to the Narrow Bantu family.[1] What can be said about rational choices for language use in higher education in such a country? The Republic of Congo is a country in Central Africa with a population approaching 5.5 million people,[2] heavily concentrated in the South and in the region around Brazzaville (the Pool region). Congo has retained French as its official language after gaining independence in the wave of countries that became independent in 1960. Lingala and Kituba are the two officially recognized 'national languages'.

6.2.1 Cultural and political situation

The Ethnologue currently discerns 62 languages spoken in Congo,[3] but again, this does not mean that there is a similar number of different cultural entities in the country. Congo was not included in the cultural dimension analysis in chapter three of the study, due to a lack of available survey data. For Vansina (1990) the entire area was part of the same cultural tradition, at least until around 1920.
After independence, the country experimented for a period with socialism, with various rulers, until Denis Sassou-Nguesso took over in 1997. Although multi-party democracy was introduced, Sassou-Nguesso has managed to remain as president ever since, winning the civil war of 1997-1999. Discovery of oil made him and his family very rich.

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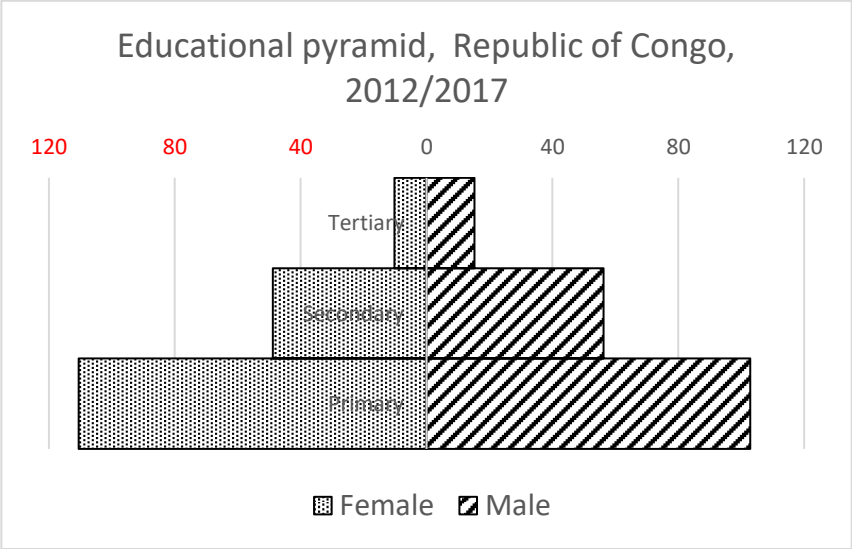
[1] Although there is a small group of Bayaka in Congo who speak an Ubangian language.
[2] https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/congo-population/ accessed 8 November 2019.
[3] https://www-ethnologue-com/country/CG accessed 8 November 2019.

6.2.2 Educational situation

In the field of education, the country has made considerable progress. Primary education is universal and secondary education is common. However, there is a gap between lower and upper secondary education: just over half the children who go to lower secondary education continue on to upper secondary education. The Gender Parity Index shows that whereas the ratio of boys to girls in lower secondary education is close to 1, many more boys than girls proceed to upper secondary education (the Gender Parity Index drops to 0.57).[4] All education is in French.[5]
The education pyramid for 2012 (primary and secondary education) / 2017 (tertiary education) is shown in the graph below.



Graph 2 - Educational pyramid, Republic of Congo 2012 (tertiary education: 2017)

Note that the GER for tertiary education in Congo has increased by 50% between 2012 and 2017, probably partly as a result of the country's Education Strategy 2015-2025. The gender imbalance in favour of boys at secondary level becomes even more prominent at tertiary level.
The ratio of GER in primary education to tertiary education is 8.4 – this makes Congo a country with a fairly pyramidical education structure, though less pyramidical than Tanzania (with a ratio of 30.5).

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[4] UNESCO data, 2012.
[5] http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/afrique/congo.htm accessed 15 November 2019.

6.2.3 Language situation and language choice options

Where the Ethnologue discerns 62 languages currently spoken in Congo, the contributors to the ASJP database discern 126 Congolese languages, to which I have added Swahili and French.
By now, it should not come as a surprise that French is difficult or very difficult to learn for L1 speakers of all Congolese languages.
Where in Tanzania over 98% of the population speaks one of the 'Narrow Bantu' languages, this is the case in fact for the entire population of the Republic of Congo: almost all languages discerned in the country belong to the Narrow Bantu family. As was shown for Tanzania, the discerned languages in this family are all fairly closely related – most of them form easy or very easy language pairs. Does that mean that, like in Tanzania, it would be possible to make a rational choice for one national indigenous language in this country?
Baka (2005: 107) notes that there are four languages of wider circulation in Congo: Kituba, Lingala, Laadi (Lari) and Sango.[6] A comparison of these four languages together with Koongo as shown in the table below reveals how close these languages are: Sango is clearly more distant, but the other language pairs are easy or very easy.

2 SYNONYMS, AT LEAST 28 WORDS					
LOANWORDS EXCLUDED					
LDND					
	KITUBA	KOONGO	LAADI	LINGALA	SANGO
KITUBA	0				
KOONGO	62	0			
LAADI	68	47	0		
LINGALA	83	78	79	0	
SANGO	94	97	98	92	0
	KITUBA	KOONGO	LAADI	LINGALA	SANGO

Table 2 - ASJP distances for languages with wider circulation in Congo

If we were to apply the same logic as in Tanzania, would it be possible to develop any of these languages into a designed national language for use in higher education in the Republic of Congo? Looking at the full matrix and purely from a theoretical point of view, the best candidate

[6] Sango is the lingua franca of the neighbouring Central African Republic; the Ethnologue does not report any Sango-speakers in Congo.

would seem to be Wumbvu – it presents a problem for only three other languages, all with very few speakers.

Again, the ASJP database itself is not a sufficient tool for making choices of this type: input from linguists with more detailed knowledge of the local languages would be a necessity.

It is interesting to note that in the Republic of Congo, in spite of any formal policies, a development such as the one suggested above is actually occurring: Bagamboula (2019) describes how Laari (Laadi) has developed into a lingua franca in the populous areas of Brazzaville and the surrounding Pool region, merging elements of Koongo, Suundi and Lingala. In her view, this has also led to the forming of what she calls a 'mega-ethnicity' of Laadi-speakers. She does not specify to what extent Laari is also used as a lingua franca in other parts of Congo, but with the support of a properly-designed language policy, it is thinkable that such an expansion would be possible. In that way, Laari could possibly develop into a distinct national language for the Republic of Congo. In a way, this development seems similar to what has happened in the Central African Republic, where Sango has obtained the status of national language (Mazrui, 2019).

It is good to note that other choices would also be possible.[7] Thus, one could imagine a choice of keeping several national languages for the Republic of Congo but choosing them in such a way that they overlap with choices made in neighbouring countries and are more in line with cultural and historical identities that may have a stronger position in the region. This would also give a potential for pooling the resources for language development from several countries. For example: the ASJP databse discerns 38 Kikongoic languages,[8] spoken in Gabon, RdCongo, Angola (Cabinda) and Congo DR. They form easy or very easy language pairs and one of them could be developed into a designed 'standard Kikongo'.

Kituba and Laadi are both Kikongoic languages, but Lingala is not, although the combination of Lingala with most Kikongoic languages is still easy. This could mean that such a bilingual solution would be more appropriate for RdCongo.

6.2.4 Conclusions and recommendations

As was the case for Tanzania, a switch to an indigenous language for tertiary education is not yet necessary in Congo, since enrolment figures are so low that French or any other language can be used.

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[7] I am grateful to Dr Elise Bagamboula for suggesting this alternative.

[8] See https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/kiko1234 for a list of Kikongoic languages as discerned by the Glottolog database.

Already at present, the use of French as medium of instruction in primary and secondary education is bound to lead to a waste of talent and resources, because it is likely that not all children have a level of French that is sufficient to follow education in that language, although in principle they may have the intellectual capabilities.

Baka (2005: 102) proposes to use the L1 as much as possible for the first four years of primary education and to switch to an indigenous language of wider communication after that and to use this language until the end of secondary education. In his proposal, this language of wider communication will be taught as a subject in the first years of primary school and another language of wider communication would also be taught as a subject. He proposes to use the four languages mentioned above in four different parts of the country up until the end of lower secondary education and to switch to Lingala and Kituba after that, using both also at the tertiary level.

The ASJP database suggests that a simpler solution might be possible, thanks to the predominance of the Narrow Bantu language family in Congo: one or two discerned languages would be relatively equally difficult (or easy) for almost all Congolese and could therefore be chosen as national language for use in higher education. As Bagamboula (2019) argues, a development towards a common *lingua franca* is already taking place for Laari. Supporting such a development based on an inclusive language policy would help build a national culture in Congo, would make learning easier and more efficient for children and would therefore provide important benefits for the country as a whole. However, a bilingual solution around one of the Kikongoic languages and Lingala would also be possible and it might be culturally more appropriate.

Compared to the current language policy, this means that French will be taught as a subject up to the end of secondary education; one or two indigenous African languages will replace French as medium of instruction at that level. In tertiary education, these indigenous languages will become more and more important, as an increasing proportion of tertiary education will use them as medium of instruction. If this occurs in parallel with an increase in enrolment levels, then the paradoxical result of this will be, as demonstrated in chapter 4.2.2 that the proportion of the population that have a command of French at a reasonable level will increase, compared to the current situation.

Of course, there are countries in Africa where the linguistic situation is much more complicated. What would the ASJP database suggest for such countries? That is the challenge for the next case study, which looks at Ethiopia.

6.3 Ethiopia

In the previous sections, we used the approach developed so far to examine the logic (or otherwise) of the language choices made in Tanzania and in the Republic of Congo. For Tanzania, the choice of Swahili as a designed language for use in (primary) education was a rational one, because it is easy or very easy to learn for more than 98.5% of all Tanzanians. It is to be expected that sooner or later, this choice will be extended to at least the first level of secondary education as well. However, for the speakers of some minority languages, Swahili is *not* a logical choice and a recommendation was to introduce those minority languages as medium of instruction, in the first instance in primary education, at least for the larger population groups. For the Republic of Congo, a similar choice would be possible, although the historical circumstances are very different and such a choice has not (yet) been made.

In this section, we will look at a country with a completely different linguistic situation, where completely different language choices have been made in education: Ethiopia. Will it be possible to say something rational about Ethiopia, using the approach developed so far?[1]

Ethiopia is a country in the horn of Africa with a population of nearly 113 million people.[2] Just like many other African countries, it is linguistically very diverse. From a political point of view, the country is unique in Africa, in that it was never colonized in the same way that other African countries were. Therefore, an indigenous language (rather than a non-indigenous colonial language), Amharic, was for a long time the language of instruction; it is still the national working language.[3] Ethiopia is also unique in that since 1991, the government has been in the hands of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which gained power after a civil war that had its origins in part in failure to accommodate the internal diversity in the country (Fiseha 2012: 439). In fact, Ethiopia is now unique in Africa in explicitly recognizing the rights of its nations, nationalities and peoples in its Constitution.

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[1] I am grateful to Dr. Azeb Amha for her valuable comments on an earlier draft of this case study; note, however, that the analysis is mine and possible mistakes and inaccuracies are as well.

[2] https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/ethiopia-population/ accessed 23 October 2019.

[3] Recently, however, the government decided to introduce four additional working languages (Afar, Oromo, Somali and Tigrigna). The practical meaning of this remains unclear. See https://qz.com/africa/1812085/ethiopia-adds-afan-oromo-somali-afar-tigrigna-languages-to-amharic/, accessed 29 July 2020.

> "A 'Nation, Nationality or People' for the purpose of this Constitution, is a group of people who have or share large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory."[4]

Individual regional states are free to choose their own working language and also to decide on the language(s) of instruction in primary education. English became the medium of instruction at the secondary level and is the only medium of instruction at tertiary level (Appleyard and Orwin 2008: 278).

6.3.1 Cultural and political situation

In 1994, Ethiopia became a Federal Republic. Administratively, it currently consists of ten regional states and two city districts, states which were formed in a way largely corresponding to the existing distribution of major ethnolinguistic groups over the country.[5] The Ethnologue currently discerns 90 languages spoken in Ethiopia,[6] compared to 125 for Tanzania.

In the cultural dimension analysis of chapter 3.5, I was able to isolate data for five ethnolinguistic groups (Amhara, Gurage, Oromo, Sidama and Tigrinya). On only one of the three cultural dimensions for which I found data was the difference within Ethiopia greater than 20 points – such a difference in culturally relevant survey question results is likely to correspond to noticeable differences in practice as well. The differences are largest in the Indulgence vs Restraint dimension. However, even on this dimension the differences are smaller than for example in Tanzania. It could be that, seen from a distance, Ethiopians are more alike than they think.

Smith (2013: 121) does not feel Ethiopians are all alike culturally speaking and points to the practical consequences of the cultural diversity she sees, for example where she points out: 'Different ethnolinguistic groups in Ethiopia have strikingly different visions of what citizenship should entail, and at least some of these conflicting visions represent distinct and competing institutional arrangements.' It

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[4] Article 39.5 of the Ethiopian Constitution, http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/et/et007en.pdf accessed 17 July 2017.

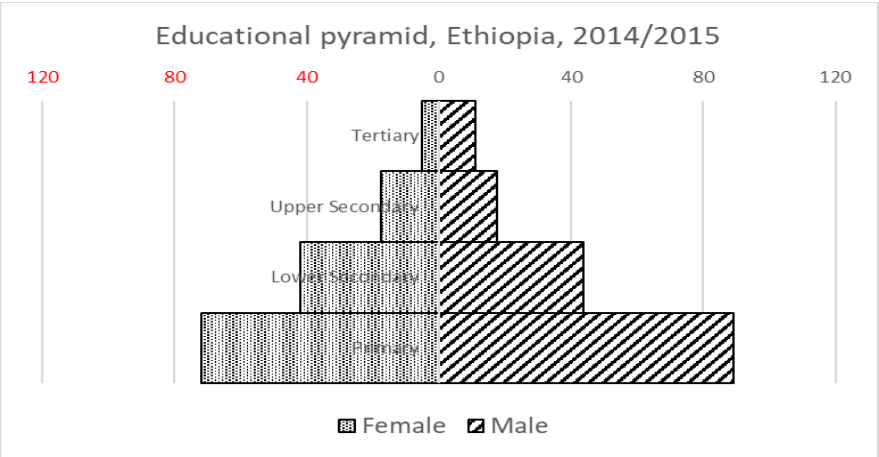
[5] On 18 June 2020, the Sidama regional state was formed. It split off from the SNNP region after a referendum. See https://borkena.com/2020/06/18/council-ratify-ethiopias-new-ethnic-sidama-statehood/, accessed 29 July 2020.

[6] https://www.ethnologue.com/country/ET accessed 9 September 2019

would be interesting to investigate real versus imagined cultural differences further for Ethiopia.
It is interesting to compare the assessment of ethnofederalism of Smith with that of Abbink (2011). Basically, where Abbink stresses that the glass is half empty, Smith calls it half full. Abbink (p 607) feels: "The federal structure (...) generates competition between the NNPs (or ethnic groups), specifically their aspiring elites, about 'resources' (...), federal funds and about communal or religious identity. In other words, they have a political interest to take position against each other." Smith, on the other hand, stresses how 'certain kinds of claims, such as ethnic and gendered claims by citizens, can be read as liberatory and democratizing rather than atavistic or primordial, as both the western media and dominant political regimes would have us conclude.' (p. 8) A fuller discussion of these assessments is outside the scope of this study, but some examples of what is happening in Ethiopia are included in section 6.3.4, because they may serve as examples for what could also happen in future in other countries in Africa.

6.3.2 Educational situation

To this day, the educational system in Ethiopia remains fairly pyramidal, as shown in the graph below.



Graph 3 - Educational pyramid, Ethiopia, 2015 (tertiary education: 2014)

The ratio of GER in primary education to tertiary education is 10.0 – as was shown in chapter four, this puts Ethiopia somewhere in-between countries with a very 'steep' pyramid like Tanzania and countries with a more equal pyramid like Botswana. A comparison with the data shown on Ethiopia in chapter four also shows the progress made over the past

decade: in 2005, all enrolment rates were much lower and the ratio mentioned above stood at 29.2. The enrolment levels of girls have grown much closer to those of boys, although much less so at tertiary level.

These statistics hide the fact that there are still considerable regional disparities within Ethiopia. Thus, Woldehanna and Jones (2006: 26) conclude that even though there have been considerable improvements compared to the past, 'given a very low baseline of educational enrolment in areas such as Gambella, Benshangul, Somali and Afar, more concerted action is needed to further reduce the inter-regional educational gap.'

Secondary education has a strongly selective nature, which becomes clear when one examines the difference in GER between lower and upper secondary education. The GER in lower secondary was nearly 43% in 2015; in upper secondary, it was under 18%. This is less selective than in Tanzania, where only one in four children proceed from lower to upper secondary education, but still means more than half of all children drop out at this stage.[7]

With a GER for the initial level of secondary education higher than 40%, one can expect that the policy of secondary education in English will come under increasing pressure; as argued for Tanzania, it is likely that the switch from a local language to English will lead to wastage for those children whose intellectual abilities would be good enough to understand instruction at secondary level in an easier language, but not in English. Indeed, at least in the Oromio region, some use of Oromo in tertiary education is visible: it 'has become a medium of instruction in teachers' training institutes and has been used as a medium of instruction in colleges in the region.'[8]

6.3.3 Language situation and language choice options

The ASJP database discerns no fewer than 121 languages to look at for Ethiopia, to which I have added English.

A first thing to note when examining the Ethiopian matrix in light of the above discussion is that, just like it is the case for Tanzania, English is a difficult or very difficult language to learn for speakers of any Ethiopian language.[9]

A key difference with Tanzania is that in Ethiopia, speakers of the different language families are more evenly divided. Speakers of

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[7] http://data.uis.unesco.org/# , accessed 23 October 2019.

[8] http://www.haramaya.edu.et/academics/college-of-social-sciences-and-humanities/dept/afan-oromo-and-literature/ retrieved 23 October 2019.

[9] All ASJP scores are at or above 95, a good number above 100.

Cushitic languages make up around half the population, of Semitic languages around 42%, of Nilo-Saharan languages[10] around 7% and of Omotic languages not more than 1% (Hudson 2003: 94).[11]

The situation in terms of ASJP distances within each of these language families is different; therefore, it seems useful to discuss them one by one.

The ASJP database discerns 17 languages in the **Ethiosemitic** subfamily of Semitic languages. The major languages in this group include Amharic, the Gurage languages, Tigre and Tigrinya. Within this subfamily, there are a number of languages that are easy to learn (though not *very* easy) for speakers of all other languages in this subfamily.

The ASJP database discerns 70 Cushitic languages. Cushitic languages are different from one another: a fair number of language pairs are in the difficult or very difficult category. Yet, there are also a number of language pairs in the very easy or easy categories. Cushitic languages are divided into a number of sub-families. One of these is the Agaw or **Central Cushitic** subfamily, of which the ASJP database discerns eight varieties spoken in Ethiopia that form easy or very easy combinations. Another large sub-family are the **East Custhitic** languages; the ASJP database discerns 49 of them; the largest of these languages are Somali and Oromo.[12] Some of these languages are easy for speakers of all other East Custhitic languages.

The ASJP database discerns 20 **Nilo-Saharan** languages that are spoken in Ethiopia. The Nilo-Saharan language family is internally diverse: many language pairs are difficult or very difficult, some are of medium difficulty, but a number of them are easy or very easy. The ASJP database suggests that there is not one language that could be developed into a Nilo-Saharan language that would be easy or very easy to learn for all speakers of Nilo-Saharan languages. In fact, it might be necessary to use six or seven languages.[13]

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[10] There is no scientific consensus that grouping languages together into a Nilo-Saharan family is actually justified.

[11] Other sources, though, give slightly different percentages, especially for the smaller language families.

[12] See Bulcha (1998) for a description that gives insights into the background of the position of the Oromo language in Ethiopia.

[13] Some of these languages belong to the Western Nilotic subfamily, which also includes Luo. These languages have a large speaker base in Uganda and Kenya and form easy or very easy language pairs. Other languages in this group can almost be considered language isolates and have only a small speaker base.

The ASJP database discerns 28 **North Omotic** languages.[14] For these languages, the situation is almost the same as that for the Ethiosemitic languages. There are some languages that are easy (and in some cases very easy) to learn for all other speakers in this group.

In addition, the database discerns four **South Omotic** languages. It would seem rational to use one of the South Omotic languages as designed language for use in education. (The combined number of speakers is around 300,000.)

This means that if we look at 'easy' languages to use in higher education, not more than 12 languages would be enough for Ethiopia (of which half would be Nilo-Saharan languages), instead of the 30 Skattum (2019) currently reports as being used in primary education. In practice, of course, it might be expedient to select a larger or slightly different group of languages; however, that does not detract from the principle. For primary education, the closer the designed medium of instruction is to a discerned L1, the easier and therefore better it is for the majority of children. However, one could imagine that for lower secondary school, a switch to an 'easy' language is a rational thing to do, if that means that for a country like Ethiopia not more than twelve languages are sufficient.

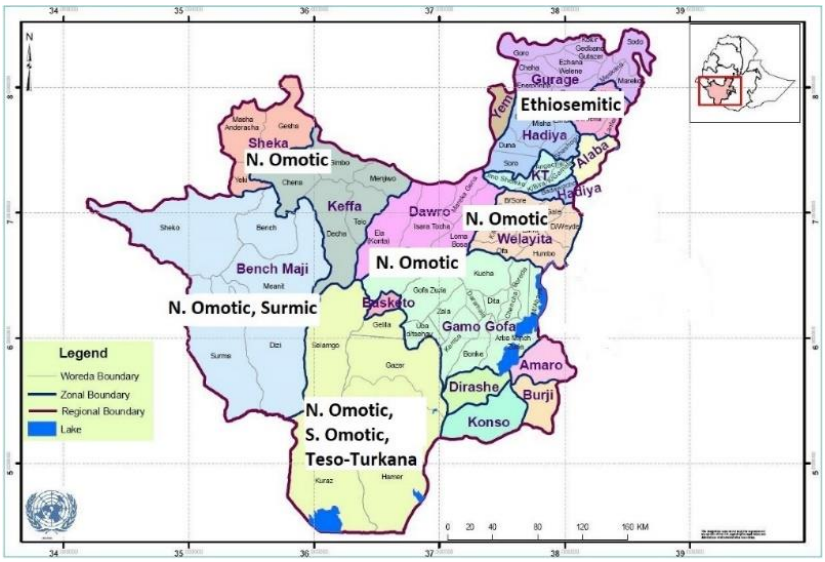
The table below shows a theoretical result using twelve language chosen for their mutual differences. These 12 languages (plus English) are indeed difficult combinations.

2 SYNONYMS, AT LEAST 28 WORDS													
LOANWORDS EXCLUDED													
LDND													
	WETAWIT	LUO	TESO	SURI CHAI	GUMUZ	GWAMA	KUNAMA	XAMTANGA	W OROMO	WOLAYTTA	AMHARIC	ARI	ENGLISH
WETAWIT	0												
LUO	97	0											
TESO	99	95	0										
SURI CHAI	97	101	101	0									
GUMUZ	101	97	99	99	0								
GWAMA	98	98	101	99	96	0							
KUNAMA	97	94	100	98	95	98	0						
XAMTANGA	103	98	101	103	99	101	98	0					
W OROMO	99	100	101	95	103	100	100	100	0				
WOLAYTTA	100	104	101	100	95	96	96	100	92	0			
AMHARIC	101	97	104	100	101	95	100	96	102	98	0		
ARI	104	100	100	99	100	97	101	102	100	97	97	0	
ENGLISH	101	103	99	100	101	102	100	103	102	101	96	97	0
	WETAWIT	LUO	TESO	SURI CHAI	GUMUZ	GWAMA	KUNAMA	XAMTANGA	W OROMO	WOLAYTTA	AMHARIC	ARI	ENGLISH

Table 3 - Difficult language pairs, Ethiopia

[14] This includes the three 'Dizoid' languages.

Below is an illustrative map of what this would mean for what is probably the most complex of Ethiopia's areas from the ethnolinguistic point of view, the SNNP regional state.



Map 1 - Potential higher education language map, SNNP, Ethiopia[15]

6.3.4 The Ethiopian experiment

Ethiopia is a leader in Africa when it comes to decentralised language policies, because it allows regional states to make their own choices for medium of instruction in primary schools and for the working language in administration. Thus, it is a country that, in a way, has implemented a number of the suggestions by Laitin (1992: 158):

" 1. Language 'states' or 'regions' are designated, and procedures are established by which the people of the region can set an official state language for use in a range of functions, specified by regional leaders but constrained by the central state.

2. An administrative court at the federal level is constituted to hear demands for boundary rectification and state creation, with the authority to implement its decisions.

3. A national language is designed by the federal government which all citizens are required to know for educational advancement, government promotion, and civil service employment."

[15] Basic map adapted from Aynalem Adugna, http://www.ethiodemographyandhealth.org/ retrieved 29 October 2019.

As described by Smith (2013), in Ethiopia states can and do designate official state languages. The House of the Federation can decide on boundary disputes. Indeed, Smith describes in some detail in chapter 4 how leaders from the Silt'e or Siltie group were able to petition the House of the Federation in order to create a separate district and how such a district was in fact created after a referendum ordered by the Ethiopian House of Federation. In 2019, another relatively peaceful referendum was held that led to the creation of a new state for the Sidama community, separated from the SNNP state[16] - it may not be the last. Thus, Cochrane and Bekele (2019) point to proposals for the creation of an 'Omotic' state.[17]

The resemblance between this setup and what was recommended by Laitin (1992) is striking and it seems that it has given Ethiopia the possibility for addressing some long-standing issues in a peaceful manner. As an example, the two separate city districts (Addis Abeba and Dire Dawa) have a multi-ethnic population, as is common in many other African cities. In Addis Abeba, Amharic is the language spoken by the majority; the largest minority is Oromo, with nearly 11% of the population. In Dire Dawa, nearly half the population is Oromo, with large minorities of Somali and Amhara speakers. In other African cities, their multi-ethnic character is used to justified a choice for the ex-colonial language as medium of instruction. In Ethiopia, both cities show that a different choice could be possible: they have primary schools with several mediums of instruction (Smith 2013: 153).

The literature gives examples of the types of effects that the Ethiopian language policy has had; thus, Seid (2014) shows how in the Keffa region, there is a language shift from Nayi (ISO 639-3 code: noz) to Kafa (ISO 639-3 code: kbr) (both are North Omotic languages), because Kafa is now being used in education and in other domains. Before 1991, the shift was rather from Kafa to Amharic.

Processes of language choice are not easy or straightforward, as some further examples from the literature may illustrate.

Savà and Tosco (2008) show why in the Oromia region, a standardized version of the language could be developed, in a process that took some time historically and that was possible in part because Oromia saw itself as being in competition with the Amharic area. This standard was developed in spite of the fact that the Ethnologue database discerns three Oromo-like languages spoken in Ethiopia. In contrast,

[16] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/ethiopia-sidama-vote-federal-region-electoral-board-191123150618999.html retrieved 27 November 2019.

[17] https://fanabc.com/english/2019/07/scholars-discuss-procedures-to-obtain-statehood-status/ retrieved 23 October 2019.

Guidi (2012) describes in some detail why attempts in 1999 and 2000 to introduce a designed language made up of a combination of Wolaytta, Gamo, Gofa and Dawo ('Wogagoda') met with wide popular resistance and in fact failed, even though these languages are closely related.[18] Cochrane and Bekele (2019: 33) analyse these attempts as top-down. It followed after earlier top-down attempts to combine Gamo, Gofa and Dawo into one language; those attempts were perceived as threats to linguistic and cultural identities. The addition of Wolaytta made the mix only more explosive, because on the one hand the Wolaytta perceived their language as being superior (therefore they tended to resist the move) and the others perceived the attempt as threatening their already threatened identity (and therefore they resisted as well). This resulted in fact in increased ethnic tensions in the region (p 38) and led to a stalemate that left all groups weaker than they could have been. Obviously, it is likely that such situations will occur in other communities and areas as well and that a top-down approach may be difficult to implement. However, just saying that things must be done bottom-up does not itself solve any problem. Joswig (2020) compares the experience with Wogagoda with some others, including those of speakers of various Ale dialects (an East Cushitic language with around 85,000 speakers). He shows that through a bottom-up consultation process, Ale speakers were able to see the advantages of a standardized form of their language for written communications and to reach a decision on this. However, other attempts to do the same in Ethiopia remain mired with difficulty. So this is a difficult, but not an impossible process. It might be possible to overcome some of these difficulties by building carefully designed incentives to collaboration as suggested in the next section.

In this context, it is interesting to note the study of Küspert-Rakotondrainy (2004), who has used an analytical framework taken from Bourdieu in a study of the Gumuz and Shinasha communities. She found that the recent introduction of local language instruction in primary schools had beneficial effects on school attendance for both communities, especially for girls, and on achievement in schools. However, the identity effects were different, related to the different positions these communities have historically occupied. Thus, for the Gumuz increased access to education is associated with modernization and upliftment, whereas for the Shinasha, it is associated with a re-appreciation of their distinctiveness and with tradition. This is where, then, choices are possible, at least for the Shinasha: using Shinasha as

[18] The benchmarked ASJP database shows these discerned language pairs as mostly 'very easy' and in one instance 'easy'.

medium of instruction will stress their Shinasha identity; using an easy to learn other language will stress their integration for example with other speakers of North Omotic languages. Neither community, though, is a passive recipient: in both communities, there may be strong (and conflicting) opinions on the best course to take.
What this short discussion shows is that indeed, language, education and identity are closely related, but how exactly this works out in practical situations would require considerably more work. In any case, it would seem important to recognize and try to understand these linkages in order to come to rational policy decisions.

6.3.5 Conclusions and recommendations

The Ethiopian situation is clearly considerably more complex than the situation in Tanzania and the Republic of Congo and this gives rise to conclusions that in part are different from and add on to those reached for Tanzania.

1) Ethiopia is perhaps unique in Africa in its effort to promote its many languages, at least for use in primary education. A potential drawback of this policy is that it puts a premium on *difference*, rather than on *similarity*: if becoming recognized as a separate 'people, nation or nationality', with a separate language leads to additional resources, this provides an incentive for people to profile themselves as such. In Ethiopia, as we have seen, there are a number of small linguistic communities, for which learning other, larger languages is difficult or very difficult. In order to minimize the disadvantages associated with a small linguistic community and to give maximum opportunities for educational advancement for children in these communities, collaboration will be a necessity (although it is not a solution for every small linguistic community). Therefore, in addition to the four principles proposed in chapter five, Ethiopia leads me to suggest a **fifth principle**: **build incentives for linguistic collaboration**, especially for related linguistic communities.
What could that mean? One incentive for collaboration could be built around the minimum number of speakers needed to justify the use of that language as a medium of instruction at a specified level.
One could hold, as a purely theoretical example, that for a minimum of 1,000 speakers it is justified to develop a language to such an extent that it can be used as designed language for the first four years of primary education. Then, for a minimum of 10,000 speakers, it might be justifiable to do the same for the whole of primary education. For lower secondary education, a minimum of 100,000 speakers might be

required, for upper secondary 500,000 and for tertiary education, a minimum of around 1 million speakers.
Theoretically, one could add to this an approach that takes prevalence of bilingualism into account; thus, for linguistic communities where bilingualism is not prevalent lower thresholds might be acceptable than for communities where it is, in order to still create a situation that offers equal opportunity to all children.

2) It is to be expected that sooner or later, in Ethiopia as well as in Tanzania, the pressure to switch from English to local languages as medium of instruction in lower secondary education will increase. Given the current enrolment rate just above what I have defined as the 'language barrier', this would be a rational step to take that is bound to increase efficiency in education. However, it is important that this transition should not be undertaken overnight but that it be planned carefully. Secondary education in local languages should be perceived from the start as quality education, not as second-hand education. If and as enrolment figures increase in senior secondary education, a change to local languages at that level will also be necessary, but at the moment it is not.

3) Cochrane and Bekele (2019) and others also point to the issue of the *quality of education*: just expanding education without investing in the quality of teachers, schools and materials may not be productive; at the moment, many children learn their own language and are officially taught Amharic and/or English as a subject, but the level of teaching is such that achievements remain very far below those of the Estonian educational system (although on the other hand, not so long ago those children might not have received any education at all).

4) For tertiary education, a switch to indigenous languages as suggested above is not yet necessary; enrolment figures are still so low that English or any other language can be used. However, if enrolment rates increase to levels approaching those of the global North, a gradual switch to indigenous languages will become advisable. If the numbers suggested in conclusion 1) above would be applied to Ethiopia, this would mean an evolution towards tertiary education possibilities in one or more Ethiosemitic languages, one or more East Cushitic languages (for example Oromo), perhaps a Central Cushitic language and a North Omotic language.[19]

[19] Speakers of Nilo-Saharan languages in Ethiopia would be at a relative disadvantage, because of the small speaker communities and large differences between the languages. For some, a possibility might be provided in

For all those who will find these languages easy to learn (the vast majority of all Ethiopians), this would mean a tremendous improvement compared to the current situation, which requires a high level of English. For the remaining smaller groups[20] there would be no similar improvement (but also no worsening compared to the current situation). For most of them, the possibility to learn in their own discerned language or a language that is easy for them up to a higher level than is presently possible would still be an improvement.

5) Ethiopia may have to consider a model where several languages are used at the federal level, similar to countries like Belgium, Canada or Switzerland. The solution suggested above with five languages (one Ethiosemitic, three Cushitic and one North Omotic), if implemented, would make access to national debate and policy making possible in an easy to learn language for over 90% of all Ethiopians. Reaching 100% would require adding several more languages. A monolingual alternative could either use an indigenous language (such as Amharic or Oromo), but this would put those Ethiopians who find that language difficult or very difficult to learn at a disadvantage. Another possibility would be to use an international language such as English, but even if the Ethiopian educational system would be just as good at teaching English as the Estonian system (which is currently not the case), that would still disenfranchise around 60% of Ethiopians at the national level.

6) Smith (2013) holds that Ethiopia harbours a number of very different cultural communities; my study suggests a less diverse picture, but it is not finely grained enough to be able to make confident statements at this level about Ethiopia. However, Smith also feels that the fact that linguistic rights (coupled to citizenship rights) are recognized in Ethiopia may be a factor that works in favour, rather than against national unity. Still, how to balance a federal, decentralized system with many different languages with the need to keep a nation together is clearly a challenge that Ethiopia is still struggling to find an answer to. Key element in this might be to move to a limited number of national languages, as suggested above and to adopt policies that encourage learning several Ethiopian languages.

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neighbouring Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda, which have larger speaker communities in these languages.

[20] According to the Ethnologue, the situation in Ethiopia is different from that in some other countries, in that speakers of these languages generally do not have a majority of people who are bilingual from birth; many are indeed monolingual.

In general, this third case study again demonstrates the power of this approach, but it also shows its limitations. These limitations lie in the difference between what seems rational and equitable and what are sure to be intervening political realities on the ground.

All in all, using the benchmarked ASJP database can hopefully serve as an input for a national debate in Ethiopia along more rational lines.

What could we learn from examining a country at the other side of the continent, for example Ghana?

6.4. Ghana

In the previous three case studies, we have looked at a country that has chosen one designed indigenous language to serve a large number of relatively similar discerned languages (Tanzania), a country that would be in a position to make such a choice (Republic of Congo) and a country with a different colonial history from the rest of Africa and a traditionally dominant indigenous language (Ethiopia). In this case study, we will examine a linguistically diverse country that has a long colonial history with the UK but at the same time with a relatively long period of independence: Ghana. What can be said about rational choices for language use in higher education in such a country? We will also venture a brief excursion into Nigeria and look at the question of what the potential is (or otherwise) of using either Ghanaian or Nigerian Pidgin English as a designed national language in education.
Ghana is a country in West Africa with a population approaching 31 million people.[1] Ghana has retained English as its official language. The country is peculiar in that one language, Akan (Twi)[2], is spoken by around half the population as L1 and many more as L2.

6.4.1 Cultural and political situation

The Ethnologue currently discerns 73 indigenous languages spoken in Ghana,[3] but again, this does not mean that there is a similar number of different cultural entities in the country. In the cultural dimension analysis of chapter 3.5 I was able to analyse data on eight ethnolinguistic groups. On all four cultural dimensions discussed there, the differences within Ghana are greater than 20 points – such differences in culturally relevant survey question results are likely to correspond to noticeable differences in practice as well. The differences are the largest in the Indulgence vs Restraint dimension. A fairly large difference also occurs in the 'Fix vs Flex' (LTO) dimension, with Ewe being very much on the 'Fixed' side and the Gonja relatively on the 'flex' side. Because of the dominance of the Akan, their scores are close to the national average. What is more, the scores of the largest ethnolinguistic groups (the Akan, Dagomba, Ewe and Ga) are fairly similar, with only some of the smaller ethnolinguistic groups having a different score. The cluster analysis of chapter 3.4 shows that out of the

[1] https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/ghana-population/ accessed 31 October 2019.
[2] The Ethnologue, however, discerns four Akan languages.
[3] https://www-ethnologue-com/country/GH accessed 31 October 2019.

five groups that could be distinguished for that analysis, four are in the same cluster. An interesting fact is that the Akan of Ghana and those of Côte d'Ivoire do not cluster together (using anthropological methods, MacLean 2010 reaches the same conclusion). Together, this suggests that Ghana enjoys a certain measure of a common and national cultural frame of reference, even though not all ethnolinguistic groups may subscribe to it fully (see also the analysis of the role of indigenous languages and English in national identity formation in Ghana as given by Anyidoho and Kropp-Dakubu - 2008).

Ghana was the second country in Sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence, in 1957, under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. Since then, the country has witnessed a tumultuous history involving coups, military rule and periods of profound economic crisis. However, the country returned to a multi-party democracy after elections in 1992 and has remained a democracy since; ruling presidents have been defeated at elections several times and there have been peaceful handovers.

6.4.2 Educational situation

In the field of education, the country has made considerable progress. Stokroos (1998), comparing four different countries in Africa, already concluded that Ghana was the country that had best succeeded in adapting its educational system to African cultures. Primary education is universal and secondary education is common, the government having expanded tuition-free education to the senior secondary level in 2017.[4] Ghana has experimented with several medium of instruction models – for an overview, see Klu and Ansre (2018). Currently, the official policy is to use English as the sole medium of instruction after the first three years of primary education.[5] During the first three years, indigenous languages are used. However, Ghana officially supports only 11 indigenous languages.[6] The actual implementation of this policy is patchy, to say the least, as described for example by Trudell (2016) and Anyidoho (2018). As Yevudey and Agbozo (2019) argue, this may be related to the fact that most teachers themselves have a multilingual background and resort to frequent code-switching and translanguaging in an effort to maximize their teaching efficiency.

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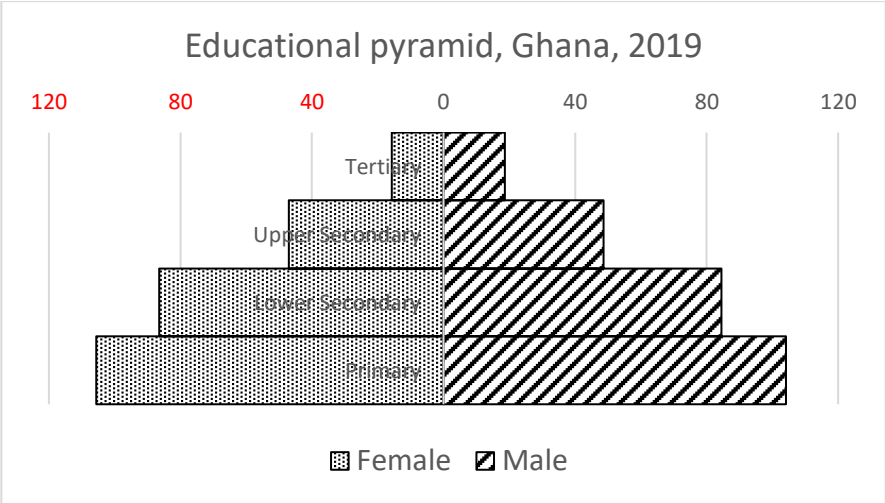
[4] http://citifmonline.com/2017/09/im-investing-in-free-shs-for-ghanas-future-akufo-addo/ retrieved 6 November 2019.

[5] See for example p 28 of the Strategic Plan 2018-2030 of the Ghanaian Ministry of Education, available at https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/ghana-education-strategic-plan-2018-2030.pdf (accessed 7 November 2019).

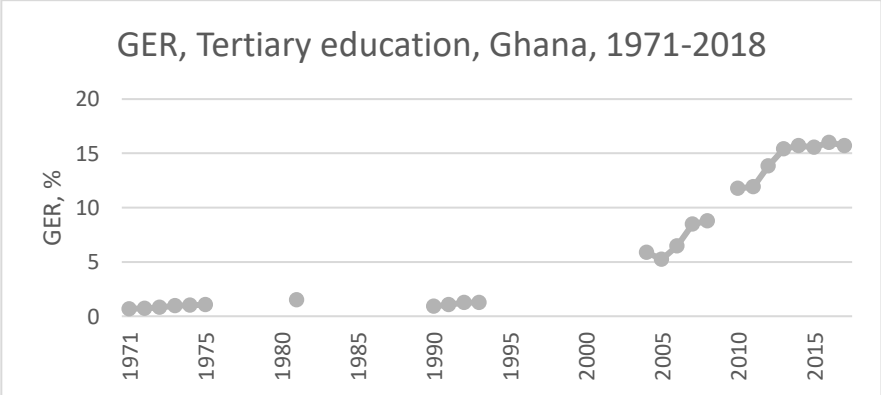
[6] http://www.bgl.gov.gh/ accessed 7 November 2019.

These efforts might in fact lead some teachers to deviate from the official language policy, whereas others do not. When there is a national service that posts teachers to schools regardless of their language repertoires, some teachers may end up teaching pupils with an L1 that the teacher also speaks – those teachers could use that language, even if the policy is different. Other teachers may not be able to speak the languages of their students – they can therefore not employ such a strategy.
The education pyramid for 2019 is shown in the graph below.



Graph 4 - Educational pyramid, Ghana, 2019

The progress made in Ghana in the past 45 years can be illustrated by the graph below, showing the evolution of the GER in tertiary education over the years.



Graph 5 – GER, tertiary education, Ghana, 1971-2018

Another tell-tale statistic (also derived from UNESCO data) is the Gender Parity Index for senior secondary education, showing the ratio of girls to boys. In 2000, this ratio was still 0.66 – for every three boys attending senior secondary school, there were two girls. By 2018, the ratio had improved to 0.95 – an impressive achievement.[7]

The ratio of GER in primary education to tertiary education is 6.1 – as was shown in chapter 4.2, this puts Ghana close to the top in Sub-Saharan Africa – the top country is Botswana, with a ratio of 3.4 (which is still below the ratios in the global North).

What percentage of Ghanaian children have mastered English at the B2 level by the end of their secondary school career? An approximate calculation was already given in chapter 4.2.3. Using WASSCE examination results, I gave an estimate of 54% of those who sit for the WASSCE examination and just under 15% of all 18-year olds in Ghana (in 2018).

A less optimistic assessment is given by Stoffelsma and De Jong (2015). They found that in Ghana, only 48% of first-year students for a Bachelor of Education had a B2 level in English reading proficiency, even though a WASSCE 'credit pass' is a requirement for admittance. Therefore, one might expect that all students have the B2 level – yet Stoffelsma and De Jong found this not to be the case. It would be interesting to do further research into this apparent discrepancy.\

As discussed in chapter 4.2.3, it could be that this national picture hides considerable regional differences from sight, especially differences between rural and urban areas. It might be that in urban areas, the proficiency in English of Ghanaian youngsters is closer to the situation in Malta, where around 48% of the 18-year olds have mastered English at the B2 level. At present, I have no data to support such an assertion but if it would be the case, it would represent a devastating indictment of the current Ghanaian language policy, which would then seem to play a role in increasing the inequality in the country and could therefore be a factor in dividing, rather than uniting the country.

The data as presented here suggest a few things:

- It is likely that the efforts of a good number of students who are currently following secondary education go to waste, not because of a lack of intellectual ability in general, but because a lack of mastery of English. A vivid illustration of this idea is

[7] This may not be the end of the story because, as shown in chapter five, in most countries of the global North girls now outperform boys.

given by Arkorful (2014). He describes the 'Schools for Life' programme in Northern Ghana. This is a nine-month part-time programme, taught not by professional teachers but by community members who speak and teach in the same language as the children. The curriculum is restricted to literacy in the local language, numeracy and life skills. He finds that this nine-month programme is just as effective as three years of formal primary school (p 78). This is a built-in inefficiency in the Ghanaian educational system that is bound to get more and more onerous as enrolment levels increase.

- If enrolment figures increase even further, the current language model in Ghana will reach its limits and pressure to change is bound to increase. This could go quickly: in 2017, Ghana abolished the school fees for senior secondary education. This has led to a considerable increase in the gross enrolment rate in secondary education: from 56% in 2012 to 63% in 2019.[8] A similar increase in the enrolment rates in tertiary education seems likely, based on this.[9]
- The current educational model provides a strong incentive to parents to do whatever they can to give their children a head start in life by providing them with the best English education they can find or afford (for example via the elite Achimota school[10]). This also explains, at least in part, the resistance that parents feel towards teaching in local languages, even though they have a generally positive attitude towards the local language (Beyogle, 2014). This provides a strong incentive to duplicating existing socio-economic inequalities through education, as already described by Bourdieu. In Ghana, these are in part also regional inequalities, the North being consistently behind the Southern part of the country in many areas, including education, as pointed out for example by Higgins (2009) and further analysed by Abdulai and Hickey (2016).

Would it be possible to devise a language policy that uses certain designed Ghanaian languages as medium of instruction and if so, what would be considerations that are relevant for making a rational choice?

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[8] http://data.uis.unesco.org/# retrieved 18 March 2021.

[9] I am grateful to Dr Dodzi Kpoglu for pointing out this development.

[10] Founded in 1924 as the Prince of Wales College, this elite school was the first of its kind in Ghana and remains highly respected to this day.

6.4.3 Language situation and language choice options

Where the Ethnologue discerns 73 indigenous languages currently spoken in Ghana, the ASJP database discerns 65 Ghanaian languages, to which I have added English.

The first thing to note about the Ghanaian matrix is that both English and Ghanaian Pidgin English are either difficult or very difficult to learn for the majority of mother-tongue speakers of other Ghanaian languages. English and Ghanaian Pidgin English together form a 'very easy' combination, so early exposure to Pidgin English may help children to later learn standard English.

A second feature is that, unlike in Tanzania, the indigenous languages spoken in Ghana are not conveniently close to one another. Thus, choosing for example Akan (Twi) as the national language is not a rational choice the same way it is for Tanzania: for many Ghanaians who do not speak Twi as their L1 the language is a bit easier than English, but for millions of Ghanaians, it is not; switching to Twi would not constitute an 'inclusive' solution as proposed in the third principle outlined in section 5.2; it would lead to considerable resistance.

The major language families in Ghana are the Kwa and the Gur languages (both part of the Volta-Congo family), but these families are internally diverse: for example the Chala/Konkomba language pair (both are Gur languages) is difficult, as is for example the Adangbe/Ikpana language pair (both Kwa languages).

Still, rational choices for language use in higher education may be possible by looking at subfamilies. The largest of these is the Potou-Tano subfamily of Kwa languages; these languages are spoken in Ghana, but also in parts of Ivory Coast. As is clear from table 1, several of these languages are easy to learn for any of the other languages in this subfamily. This is true for example for Efutu, but also for the Fante variety of Akan. The Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL)[11] supports Akan/Twi, Gonja and Nzema from this language subfamily. It would be conceivable to use several of these languages in primary education but make a switch to just one of these languages as medium of instruction for secondary and higher education – this language would then have to be taught as a subject in primary education.

Another subfamily of the Kwa languages is Ga-Dangme, which has two discerned languages. It is a very easy language pair; either one of these languages could be developed for use in higher education. Note that Ga/Twi is *not* an easy language pair. However, Ga is easy to learn for speakers of a number of the Ghana-Togo mountain languages discerned in Ghana. Ga and Dangme (or Dangbe) are both supported

[11] http://www.bgl.gov.gh/language-overview.php, retrieved 28 February 2020.

by the BGL. Again, it would be conceivable to use both languages in primary education but to make a switch to just one of these languages as medium of instruction for secondary and higher education – this language would then have to be taught as a subject in primary education.

A last subfamily of the Kwa languages is formed by the Gbe languages, of which Ewe is the most important one spoken in Ghana. As shown in chapter four, most of the Gbe language pairs are very easy. Ewe is supported by the BGL.

The Gur languages form a different family, with many discerned languages spoken mainly in the North of Ghana (and neighbouring countries). This family is internally diverse; there is not one language that is easy to learn for all Gur-speakers. However, with three languages it would be possible to have a solution for all or nearly all Gur languages spoken in Ghana. The Gur languages supported by the BGL are Dagaare, Dagbani and Kasem. Dagaare and Dagbani are easy or very easy to learn for almost the same group of other Gur languages; from the point of view of inclusiveness, a more rational choice might be possible.

If the same rule of thumb would be applied to Ghana that has been suggested for Ethiopia (discerned languages with a minimum speaker base of one million as medium of instruction in tertiary education), then tertiary education would have to be provided in Ghana in five or six languages, possibly in addition to English: one Potou-Tana language, one of the Ga-Dangme languages, a Gbe language and two or three Gur languages. Again, this would be an inclusive solution that would be a tremendous benefit for Ghanaians and for Ghana as a whole. As Ansah (2014: 14) has pointed out, to implement such solutions would need to take the actual sociolinguistic situation on the ground into account. It would require a good collaboration between the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service, the Ghana Statistical Service and the Linguistics Association of Ghana. That way, it will be possible to offer mother tongue education to every child in a decentralized way.

2 SYNONYMS, AT LEAST 28 WORDS
LOANWORDS EXCLUDED
LDND

	AHANTE	ANUFO	ANYI	BAULE	DOMPO	DWANG	EFUTU	GECHODE	GENYANGA	GONJA	HILL GUANG	KRACHI	LARTEH	NAWURI	NCHUMURU	NKAMI	NZEMA	TWI ASANTE	TWI FANTE
AHANTE	0																		
ANUFO	87	0																	
ANYI	76	68	0																
BAULE	78	67	56	0															
DOMPO	87	87	84	79	0														
DWANG	93	91	87	85	77	0													
EFUTU	87	87	87	87	82	80	0												
GECHODE	87	93	85	83	76	77	75	0											
GENYANGA	86	92	87	84	75	75	73	29	0										
GONJA	92	93	87	86	69	77	85	72	73	0									
HILL GUANG	85	88	87	87	77	76	77	81	78	82	0								
KRACHI	85	89	82	83	81	79	86	71	71	72	80	0							
LARTEH	93	92	86	87	75	78	83	81	82	84	69	82	0						
NAWURI	92	95	90	87	74	79	84	56	62	61	83	65	86	0					
NCHUMURU	88	89	87	87	78	75	80	69	69	70	84	57	86	69	0				
NKAMI	87	87	85	83	74	68	77	84	77	77	68	72	81	76	78	0			
NZEMA	79	74	72	77	86	88	87	92	93	91	88	89	87	95	90	88	0		
TWI ASANTE	87	77	71	75	85	77	81	88	85	85	86	82	84	92	87	82	79	0	
TWI FANTE	90	84	71	76	84	80	77	81	77	84	88	77	85	88	80	81	81	46	0

Table 4: Potou-Tano languages

6.4.4 English, Creole, Pidgin?

In some countries, including in Ghana and Nigeria, new languages have developed that have acquired status of lingua franca. This includes languages such as Sango in the Central African Republic, Krio in Sierra Leone and Ghanaian and Nigerian Pidgin English. Both in Ghana and Nigeria, English-based Pidgins have developed that are widely used. One might therefore ask the question whether these could be developed into designed languages as the single language to use in higher education on a national level, thus avoiding the need to use multiple languages.

For Ghana, this does not seem to be a likely development, because the language is not spoken in the whole country, but mostly confined to the greater Accra region, where it competes with Akan as a lingua franca. Also, according to the Ethnologue, its use is gendered, being used mostly by males.[12]

For Nigeria, the situation could be different. Nigerian Pidgin English (also known as Naijá) is very widespread in the country and is in fact developing into a Creole, because more and more children learn it as a first language (Simpson and Oyètádé, 2008). It therefore seems to be a legitimate question to ask: could Nigerian Pidgin become a national language in Nigeria and could it potentially solve the problem of which language to use in higher education?

What answer would the ASJP database suggest?

The first thing to notice about Nigeria is that it is linguistically very diverse. The Ethnologue discerns 507 living indigenous languages.[13] The ASJP database discerns 380 (including English). These languages are from very different language families: there are substantive numbers of speakers from Afro-Asiatic languages (Hausa being the largest), Nilo-Saharan languages (Kanuri being the largest) and Niger-Congo languages from several families, including Southern Bantoid (Ibibio, Tiv), West-Benue-Congo (Yoruba, Edo, Igbo, Nupe, Idoma), Kalabari and various Platoid languages (Jukun and others).

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[12] https://www-ethnologue-com/language/gpe retrieved 8 January 2020.

[13] https://www-ethnologue-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/country/NG retrieved 8 January 2020.

2 SYNONYMS, AT LEAST 28 WORDS													
LOANWORDS EXCLUDED													
LDND													
	TIV	IBIBIO	YORUBA	EDO	IDOMA	IGBO ONITSHA	NUPE	JUKUN TAKUM	KALABARI	KANURI	HAUSA	ENGLISH	NIGERIAN PIDGIN
TIV	0												
IBIBIO	99	0											
YORUBA	96	94	0										
EDO	99	94	87	0									
IDOMA	97	87	98	94	0								
IGBO ONITSHA	96	93	95	98	98	0							
NUPE	98	93	94	91	95	95	0						
JUKUN TAKUM	94	96	101	88	95	96	91	0					
KALABARI	98	101	94	101	98	93	99	99	0				
KANURI	101	103	98	103	99	98	101	97	95	0			
HAUSA	104	103	97	96	99	100	96	101	96	99	0		
ENGLISH	104	103	99	100	98	100	100	100	101	102	98	0	
NIGERIAN PIDGIN	103	103	98	98	97	100	100	102	97	101	99	41	0
	TIV	IBIBIO	YORUBA	EDO	IDOMA	IGBO ONITSHA	NUPE	JUKUN TAKUM	KALABARI	KANURI	HAUSA	ENGLISH	NIGERIAN PIDGIN

Table 5: Selected Nigerian languages

As is clear from table 5, showing these main languages, English and Nigerian Pidgin form an easy combination. Both languages are difficult or very difficult for all of the other Nigerian languages in this selection.
What is also clear is that there are only a few other easy language combinations, such as between Edo and Yoruba and between Edo and Jukun. Of the three major languages of Nigeria, the Igbo – Yoruba combination is of medium difficulty, the combination of either of these with Hausa is about as difficult as the combination with English.
The Ethnologue reports that there are several dialects of Nigerian Pidgin: 'Lagos Pidgin, Delta Pidgin, Cross River Pidgin, Benin Pidgin. No unified standard. Dialects may be very different from each other.'[14] This is a logical development – pidgins are formed on the basis of a mixed lexicon using words from different languages, but in this case with English as the dominant source. However, it is logical that in different linguistic areas, words from different other languages will be added in. In addition, pronunciation will be different, depending on the sounds that are common in the different linguistic areas; the same may hold for the grammar. The consequence of this is that sooner or later, the Ethnologue will come to decide that it is necessary to discern different Nigerian Pidgin languages.
Note also that the Ethnologue does not mention 'Kano Pidgin' or 'Maiduguri Pidgin'. This is because Nigerian Pidgin does not currently enjoy nationwide coverage in Nigeria: in its different varieties, it is mainly spoken in the South of the country. Northerners do learn the

[14] https://www-ethnologue-com/language/pcm retrieved 7 January 2020.

language, mainly to deal with Southerners, and those that do can be recognized by their Northern accent.[15]

Of course, policy could influence this. One could imagine developing Nigerian Pidgin into a designed language with a formal grammar, pronunciation rules and a vocabulary that could include words from a variety of Nigerian languages. However, it would only make sense to do this if the source languages that would be at the basis of such a development are not too different – but in this case, they are. The ASJP database looks at lexical differences, but a quick look at Wikipedia reveals that for example Hausa and Yoruba are also very different in their phonology and grammar. This means that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to develop the language in such a way that it is ***equally easy to learn*** for all Nigerians: there will always be inequities, no matter what solution may be conceived. What is possible, in theory, would be to develop the language in such a way that it is ***equally difficult*** to learn for all other Nigerians – but because English already serves that purpose, what would be the point?

There is another theoretical possibility: all Nigerian parents could decide to abandon their own languages and to change over to speaking Nigerian Pidgin with their children from birth, or at least to make sure that these children grow up in a largely Nigerian Pidgin-speaking environment – for a number of children especially in the South of the country, that is of course already happening. For these children, it will be easier than for others to learn standard English, at least if the designed Pidgin is close to the current Nigerian Pidgin. If this process takes place in certain parts of Nigeria but not in others it will only lead to a sharpening of the internal divisions in the country. This is likely to happen if Nigerian Pidgin itself borrows more heavily from some Nigerian languages than from others. One could argue that Pidgin is (or Pidgins are) culturally more appropriate and therefore 'feel' better, especially because of such borrowings and other changes. However, this could probably also be accomplished through Nigerian English and unless people massively switch to Nigerian Pidgin as their L1, the indigenous languages will always feel even better. If the Pidgin is similar to some, but not to all languages, then this would lead to resistance. But if the choice is between changing to a more equitable form of Nigerian Pidging than the current one and changing to (Nigerian) English – why not choose English instead?

In conclusion, developing Nigerian Pidgin into a designed language would be possible, but it cannot be done in such a way that it would become an easy alternative language for ***all*** Nigerians – the underlying

[15] Akinyinka Akinyoade, personal communication.

language ecology prevents it. This same reasoning also applies to Ghana: the Gur languages are very different from the Kwa languages, but within the Kwa languages there is great diversity as well. In Ghana, just as in Nigeria, the underlying language ecology would prevent developing the Pidgin as a national language that would be an equitable and easier alternative than English. In other words: pidgin will not solve anything.

What this also means, following the logic explained in the earlier chapters, is that Nigeria will have to change over to using multiple languages in higher education at some point in the future; one of these could still be English. It would be possible, using the method developed in these case studies, to carry out such an analysis for Nigeria as well. I have chosen not to do this because the method developed here itself does not provide final answers, Nigeria has a rich base of linguists better able to do the analysis and the approach itself is sufficiently developed through the other case studies.

6.4.5 Conclusions and recommendations

As was the case for the previous countries, a switch to indigenous languages for tertiary education is not yet necessary in Ghana, since enrolment figures are so low that English or any other language can be used. However, enrolment rates have doubled in the 2005-2015 period and could double again in the next decade. If that happens, the strain on the system will increase and the pressure for a change to indigenous languages at least for a part of tertiary education will increase.

Already at present, the use of English as sole medium of instruction in secondary education is bound to lead to wastage and loss, because it is likely that not all children have a level of English that is sufficient to follow education in that language, although in principle they may have the intellectual capabilities.

For Ghana, it would be possible to choose five or six languages as designed languages for higher education (possibly in addition to English) and that would cover almost the entire population and guarantee equitable access to education at levels that cannot be achieved using English as the sole medium of instruction. This is a lower number than the number of languages currently supported for primary education; however, it might be necessary to make a slightly different choice of the languages chosen as medium of instruction, in order to do justice to the principles of ease of learning and of inclusivity as outlined in chapter 5.2. Given the common cultural basis that seems to bring together most major ethnolinguistic groups in Ghana and given the level of cross-cultural understanding that seems to exist there, this should not pose a threat to national unity, but rather serve to

bring the peoples of Ghana even closer together, especially if policies are put in place that encourage Ghanaians to learn each other's languages.

We have briefly examined whether or not Pidgin could provide a solution to the language problem, either in Ghana or in Nigeria. The conclusion was clear – in those countries, they are no solution. In the previous case studies, the conclusion was that in future, non-indigenous languages will no longer be used as medium of instruction in secondary education and will have at best a minor role as medium of instruction in tertiary education. For Ghana, the situation might be different from that in other countries, in that it is thinkable that English will continue to be used as medium of instruction in parts of secondary and tertiary education, alongside indigenous languages.

For the last in this series of case studies, let us now look at a country with one clearly dominant language, a country which also has the highest enrolment rates in education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Botswana.

6.5 Botswana (as part of Southern Africa)

In the previous case studies, we have looked at countries that have low enrolment rates in tertiary education. For this last case study, we look at the country that has the highest enrolment rate and where, furthermore, a choice for a language to use in higher education is obvious: Botswana. Botswana has a small minority of speakers of the Khoisan languages. Because of their special position, they will be treated separately; they are spoken also in Namibia and South Africa. In addition, because of the relationship between Tswana and other Southern African languages, a short paragraph (without a full analysis) has been added about South Africa.

Botswana is a country in Southern Africa with a population of less than 2.5 million people.[1] As is the case for almost all other African countries, Botswana is linguistically diverse; it has retained English as its official language. Botswana is peculiar in that one language, Tswana, is spoken by over 80% of the population either as L1 or as L2. For an overview, see for example Chebanne (2016b).

6.5.1 Cultural and political situation

The Ethnologue currently discerns 26 indigenous languages spoken in Botswana,[2] but again, this does not mean that there is a similar number of different cultural entities in the country. In the cultural dimension analysis of chapter 3.5 I was able to analyse data on 12 ethnolinguistic groups. On two of the four cultural dimensions discussed there, the differences within Botswana are greater than 20 points – such differences in culturally relevant survey question results are likely to correspond to noticeable differences in practice as well. The differences are the largest in the 'Fix vs Flex' (LTO) dimension. A fairly large difference also occurs in the Indulgence vs Restraint dimension, with the Sarwa[3] being very much on the restrained side and the Kgatla less so – even though all groups in Botswana score on the restrained side of the spectrum. The cluster analysis of chapter 3.4 shows that all nine groups that could be distinguished for that analysis fall into the same cluster. An interesting fact is that the Tswana of Botswana and those of South Africa do not cluster together. In popular perception there is a

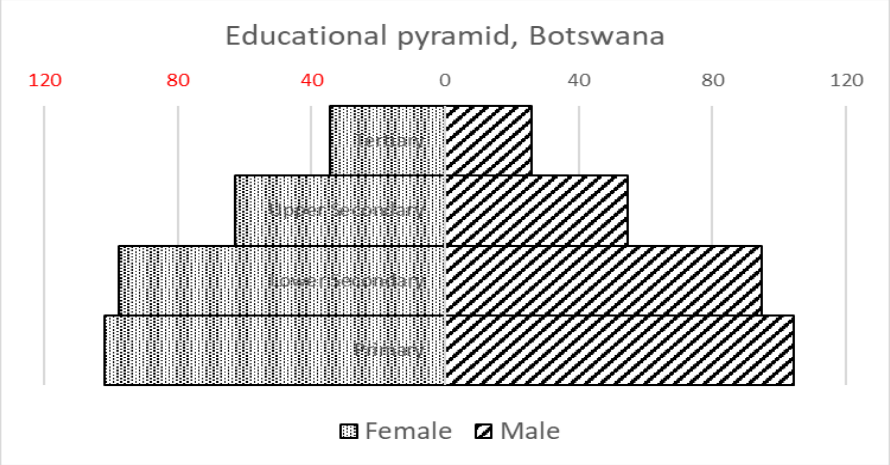
[1] https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/botswana-population/ accessed 18 November 2019.
[2] https://www-ethnologue-com/country/BW accessed 18 November 2019.
[3] The 'Sarwa' ethnic designation is particularly problematic; it is used in Botswana to denote all Khoisan speaking groups.

clear cultural distinction between the Bantu-speaking peoples in Botswana and the minority speakers of Khoisan languages.
Together, though, this suggests that Botswana enjoys a certain measure of a common and national cultural frame of reference, even though not all ethnolinguistic groups may subscribe to it fully.
Botswana became a British protectorate in 1890, partly as a result of efforts by leaders at that time of three ethnolinguistic groups in the country, who sought to keep the country out of the control of the South African Boer settlers (Gulbrandsen, 2012: 48/9). As a protectorate, the country was able to enjoy a relative degree of autonomy before gaining independence in 1964. Botswana has been a multi-party democracy from the start, with the Botswana Democratic Party always in the majority. Economically, the country has done relatively well, profiting from income from diamond and other mines.

6.5.2 Educational situation

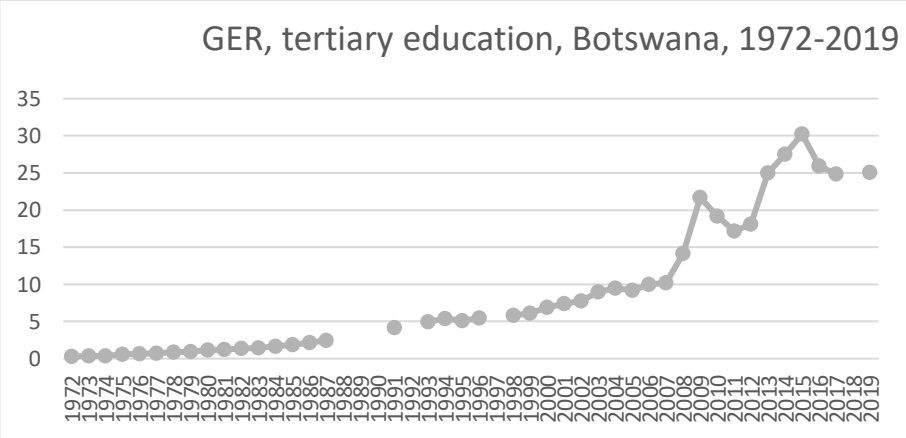
In the field of education, the country has made considerable progress. Primary and lower secondary education are universal. There is a cut-off point between lower and upper secondary education: only two out of three children who start secondary education continue to the upper level. In Botswana, Tswana is used as the medium of instruction in the first two years of primary education. English is used afterwards. No other languages are used in education.[4] Chebanne (2020, personal communication) feels that it would be too much to say that Botswana has a language policy as such; rather, there are a number of commonly-accepted practices in education and in administration.
The education pyramid for 2015 / 2008 (upper secondary education) is shown in the graph below.

[4] See Annah Molosiwa at http://theconversation.com/training-can-help-botswanas-teachers-manage-multiculturalism-69058, retrieved 18 November 2019.



Graph 5 - Educational pyramid, Botswana, 2008/2015

The progress made in Botswana in the past 45 years can be illustrated by the graph below, showing the evolution of the GER in tertiary education over the years.



Graph 6 – GER, tertiary education, Botswana, 1972-2019

The ratio of GER in primary education to tertiary education in 2015 was 3.4, which puts Botswana at the top of Sub-Saharan Africa (although this ratio is still below those of the global North).

Molosiwa and Bokhutso (2016) have argued that the current language in education policy of Botswana puts speakers of other languages than Tswana at a disadvantage. Is this picture confirmed if one looks at the ASJP database? Would it be possible to devise a more equitable language policy? This question is probably easier to answer by looking at the Khoisan and the Bantu languages separately.

6.5.3 Language situation: Khoisan languages

The Khoisan languages are among the most endangered in Africa, totalling together fewer than around 300,000 speakers, mostly from marginalized communities.

The Khoisan languages may be one area where the ASJP database reaches its limitations, due to the phonetic transcription mechanism it uses. All click sounds are represented by only one symbol in the ASJP word lists. With this limitation in mind, however, it is still possible to say something about the Khoisan languages, using the ASJP database. It discerns 29 of them (including some extinct languages), spoken in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. They fall into three families: Tuu, Khoe-Kwadi and Kx'a (see table 6).

A first feature that they have in common is that English, Tswana and Xhosa are all either difficult or very difficult languages for all speakers of Khoisan languages.

A second thing to note is the internal diversity of the Khoisan languages: there is not one language that would be easy to learn for all of them. This internal diversity is often overlooked in discussions of Khoisan speakers, who tend to be lumped together. But in spite of the overlooked internal diversity, there are some easy or very easy combinations within individual Khoisan language families. Thus, for the Tuu family, Xoon is easy or very easy. There are only around 2,500 speakers of Tuu languages. For the Kx'a family, only the various varieties of Kung remain; they form an easy combination with together around 15,000 speakers.

2 SYNONYMS, AT LEAST 28 WORDS
LOANWORDS EXCLUDED
LDND

	KAM KA KE	MASARWA KAKIA	NG KE	NU	NU EN	XOON	XOON MASARWA	XO ON NUEN	ANI	GWI	GXANA	KHOEKHOE GOWAB	KHWE	KORANA	KWADI	KXOE	MASARWA TATI	NAMA	N ARO	NARON	SHUA	HOAN	HOAN HU C	JUHOAN	KAUEN	KUN G	KUNG EKOKA	O KUNG	TSWAN A	ENGLISH
KAM KA KE	0																													
MASARWA KAKIA	74	0																												
NG KE	47	74	0																											
NU	88	95	84	0																										
NU EN	70	51	72	92	0																									
XOON	95	80	95	96	75	0																								
XOON MASARWA	88	56	89	94	69	61	0																							
XOON NUEN	87	66	85	96	49	55	45	0																						
ANI	101	96	101	100	95	95	94	93	0																					
GWI	99	96	99	98	94	94	97	93	64	0																				
GXANA	99	94	99	97	93	92	99	94	61	12	0																			
KHOEKHOEGGOWAB	97	94	98	100	98	95	95	96	78	84	83	0																		
KHWE	101	97	101	100	99	93	100	99	46	62	57	76	0																	
KORANA	100	93	97	96	96	97	96	94	63	77	76	65	63	0																
KWADI	97	98	98	103	97	102	104	102	87	90	89	89	86	86	0															
KXOE	101	96	98	100	99	97	99	99	64	79	78	82	56	56	87	0														
MASARWA TATI	96	92	99	97	97	98	94	96	78	77	75	91	68	86	92	86	0													
NAMA	97	95	98	96	96	92	91	93	71	85	83	54	71	43	90	75	86	0												
NARO	101	97	99	99	97	94	98	95	51	65	64	76	49	55	88	51	80	71	0											
NARON	96	96	99	96	92	97	96	92	69	77	76	84	69	86	89	83	81	87	66	0										
SHUA	100	98	99	100	96	98	89	98	24	68	64	78	53	59	87	70	73	67	59	76	0									
HOAN HUC	101	102	100	105	104	104	107	105	101	99	99	104	102	102	94	101	101	101	99	101	99	0								
HOAN	103	99	103	104	102	102	104	102	97	99	99	99	98	101	93	99	99	97	100	100	98	53	0							
JUHOAN	98	97	99	102	96	98	100	94	92	95	94	97	93	97	101	95	96	96	97	97	95	97	96	0						
KAUEN	96	89	97	98	85	98	97	96	95	98	98	98	97	97	97	98	97	94	94	91	89	97	93	79	0					
KUNG	96	84	95	98	85	101	98	96	94	97	97	96	98	95	96	97	98	97	93	93	88	97	88	85	50	0				
KUNG EKOKA	97	97	96	98	96	98	98	97	94	97	97	99	97	96	99	102	96	96	98	97	96	98	97	77	80	81	0			
O KUNG	93	96	96	97	88	97	97	96	94	100	100	99	96	99	98	99	98	100	95	95	94	96	93	81	47	49	74	0		
TSWAN A	99	103	99	99	101	103	101	102	100	98	98	98	97	99	101	100	99	99	97	99	100	99	102	100	101	100	100	101	0	
ENGLISH	99	97	100	100	100	99	98	99	101	101	101	98	100	101	100	101	99	102	102	100	102	100	102	99	100	101	100	101	99	0

Table 6: ASJP output, Khoisan languages

The largest Khoisan language family is Khoe-Kwadi. The largest of the discerned languages in this group is Khoekhoegowab, also known as Nama. It has around 200,000 speakers. It is easy for speakers of all other Khoe-Kwadi languages and is used as medium of instruction in primary schools in Namibia in the first three years and taught as a subject in later years.[5]

In Botswana, Xoon has around 2,000 speakers, Kung has around 7,000 and Khoekhoegowab almost none. However, there are around 45,000 speakers of other Khoe-Kwadi languages, Haikom (not in the ASJP database) being the largest.

Botswana does not follow the example of Namibia: none of the Khoisan languages are used in education, all children are confronted with English and Tswana from day one. Mokibelo (2010) shows the difficulties related to this, leading especially to systematic underperformance in English. She points to a specific issue, also discussed by Chaudenson in relation to French teaching, namely that speakers of Khoisan languages typically have difficulties in learning English that are different from those experienced by speakers of Bantu languages. English is roughly equally difficult for speakers of either Tswana or of a Khoisan language. However, because the L1 is different, the type of problem experienced by learners is different. If the curriculum is taught using textbooks geared towards Tswana speakers, and perhaps by teachers who are themselves Tswana speakers as well, this will put Khoisan speakers at a disadvantage they will find difficult to overcome. This disadvantage is in addition to the disadvantage caused by cultural differences and socio-economic inequality discussed by Molosiwa and Bokhutso (2016).[6] Mokibelo (2016) compares the situation of San and Zezuru (Shona) speakers with mainstream Tswana children. She finds that both groups are disadvantaged, but tends to group them together, even though the Shona-Tswana language pair is much easier than any of the Khoisan-Tswana language pairs.

A related issue has to do with the appropriateness of the school system itself. Many of the Khoisan speakers still employ a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle that is adapted to the arid conditions of the Kalahari Desert.[7] Children are therefore often sent to hostels in towns or cities and separated from their families in order to attend class. This system

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[5] http://www.nied.edu.na/assets/documents/05Policies/NationalCurriculumGuide/National_Curriculum_Basic_Education_2016.pdf, accessed 19 November 2019.

[6] See Chebanne and Dlali (2019) for another searing critique of the current situation.

[7] See Van Pinxteren et al (2020) for a more extensive discussion on educational issues in dryland areas in several parts of the world.

has the double effect of causing trauma in children and of alienating them from their roots. This means those children who are both intelligent and strong of character – therefore, those children who potentially could be most valuable to their communities – are taken out, thereby intellectually impoverishing their communities at a time when, due to climate change, increasing demands are made on their resilience and adaptability. This type of problem has been pointed out in connection to pastoralists in other areas and has led for example to the experiment with Pastoralist Field Schools in East Africa.[8]

Taking the rule of thumb proposed for Ethiopia as a guideline, one could imagine using three designed Khoisan languages for use in in the first years of primary education: Xoon, Kung and either Haikom or Khoekhoegowab (because the latter has already been developed for that purpose in Namibia). This would be far better than the current situation, which in fact forces children to learn a (very) difficult language (Tswana) and then through this language to learn another (very) difficult language. (The current situation is akin to forcing English-speaking children to learn in Chinese for the first few years of education and to use their knowledge of Chinese then to switch to education in Hindi – a recipe for failure.) It would be even better to develop the education system to such an extent that all children who speak a Khoe-Kwadi language could get a fuller education in a designed Khoe-Kwadi language (even though that would probably not offer any solace to speakers of Tuu or Kx'a languages).

Chebanne (2016a) has pointed out that a harmonized language development policy with a harmonized writing system are both essential for any of this to have any chance of success.

6.5.4 Language situation: Bantu languages

The ASJP database discerns six Bantu languages spoken in Botswana besides Tswana. These languages all make for easy or very easy language combinations. Nevertheless, one should realize that speakers of for example Kalanga face difficulties in learning Tswana that are greater than those faced by native Tswana speakers (they are equivalent for example to English speakers trying to learn Dutch). The current educational system of Botswana does not take these difficulties into account, although individual teachers might. Conscious action to give extra support to non-Tswana speakers of Bantu languages would probably be beneficial both to the country and to individual learners.

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[8] http://www.fao.org/capacity-development/news-list/detail/en/c/883112/ accessed 19 November 2019.

Tswana has a large speaker base in South Africa as well. Therefore, in line with the fifth principle introduced in the Ethiopian case study (encourage collaboration), it might be cost-efficient to develop Tswana in Botswana in harmony with the development of Tswana in South Africa and in fact also in harmony with closely related discerned languages like Sotho. This would be rational, but it is not a straightforward matter. Thus, Machobane and Mokitini (1998) provide an insightful analysis of the problems in creating a harmonized writing system (orthography) for Sotho.

Banda (2016) also discusses the issue of the many writing systems (orthographies) that exist in Africa. He points out how they are needlessly complicated and different from each other and from the conventions of English spelling (which unfortunately are among the least logical found anywhere). He documents that in practice, official orthographies are often not followed and that a practice is emerging that does justice to the multilingual repertoires many people have. His plea is for allowing this to happen. Here, in my view, Banda commits an error of thought. It does not follow from the fact that colonially-developed orthographies needlessly divide Africans that leaving things to chance will lead to better outcomes: that reasoning disregards the advantages of standardized writing systems. Instead, African-designed policies are needed that offer maximum simplicity and that capitalize on possibilities for mutual intelligibility between related languages – the policies that Prah has been working on.
In this context, it may be illustrative to look at Tswana and other languages in South Africa before turning to further conclusions and recommendations.

6.5.5 Language situation: South Africa

Below is the matrix of ASJP distances between the 11 official languages of South Africa.

2 SYNONYMS, AT LEAST 28 WORDS											
LOANWORDS EXCLUDED											
LDND											
	NDEBELE	NORTHERN SOTHO	SOTHO SOUTHERN	SWAZI	TSONGA	TSWANA	VENDA	XHOSA	ZULU	AFRIKAANS	ENGLISH
NDEBELE	0										
NORTHERN SOTHO	85	0									
SOTHO SOUTHERN	73	59	0								
SWAZI	60	74	75	0							
TSONGA	66	70	75	67	0						
TSWANA	85	70	66	88	77	0					
VENDA	72	76	71	68	75	81	0				
XHOSA	55	84	70	59	73	86	71	0			
ZULU	61	77	75	43	70	86	71	52	0		
AFRIKAANS	101	101	100	104	101	98	103	101	102	0	
ENGLISH	95	101	99	99	98	99	98	100	99	59	0
	NDEBELE	NORTHERN SOTHO	SOTHO SOUTHERN	SWAZI	TSONGA	TSWANA	VENDA	XHOSA	ZULU	AFRIKAANS	ENGLISH

Table 7: ASJP output, official languages of South Africa

Again, it is good to point out that both Afrikaans and English are difficult or very difficult languages for any L1 speaker of one of the other languages spoken in South Africa. It is also good to note that the Afrikaans-English language pair is very easy – using the same criteria proposed in the other case studies, using only one of them as language in higher education should be possible. Afrikaans-speakers are often praised for their excellent command of English, but taking into account the proximity of both languages there seems to be no cause for special admiration here.

Alexander (1998) has argued that in South Africa, only two Bantu languages (Nguni, encompassing Ndebele, Xhosa, Swazi, Tsonga and Zulu) and Sotho (encompassing the others) could be developed for formal use in education and other domains.[9] This thesis is only partially supported by the ASJP database. The Nguni languages do form very easy language pairs, with the exception of Tsonga. On the other hand, the internal variety within the Sotho-Tswana languages seems to be larger than within the Nguni languages; the Sotho-Tswana language pair is easy, but not *very* easy. Using the same criteria as employed for the other case studies would lead one to conclude that only one (and in fact, any one) of the Bantu languages discerned in South Africa would need to be developed as the designed language. In the completely hypothetical case that for example Afrikaans and Zulu would become the two official languages of South Africa, this would lead to a

[9] See Msimang (1998) for an analysis of how these ideas were sabotaged in the Apartheid era.

tremendous strengthening of the position of Zulu. However, developing Sotho and Nguni, as suggested by Alexander, would also have this effect. What seems certain is that South Africa's current language policy with eleven official languages will inexorably lead to a strengthening of the position of English. Alexander (2001) has pointed this out as well, and has argued for the creation of a new, common South African identity. The research of chapter 3.2 illustrates that such an identity might in fact be forming.

The Gross Enrolment Ratio in tertiary education in South Africa in 2017 stood at 22.37%, not far below the level of Botswana.

6.5.6 Conclusions and recommendations

Batibo (2004: 60) has argued that the future of Setswana depends on the commitment of the country's decision makers. However, as I have shown, the commitment of decision makers can and will be influenced by broader societal processes that are at play, such as the steady increase in enrolment. As was the case for the previous countries, a switch to indigenous languages for tertiary education is not yet necessary in Botswana, since enrolment figures are so low that English or any other language can be used. However, enrolment rates have almost tripled in the years since 2007. If this type of growth continues in the coming decade, the strain on the system will increase and the pressure for a change to Tswana at least for part of tertiary education will increase. In chapter 3.3.2, I pointed to Botswana's history of involvement with the British, leading to its ability to retain a relatively higher degree of cultural autonomy than some other countries in Africa. This history might also mean that, like in Ghana, English will retain its position as medium of instruction for at least parts of tertiary education for a longer period of time than in a country such as Tanzania.

Already at present, the use of English as medium of instruction in secondary education is bound to lead to wastage and loss, because it is likely that not all children have a level of English that is sufficient to follow education in that language, although in principle they may have the intellectual capabilities. Matiki (2010) has shown that the dominance of English in the legal system disempowers the majority of Botswanans who do not have a sufficient command of the language.

Botswana is unique in that it has speakers of all three Khoisan language families within its borders. The ASJP database has been used to estimate the evolution over time of human languages.[10] According to Holman et al (2011: 25), the Khoisan languages may have the oldest

[10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Automated_Similarity_Judgment_Program accessed 25 November 2019.

roots in the world, thereby representing a unique human heritage. Preserving and promoting this heritage in some way could rightfully be portrayed as a matter of national pride for the country. Using some or all of these languages in education would be a way of doing so that would also provide a service to the speakers of these languages, especially if it is done in a way that supports sustainable livelihoods. The ASJP database suggests that these cannot be lumped together – developing one Khoisan language as the designed language would not offer an equitable solution for the speakers of languages in the other language families. Using at least three Khoisan languages for the first years of primary education would probably help to increase the achievement of Khoisan speakers. In addition, special measures should be considered aimed at ensuring that education is relevant to the pastoral lifestyle of many Khoisan-language speakers.

The Botswana experience reinforces the importance of using foreign-language teaching methods that take the specific difficulties of speakers of different languages into account: a method that works well for Bantu speakers may be less appropriate for Khoisan speakers and vice versa.

For South Africa, the short analysis shows that rational choices may not be the same as choices that seem realistic given the current socio-political situation of the country; however, the analysis does show alternative choices that may be feasible in the current context that lead to better outcomes than the current situation.

6.6. Some challenges and conclusions

6.6.1 Five case studies: applying the theory

This study examines Vansina's prediction that neo-African traditions will appear, based in part in African languages. In chapter three, I demonstrated that in some countries these neo-African traditions seem to be developing along national lines; in other countries, such a development does not seem to be taking place. In any case, the traditional ethnolinguistic distinctions seem to be losing their significance, at least in a number of cases. However, the situation is different from area to area and no clear patterns can be distinguished.

In chapters four and five, I have tried to explain why African languages are currently not being used more in higher education and I have investigated the scope for rational choices in language use for (higher) education. This was done at a fairly abstract and theoretical level, although much more concrete than what is found in most other pleas of this type. In this chapter, I have explored what the theoretical insights gained could contribute when applied in five different country situations.

In these five case studies, I tried to look at the overlap (or lack of it) between the cultural and the linguistic situation in each country and examined the feasibility or otherwise of rational choices for language in higher education in as many countries (Tanzania, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana and Botswana). I also looked at languages from some of the language families more in general and at several neighbouring countries, including South Africa.

Only in Botswana was it possible to some extent to map cultural differences onto language differences: the Bantu speakers in that country seem to be culturally different from the small groups of speakers of Khoisan languages. Even there, the mapping is not one on one: the Khoisan languages belong to three different language families; the data do not allow me to determine whether or not this also corresponds to three different cultural areas within the Khoisan-speaking communities. In Ethiopia, I only have data for five of the larger ethnolinguistic groups. That data suggests that seen from a distance, Ethiopians may in fact be more alike culturally than they think themselves. In South Africa, there seem to be positive indications that the link between language and culture that may have existed in the past is now no longer there: the Tswana, Sotho and Swazi in South Africa are more similar to one another than to their siblings in Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini. In the other three countries, there is no clear

mapping of cultural differences onto linguistic differences. As authors like Topan (2008) or Smith (2013) have argued, this also means that a switch to using African languages in and by itself does not need to pose a threat to national unity, contrary to what is popularly believed.

In all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, enrolment in tertiary education is still (far) below the level common in the global North. Therefore, a change to using African languages in higher education is not yet necessary for any of these countries; there are enough young Africans that have sufficient language abilities and general intelligence to fill up the relatively few places available to them. However, this is likely to change if enrolment figures double again, as they have done in the past and as has also happened for example in Europe. Such a development could take place in the next decade or so and is perhaps most likely to occur first in Botswana, the country with the best performance in this regard in the region. However, a shift to a different or additional medium of instruction, at least for part of tertiary education, requires careful preparation and planning – if such a change is foreseen, then it is best to start preparations as early as possible.

The case studies also show problems at the level of secondary education, where in a number of countries, enrolment rates, especially at the level of lower secondary education, already exceed 40%. I do not have precise information on what level of language knowledge is necessary to profit from education at this level: the only indication that I have is for tertiary education. There is abundant literature complaining about high dropout rates in secondary education in Africa.[1] Some of that must be related to adverse socio-economic conditions, to the quality and/or the affordability of education and to discouraging or even threatening conditions in schools, especially for girls. However, some of it is likely to be due to language as well: secondary education in what is essentially a foreign designed language puts certain demands on the language learning abilities of children and those abilities are not distributed equally over the population. In addition, the required level of Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) only develops in the late teens. Increasing numbers of children are likely to drop out because of insufficient skills in the language area, even though their intellectual capabilities in other areas might be sufficient to profit from the education if it would be provided in a more easily accessible designed language. This factor is bound to become more important with increasing enrolment rates in secondary education: more children

[1] One statistic is for example the 'cumulative drop-out rate to the last grade of lower secondary general education' as published at http://data.uis.unesco.org/#. For Ghana, this rate was more than 21% in 2016; for Estonia, it was under 0.5%. (Data retrieved 22 November 2019.)

in secondary education will mean that the average language abilities of children enrolled in secondary education will decrease and therefore that the average amount of effort required to teach them a foreign designed language to the required level will increase. Secondary education in many countries would clearly become more efficient (in terms of rates of successful completion at a given rate of investment) if it were to be provided in designed languages that are easier to learn for children.

The five case studies show that it is possible to arrive at rational choices for a limited number of designed languages in the countries studied. For Tanzania, I have shown that Swahili is easy to learn for over 98.5% of all Tanzanians (in sharp contrast to English, which is difficult or very difficult for all Tanzanians) and I have suggested that this forms a new and powerful explanation for the enduring success of Swahili in the country, an explanation that is better than the partial explanations I found in the literature I surveyed. It is important to stress that learning an 'easy' designed language still requires formal instruction, although far less than a 'difficult' language would require. I therefore suggest that using some of the Tanzanian discerned languages that are more distant from Swahili as designed languages at least in the initial years of primary education might improve the efficiency of education for L1 speakers of those languages.

I have pointed out how for the speakers of minority Nilotic and Cushitic language as well as for the speakers of Hadza and Sandawe (considered to be language isolates), Swahili is not an easy language. For them, it would be important to introduce education (at least at primary level) in a designed language that is more accessible to them. What the Tanzanian example also shows is that the differences within the Narrow Bantu family of languages (to which most discerned Tanzanian languages belong) are smaller than those within the Nilotic language family – choosing one easy designed language is possible for the Narrow Bantu family, but not for the Nilotic family.

Both the literature discussed on Tanzania and the analysis from chapter three point to the fact that even though Narrow Bantu languages spoken in the country form relatively easy language pairs, this does not mean that Tanzania has a culturally homogeneous Bantu-speaking majority: large cultural differences within the country remain, that cannot easily be mapped onto language families.

The Republic of Congo is in a certain way in a similar situation as Tanzania, in that all the discerned languages spoken in the country belong to the Narrow Bantu family. The recommendation by Baka was cited, who suggests using the L1 as much as possible for the first four years of primary education, then to switch to one of the country's four

languages of wider communication and to narrow this down to Lingala and Kituba for upper secondary and tertiary education. The ASJP database in fact suggests that an easier choice might be possible, because several discerned languages are easy to learn for all Congolese. This is in line with developments already taking place more or less spontaneously in the country – a rational language policy would make it possible to support and accelerate this process towards an indigenous national language, at least for higher education. Following the suggestion by Baka, it would be possible indeed to use the L1 for the first years of primary education and then to immediately switch to one or two discerned languages.

The choice that would suggest itself for the Republic of Congo is certainly not possible for all African countries. In Ethiopia, the linguistic situation is considerably more complex. Ethiopia's current ethnofederalist policies put a premium on difference, rather than on similarity. Perceptions of either difference or similarity can to a certain extent be influenced by policy. Therefore, I propose a fifth principle, in addition to the four developed in chapter five (use a limited number of languages; that are easy to learn; that are as inclusive as possible; that take account of bilingualism). This fifth principle would be to build incentives for **linguistic collaboration**, especially for related linguistic communities.

This could be done for example by stipulating that developing a designed language for use at a specific level of education would only be done if the speaker base of discerned languages that are related to such a designed language is large enough. In Ethiopia, as in other countries, switching to local languages at the level of lower secondary education would probably already increase efficiency at that level. For higher education, the ASJP database suggests this could be developed in four or five languages.

The Ethiopian case study also brought home some of the limitations of the approach of using the ASJP database. These are related to the fact that what may seem rational and equitable at a theoretical level might not be a realistic outcome to aim for, given the current socio-political situation in the country. However, my approach at least offers a starting point for a rational debate and a way of starting to think about incentives for convergence in designed language use in a domain such as (higher) education.

The Ghanaian case study in a way gave similar results to those of Ethiopia. In Ghana, the indigenous languages are not conveniently close to one another. For the Kwa family of languages, three languages would be necessary for an equitable solution (for example Akan, Ga

and Ewe). For the Gur family of languages, a further three languages would seem to be necessary. It might be possible that English is used as medium of instruction alongside Ghanaian languages for longer than might be the case for some other countries. Ghana is one country where the data presented in chapter three suggests that a national culture may be forming, even though in-country differences between ethnolinguistic groups remain.

Lastly, the Botswana case study reinforced some of the conclusions and recommendations from the previous case studies. Most people in Botswana speak a Bantu language and for them, Tswana would seem to be a logical choice as language for higher education. Botswana has the highest enrolment rate in tertiary education in Sub-Saharan Africa, but it is still below the 40% level. However, it is entirely possible that the country will reach that threshold in the next decade or so. If so, an orderly and planned transition involving a gradually expanding role of Tswana in tertiary education would seem to be possible and desirable. At the same time, introducing some of the other languages spoken in Botswana as medium of instruction in the first years of primary education would probably be a wise strategy, because it would increase learning efficiency.

This is especially true for speakers of Khoisan languages. The ASJP database suggests that the Khoisan languages are internally very diverse and indeed, they are considered to be made up of three language families. Botswana is the only country that has L1 speakers from all three families within its borders. Preserving and promoting this heritage in some way could rightfully be portrayed as a matter of national pride for the country. Using some or all of these languages in education would be a way of doing so that would also provide a service to the speakers of these languages, especially if it is done in a way that is culturally appropriate and supports sustainable livelihoods.

The Botswana experience also shows that methods of teaching English should be adapted to the specific linguistic background of the learners: methods that may be suitable for Bantu-language speakers may not be ideal for speakers of Khoisan, or indeed of Chadic or Nilotic languages.

My study thus supports the conclusions by Kaschula and Nkomo (2019: 621), who argue:

> 'What is required is a mutually inclusive linguistic environment that celebrates not only linguistic equity between African languages and exoglossic languages, but also African identity, culture, and indigenous knowledge in the context of what such an approach can bring to African development. What goes to the core of such a developmental approach would be to use African languages for the purposes of education.'

The analytical framework and the case studies together demonstrate that indeed, there are good possibilities for rational language-in-education policies in Africa. They also lead to a few additional insights that I would like to present here.

6.6.2 Decolonizing education: a different perspective

The analysis in these case studies leads to a perspective that should be added to existing perspectives on decolonizing education. These existing perspectives tend to be focused on the content of education, rather than on the sociological function of education. Thus, Ndofirepi and Gwaravanda (2019: 589) say: 'Placing the African knowledge system at the centre of analysis involves the use of the African knowledge paradigm, worldview and categories of thought as the basic framework of analysis'. Curiously, they manage to discuss decolonization of Universities without even once referring to the issue of language, thus in a way illustrating the assessment of Kaschula and Nkomo (2019: 619), who say that "[t]he language question is then the 'elephant in the room' when it comes to development in Africa, indeed to transformation of the continent at all levels, from societal, educational to economic transformation." Prah (2016) before them has already pointed to the link between the two: building on indigenous knowledge systems requires also building on knowledge as transmitted through indigenous languages. Mbembe (2015) asserted: 'The African University of tomorrow will be multilingual'.

As was shown in chapter 1.4, Bourdieu has demonstrated that there is a relationship between enrolment ratios in education and the social function of education and its role in elite reproduction. The analysis of the evolution of enrolment rates as well as the 'steepness' of the educational pyramid (indicated by the enrolment ratio in tertiary education divided by the enrolment ratio in primary education) are meaningful for understanding the function of education in a particular society.

Looking at enrolment ratios and the steepness of the pyramid in colonial times, it is clear that the function of education was limited to recruiting a small number of local cadres for work within the colonial system – what Campbell (2017) calls 'education for submission'. An efficient way of recruitment was to provide substandard education in a foreign language to a small group of 'privileged' children. Some were so intelligent (and so malleable) that it showed even under such adverse conditions – they were then recruited and given a continuing

education of a higher standard. This system clearly was conceived in a top-down manner.[2]

The problem is that the system was essentially kept, but with ever larger numbers of children and students in the system – but the system won't scale. This is bound to be a problem already in a number of countries with high enrolment rates in (lower) secondary education because it is not likely that educational systems in those countries will be able to give all children the foreign language skills that they need in order to profit from that education. However, because the educational pyramid is conceived top-down, this problem is not seen. As long as there are enough young people with the required language skills to fill up the few places available to them in tertiary education, the essentially colonial model of education can continue. However, there is a limit to this. In the global North, so many young people attend tertiary education that giving them all the required foreign language skills becomes a practical impossibility. That is why even in countries with a relatively low number of speakers of local languages, such as Estonia, tertiary education is predominantly in an indigenous designed language. Trends in enrolment over the years in Africa show that this 'language barrier' is likely to make itself felt in a number of African countries within the space of the next decade or so.

Bourdieu helps us understand that shifts in the function of education are never uncontested. Therefore, continued expansion in tertiary education is likely to lead to different types of social strife and unrest; planning for what lies ahead may help to make these struggles more peaceful and more productive than they will otherwise be.

Preparing for a system where many more students than is currently the case take up tertiary education requires a shift in thinking about the educational pyramid: instead of conceiving it top-down, as in the colonial period, it will be necessary to conceive it bottom-up. What do I mean by this? As outlined above, in colonial times the demands on the quality of primary and secondary education for all but the elite could be limited. Children needed to be given a chance to show their language abilities and once the selection was made, would be taught all else they needed to know at higher levels of education. The fact that those without the required abilities did not get the maximum benefit from their schooling did not matter so much. Again, as long as the system is

[2] It is good to bear in mind that this top-down system was not invented specifically with the intention of keeping the colonized in their place, although it had that function. Educational systems in Europe at the end of the 19th and well into the 20th century were also conceived top-down and had a specific function in elite reproduction that is different from the current situation.

aimed at educating only a relatively small proportion of the population, this works fine.

However, in a highly developed society, maximum levels of education are a must in order to ensure maximum productivity. This means that under-achievement is no longer an acceptable outcome. If primary and secondary education are of substandard quality, the stress on tertiary education to make good on the missed opportunities of earlier phases will become unbearable. Furthermore, those that do not proceed to tertiary education will be left empty-handed. In other words, in future, all brains will be needed and they need to be developed at all levels of education.[3] This means that the educational pyramid needs to be conceived bottom-up. As argued in chapter two, the net result of teaching more children, but teaching them foreign language as a subject, instead of using it as medium of instruction will be an increase rather than a decrease in the number of people who speak such a foreign language. It will also mean that results in other areas (such a science-related subjects) will go up.

Decolonizing education should go beyond decolonizing the University curriculum. It is necessary to also question the top-down model of education that was inherited from colonial times.

6.6.3 Identity, culture and language – are they related and if so, how?

Ask any lay person what he or she considers to be characteristic of his or her ethnic culture and 'language' will invariably be one of the first things mentioned.[4] In chapter 1.1, I quoted Adichie, who said that 'Language is the constructs of culture'. This statement echoes Prah (2010b: 83): 'Language is thus a historical and cultural register of the speakers of the language. It is impossible to conceive of culture without language or language without culture'. This captures the popular imagination, which holds that somehow, there is a relationship between the two. However, the case studies demonstrate the difficulty

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[3] Hence the title of my presentation at the ECAS2109 conference: 'African Intellect – Key to Development'.

[4] Thus, in 2019, the Netherlands Institute for Social Research published a report authored by Beugelsdijk et al on the Dutch cultural identity – a summarized popular version, 'Thinking of the Netherlands' was published in English. On p. 11, the Dutch language is shown as the topmost of 20 traits seen by the Dutch as characteristic of the country. In chapter nine of the full report (in Dutch only), Beugelsdijk gives an excellent overview of where to situate Dutch national culture using the approach of cross-cultural psychology using the vocabulary of dimension scores as pioneered by Hofstede and a hierarchical cluster analysis similar to the one presented in chapter 3.4 of this study.

of pinpointing this. Yet the question remains: can we somehow get more precise?

In the literature, perhaps the most famous idea on the connection between the two is in the so-called 'Sapir-Whorf' hypothesis, as first suggested by the US linguist and ethnologist Edward Sapir in 1949 and later refined by another US linguist, Benjamin Whorf (1956). In its currently most used form, the hypothesis holds that language and culture are interdependent and that the language people speak influences some of their decisions and behaviour. Yuka and Okolochi (2011) use it as their main argument in support of greater use of African languages. However, I am with Fabb (2016: 56), who discusses the hypothesis and the ways it has been used and argues 'that it is premature to come to these conclusions. Languages vary in much more complex and detailed ways than is accommodated by the binary divisions favoured in the Whorfian articles.' This conclusion is also supported by the material presented in the case studies.

But if that is so, what then can we say about these matters? A more sophisticated approach can be found in Wierzbicka. Wierzbicka (1997) holds that it is possible to describe cultures through a study of key words and their meanings in different languages. She gives the example of the word 'friend' in different languages, such as American English, British English, Polish and Russian. What she shows is that the equivalent of this word (and related terms) in each language refers to a different category of people – from rather wide in American English to very restricted in Russian. She holds that by using more terms like this and by studying more languages, it is possible to describe both linguistic and cultural differences. She has developed 'Natural Semantic Metalanguage' for making such descriptions. However, doing this requires a high level of specialist multilingual expertise and a great amount of work. This may explain why, even though Wierzbicka described her approach more than twenty years ago, there are not many authors that have made use of it.[5]

Davis and Abdurazokzoda (2016) show that there are relationships between how languages are structured and cultural characteristics, comparing data from the World Atlas of Linguistic Structures (WALS), for example on ways of showing politeness, with cultural traits, using data from the World Values Survey.

A preliminary conclusion, also supported by the case studies, can be that there ***is*** a relationship, but it is not always one-on-one: it can also be one-to-many, and this in fact in either direction (one cultural area

[5] But see for example Ameka (2016) for an illustration of how Wierzbicka's approach can be used for describing culturally specific relationships as expressed in certain African languages.

with several languages or one language serving different cultural traditions). The discussion is not helped any by the controversies, pointed out in section 1.3, on what to call a language. The common trope is that in Africa, there are over 2,000 languages – but are there over 2,000 cultures? In section 1.7, I called this a pre-scientific myth. Yet, in line with the thinking of Vansina (1990), larger-scale cultural traditions used to exist in Africa. Vansina has shown this for the region of Equatorial Africa. This is a region where many different languages can be discerned, although, as shown in the case study on the Republic of Congo (section 6.2), many of them are closely related. If, like Prah (2012) one were to hold that the actual number of languages is much smaller, then a better agreement between linguistic and cultural differences and similarities in Africa might be found – but as the example of culturally diverse Tanzania, with its large speaker base of closely related Bantu languages seems to suggest, such an agreement is not likely to be absolute.

There is a large body of literature that links ethnic and linguistic fragmentation within a country to lack of mutual trust, to bad governance and all that it entails and to failing economic performance. The classic study in this regard is by Easterly and Levine (1997); this study has led to a host of similar studies, all more or less confirming their findings – see for example Michalopoulos and Papaiouannou (2016). However, as pointed out in section 1.3, these studies depend on source data on ethnolinguistic groups that are based on the colonial period and need to be treated with some caution and suspicion.

In this light, it is interesting to look at the more sophisticated approach that was used by Desmet et al (2016: 442). What they find is that even small linguistic divisions between groups can lead to market inefficiencies: trade becomes more difficult in these circumstances. However, it is only the larger differences, between languages that separated thousands of years ago, that lead to much larger negative effects, leading to a skewed distribution of resources and the likelihood of civil conflict. Likewise, Beugelsdijk and Klasing (2016) show that greater differences in values within regions also leads to lower trust levels in those regions – and to lower levels of economic growth.

The link between culture and language is to a certain extent malleable. Hofstede (2001: 63), almost in the beginning of his classic book, devotes a few paragraphs to two exceptional situations he encountered in Europe. His research findings revealed to him that in Belgium, there is one national culture, even though there are two quite different languages spoken in the country: Dutch and French (a 'medium to

difficult' combination, depending on the variety of Dutch chosen).[6] For Switzerland, he found a different picture: the French speakers were culturally more aligned with France, the speakers of their two German-like languages[7] more with Germany. Hofstede explains this from the specific history of the countries. For Europe, these two situations are not so common. Africa, however, has a radically different history and the research of chapter three suggests that both the Belgian and the Swiss situations may be much more common in Africa than they are in Europe. In Ghana, for example, a situation akin to that of Belgium might exist; Ghana is a territory where there is a long history of interaction between the groups living in different parts of the country. However, there is no empirical evidence that suggests that the hypothesis on the feasibility of nation building put forward by Grotenhuis (2016), as discussed in chapter 1.5, is in fact correct. Cultural and linguistic alignments or rifts are the results of long-term historical processes that can be influenced by social engineering to only a very limited extent, much more limited than Grotenhuis seems to believe. With Blommaert (2014: 40): the 'cultural resilience' of the 'common man' should not be underestimated. It is not possible to ignore historical realities when trying to mix peoples of different linguistic and cultural origins together in whichever way the social engineers please and hope for a stable outcome.
Building on the work of Desmet et al (2016), Gerschman and Rivera (2018: 231) arrive at a more nuanced analysis. By looking at linguistic distance,[8] they find that 'only deep-rooted diversity, based on cleavages formed in the distant past, is strongly inversely associated with a range of regional development indicators.' In other words, small differences are not so important – but countries with considerable cultural differences are faced with developmental challenges. This does not mean that ethnically homogeneous countries are conflict and violence-free; these studies all show statistical correlations that hold when comparing many countries, but that do not say much about individual countries.

There is a related point that needs to be made here and this is about the relationship between language and (social and technological) innovation. As argued in sections 5.1 and 5.2, using a designed

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[6] The Ethnologue discerns three Dutch-like languages spoken in Belgium: Flemish, Dutch and Limburgish, ISO 639-3 codes vls, nld and lim. https://www-ethnologue-com/country/BE/maps accessed 3 March 2020.
[7] Swiss German has ISO 639-3 code gsw, Walser wae.
[8] The concept of linguistic distance and the different ways of measuring it is discussed in chapter five.

language that is easy to learn for as many people as possible is essential for giving access to the functions associated with citizenship in a country. Enabling citizens to function as such through indigenous designed languages will enhance public debate and will thereby stimulate the development towards cultural autonomy. This will also make it easier to create a fertile breeding ground for social and technological innovation. On the other hand, restricting access to the national debate to those who know the colonial language well enough will tend to muffle or stunt such debate and innovation and cause it to go underground.

Let's again revisit the conclusions from the previous chapters and try to discover what links can be found between them.

7. Language, Education and Identity revisited

At the start of this study, I used the example of Adichie's novel 'Americanah' to point to a number of wider issues I wanted to speak to, regarding the status of African cultural identities today, the relationship with language and more in particular, the relationship between culture, language and education. In this concluding chapter, I revisit those issues, making use of the insights gained earlier. What did we learn? What remains unexplored? What is the way forward?
In order to do that, I will first summarize the main conclusions from the earlier chapters and discuss the limitations of my research. This will lead to a discussion of the research agenda that this work suggests. In the next section, I will situate the approach of this study within a broader context of empowering and disempowering views on Africa, including a critique of the toxic cocktail of ideas that currently puts a brake on the scope for African agency. The study ends with a concluding look at the issue of cultural autonomy.

7.1. Main conclusions – findings and limitations

In chapter one, I explained my interest in a view of African identities as actually experienced and built by Africans – not as constructs that have been engineered by the various state-building and nation-building initiatives. This means that I am interested in looking at culture. I aligned myself with the vision of Prah, who sees language as a central element of culture. I criticized the over-confidence in social engineering and its possibilities of 'nation-building' in Africa (or elsewhere). I took issue with the tendency by Marxists to downplay the importance of culture. I mentioned the tendency of scientists to fall into the trap of taking one of two pre-scientific myths as their starting point: the 'Africa as a country' and the 'Tower of Babel' myths, either describing Africa as a cultural whole or, on the other hand, as infinitely fragmented. I criticized both myths for being disempowering, obscuring an appreciation and understanding of the different African cultural identities that form part of the full spectrum of human cultural identities.
I then turned to Vansina, who predicted the emergence of neo-African traditions, carried by African languages. I again pointed to Prah, who has drawn attention to the central role of education in African

languages for African development. These insights combined led to my three main research questions, formulated in chapter two:

- How can we describe large-scale cultural differences and similarities in Africa?
- Why are African languages not being used more in higher education?
- What possibilities are there for rational language in education policies?

In terms of method, I restricted myself to using methods and approaches that have already been used in other continents as well and to using data that are in the public domain and based on African self-representations. My interest is in documenting long-term trends and showing Africa in its dynamism and diversity.

The starting point of my research on culture was the definition of a **culture as a value system that serves as common point of reference to a people**. This definition is at the group level – not at the individual level. It accepts that within any cultural whole, there is a large amount of diversity. The key element is that individuals who know or consider themselves to be part of a specific culture know its values, even though they may not themselves subscribe to them on a personal level.

I pointed out that just asking people how they define their culture is not a sophisticated or reliable way of getting to descriptions. I showed how in order to compare cultures and describe large-scale cultural differences and similarities, the approach of cross-cultural psychology offers a vocabulary that has been used in many parts of the world, though only sparingly in Africa. I positioned myself within that field, aligning myself broadly with the approach as initially developed by Hofstede and Minkov. This approach depends on the use of value surveys of comparable groups across a range of countries. That makes it difficult to implement. An important starting point is the World Values Survey (WVS), which has been held repeatedly in more than 90 countries worldwide. The WVS, though, has a number of weaknesses: it was developed within a framework that is slightly different from that of Hofstede and that I criticized as being too ideological. Furthermore, not all the questions of the Hofstede Values Survey Module (VSM) are included in the WVS and therefore it is difficult or even impossible to get information on all six of the Hofstede/Minkov dimensions from the WVS. For Africa, a problem is that only a small number of countries in Africa have been surveyed. Therefore, I turned to the Afrobarometer survey, which covers a much larger number of countries and is based on African self-representations. An added advantage of the Afrobarometer survey is that in principle, it allows for disaggregation of

data to the ethnolinguistic group level. Ethnolinguistic group distinctions in Africa are problematic, but they are currently the closest we have to identifying different cultural groups on the continent. The Afrobarometer survey was not specifically designed as a values survey and does not include many similar questions to the WVS or the VSM. Nevertheless, my assumption that values shine through in more or less any set of questions asked across a range of countries proved to be correct: I was able to show a close relationship between parts of the data on cultural differences and similarities as researched by Hofstede/Minkov/Beugelsdijk and data contained in the Afrobarometer survey. I did that using three lenses: *hierarchical cluster analysis*, *cultural dimension scores* and a *comparison of scores from Africa with scores from other continents*.

The hierarchical cluster analysis builds on an approach developed by Minkov and Hofstede (2012). They looked at WVS data at the level of in-country administrative regions and posited that if national culture is a meaningful concept, then data from such regions should cluster together nationally, rather than being spread randomly over many different clusters. They found that for the great majority of countries they used for their research, this was indeed the case. My approach was different from that of Minkov and Hofstede, in that it used Afrobarometer round 6 survey data and looked at ethnolinguistic groups, rather than at administrative regions. Working that way, I was able to identify data from 35 African countries, including 26 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and from there 187 individual ethnolinguistic groups.

The findings show that indeed, in many countries the groups do cluster together at the national level. This is especially so for countries where this would be expected, such as Botswana, Lesotho and Madagascar. For a country like Lesotho, the Afrobarometer survey has sufficient data from seven ethnolinguistic groups, who all cluster together. One can wonder what the meaning still is of these distinctions for a country like Lesotho. Ethnolinguistic groups also cluster together in a number of other countries, such as Niger. In other countries such as Ghana, most ethnolinguistic groups cluster together. However, there are other countries, such as Guinea, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Tanzania in which the groups do not cluster together neatly. My conclusion was that there is not one common pattern that applies across Africa. In general, approaches that map cultural differences onto linguistic differences, using linguistic differences as a proxy for cultural differences, are not reliable, at least not for the whole of Africa.

For the second lens, I attempted to arrive at individual dimension scores for ethnolinguistic groups and I was able to do that for four out

of the six Minkov/Hofstede dimensions: 'Fix vs Flex' (LTO), Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR), Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV) and Power Distance (PDI). Especially the Individualism versus Collectivism distinction is well-accepted in the literature and used in a variety of settings.

The findings broadly confirm the picture obtained through the hierarchical cluster analysis. In some countries such as Ghana, the largest ethnolinguistic groups show similarities, even though some of the smaller groups show different patterns. In Southern Africa, the picture emerges that for example the Sotho of Lesotho and the Tswana of Botswana are no longer culturally the same as their counterparts in South Africa; they score differently on 'Fix vs Flex' and on Indulgence versus Restraint, and less so on individualism. In South Africa, a new cultural tradition seems to be emerging, as predicted by Vansina. This is a shared new identity, even though 'black' South Africans speak several different discerned languages. On the other hand, in a country like Kenya, large differences remain between ethnolinguistic groups. Thus, the Luo of Kenya are closer to the Acholi and the Lango of Uganda (with which they share linguistic similarities) than to other ethnolinguistic groups in Kenya.

The third lens compares Sub-Saharan Africa with other continents. It shows that Africa's internal diversity is at least as high as the diversity that is found in other continents. On the other hand, it also confirms the common perception that on average, Africa is more collectivist and Europe more individualist.

Together, these three lenses provide 'proof of concept': using cross-cultural psychology, it is possible in principle to describe large-scale cultural differences and similarities in Africa and it leads to new insights into African identities today, that are different from what was handed down as insights from colonial times. This method can be used for charting the emergence of 'neo-African' traditions, as predicted by Vansina. The first signs of such a development are visible in the data.[1]

Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that there are limitations to this research, due to imperfections in the underlying data. Even though the overall picture seems reliable, the data on individual ethnolinguistic groups should be interpreted with some caution. Adapting the Afrobarometer survey to take better account of cultural values and to ensure better representativity at the ethnolinguistic group level could go a long way towards addressing these problems.

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[1] This is also signalled by a keen observer such as Dowden (2015: 619). He ends his book on what is perhaps an overly optimistic note: 'The wound that parted Africa from its soul is healing. Its schizophrenia is ending. Africa is finding itself.'

Vansina has pointed to the key role of languages in developing new traditions, and Prah stresses the crucial role of (higher) education in this context. That is therefore the focus of chapter four. The use of African languages in higher education remains very limited and it seems reasonable to suspect that this in itself hinders the development of the neo-African traditions predicted by Vansina. My second research question was to explore the reasons for this and to explore possible future developments.

Using a theoretical framework developed by Bourdieu, I argue that there is one explanation for the limited use of African languages in higher education that has hitherto been overlooked in the literature: the issue of the relatively low enrolment figures in Africa, as compared to the global North. My basic argument is that as enrolment figures increase, the pressure on using African languages as medium of instruction will also increase, simply because language learning abilities are not distributed equally across the population. As long as education limited itself to an intellectual elite, it was possible to select only those most gifted in language. Using the educational system of Estonia as a benchmark, I argue that in future, this will no longer be a cost-effective option. In order to develop the argument, I proposed a new distinction between discerned and designed languages, inspired by terminology originally proposed by Kloss. I argue that in formal settings, but also in education, the designed languages that are used will always be different from the repertoires spoken at home; therefore, they need to be learned. I have shown that it is possible and in fact common that one designed language serves several different discerned languages.

The third research question, on the possibilities for rational choices for language use in higher education, is equally difficult to answer and necessitated a number of innovative ideas. I argue that higher education requires use of a designed language, therefore always requiring a certain amount formal learning from the user. However, in order to educate as many people as possible, it is important to minimize the required language learning by staying as close as possible to the language repertoire learners already have. In order to develop a way of thinking about this, I made use of Levenshtein distances as calculated with the help of the ASJP database and benchmarked them to a schema for ease of language learning. This yielded a new way of approximating which languages are 'easy' or 'difficult' and for whom. I concluded that rational choices would be possible, and proposed to base such choices on four principles:

1. Develop a limited number of designed languages for education.

2. Designed languages should be chosen in such a way that they are easy to learn for as many speakers of discerned languages as possible.
3. Strive for inclusivity: choose designed languages in such a way that all have to exert a relatively low but relatively equal effort to learn them.
4. Make use of existing bilingualism as a resource.

The case study on Ethiopia led me to propose a fifth principle:

5. Build incentives for linguistic collaboration, especially for related linguistic communities.

I tried to show how the theoretical insights thus gained could be applied, presenting five brief country case studies, of Botswana, Congo Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanzania. They reinforced the point that cultural and linguistic differences cannot be mapped onto one another. However, they also made clear that indeed, in all cases it is possible to propose rational language policies, using a limited number of designed African languages. Such rational policies would represent a tremendous improvement compared to the current situation.

For Botswana, I argued in favour of special arrangements for speakers of the Khoisan languages in the country, in addition to the use of Tswana. For Congo and Tanzania, most people would be well-served by one of the Bantu languages spoken in those countries. For Ghana, the situation is more complicated and as many as six languages might be needed (still below the number of nine languages currently supported by the Government, but only up to primary school level). For Ethiopia, by far the most complicated country language-wise in my list of cases studies, in theory only five languages would be sufficient,[2] although in practice this seems unrealistic.

The study provides an additional way of looking at decolonization of African education: changing the University curriculum will not be enough. In addition, it will be necessary to re-think the 'educational pyramid' from the bottom up and to think about rational choices for increased use of African languages. A developed society requires a productive population and a productive population means an educated population. In many African countries, primary education is now almost universal. However, there is a scope and need for considerable expansion of (appropriate) education at secondary and tertiary levels: Africa will need to educate all its brains. In order to do that efficiently, it will be essential to use African languages. Clearly, doing that might

[2] Even though, as pointed out, this would present problems for speakers from several smaller linguistic communities.

also help in the development of new cultural traditions in Africa, although the relationship might not always be one-on-one.

There are limitations to my approach: a purely desk-type theoretical exercise of this type can never be enough. This research provides an approach that can serve as an input to a national and continental dialogue on language in education policies. Of course, input from local scientists and leaders is going to be more important, input that needs to take perceived historical and cultural differences and similarities into account.

Again, in Africa there are those countries (such as probably Ghana), where there is a level of national unity across linguistic divides and there are others (such as probably Tanzania), where linguistic divisions for the majority of the population are more limited, but where nevertheless the cultural differences are considerable. It is good to point out that, in spite of the attention given to fierce ethnic conflicts on the continent, most Africans do in fact manage to live in peace with their neighbours, even if they speak a different language or come from a different cultural background. In contrast to many in the Global North, Africans are by and large not only multilingual, but also multicultural. That means that they are able to navigate different linguistic and cultural contexts much more easily and more ably than most Europeans or Americans could. This is an asset, but this adaptability also helps to keep the underlying linguistic and cultural realities on the continent out of sight. Yet, these realities exist and deserve to be understood in their dynamism. The process of building neo-African traditions is not yet over – there is a dynamic here that is still developing. In order for that process to continue, use of African languages in higher education will be important. Fortunately, the process of expansion in enrolment will itself set in motion a sociological process leading to increased use of African languages in higher education. This will be helped by careful planning and rational choices – but as I have shown, such rational choices are possible.

7.2. The way forward: a research agenda

This study is built around a few basic premises. One of them is that Africa's development issues are caused not by plotting of ruthless neo-colonial exploiters, not by prevailing climatic conditions, not by skin pigmentation or other genetic differences, not by something inherently 'wrong' in Africans or in African culture, and not by general backwardness. Instead, I have pointed to Vansina's explanation, cited in chapter two: the basic problem lies in the way in which the old cultural

traditions in Africa have been destroyed in the colonial period and have not yet been replaced by a new set of commonly-understood cultural traditions. If this is the crucial problem, then a research agenda should crucially be centred around understanding these developments and at identifying strategic opportunities for agency.

Prah (2014) has called for decentralisation in Africa, democratisation, transcending current national boundaries, development of languages and basing oneself on 'deeper historical identities'. In this study, I have limited myself to language in education and to cultural similarities and differences – already a vast field of exploration. Research into the other areas (best ways of achieving democratisation and decentralisation, how artificial boundaries can be overcome) is also going to be necessary, but I do believe that such research has to base itself on an appreciation of, as Prah says, 'what people have and have had for ages', or, to use the words of Wa Thiong'o (2005: 164): 'only through the use of African languages shall we be able to break with European memory'.

Throughout this work, I have pointed to the need for more research. In the area of culture, I have given a 'proof of concept', showing the potential of cross-cultural psychology. However, better questions and a better way of covering ethnolinguistic groups would be needed in order to get more reliable results. I pointed to the work done by Noorderhaven and Tidjani (2001), who explored the possibility of finding additional dimensions from the study of Africa – follow-up work would be useful.

It is clear that the frequent assumption taken in development research that linguistic diversity can be taken as a proxy for cultural diversity deserves to be questioned – it can no longer be taken at face value, because situations as described for Belgium by Hofstede may be much more common in Africa than in Europe and furthermore, their occurrence does not seem to follow a readily predictable pattern.

I argue that the convenient shortcuts in thinking about language cannot be used unquestioningly any more. Thus, the distinction between 'speakers' and 'non-speakers' of a language is too easy. Likewise, the assumption that there is a set cost of learning a different language that is equal for all learners is wrong, as is the assumption that anybody can learn any other language to whatever level of fluency. Comparable research into the actual levels of fluency in foreign language use reached in Africa is lacking.

Dimmendaal (2004: 85) has called for capacity building of African linguists – certainly a call I would support. However, he limits himself to 'the area of descriptive and applied linguistics' – by which he essentially means 'training of some younger colleagues in the documentation of

poorly studied or undescribed languages'. Likewise, Lüpke (2019: 489) feels that linguistic research should be expanded to record and analyse an ever greater number of social interactions between speakers. She calls for a 'perspective that acknowledges people as agents in their sociocultural environment who exert choices and adapt to changing circumstances' – hardly a revolutionary new perspective. She calls for a 'dramatic increase in interdisciplinary linguistic research on language ecologies' (p 486).

In light of the material presented in this part of the thesis, this conventional research agenda seems too limited (although it would require considerable funding) and not well focused. It seems clear that no research agenda can afford to ignore language policy, language planning, engineering and language learning. Leaving these matters outside of research is disempowering, as it relegates speakers of African languages to a reserve-like status, outside the mainstream of a democratic debate.

I have demonstrated that rational choices in developing designed (African) languages for higher education are possible and unavoidable. But I do not have an answer as to which languages this would be and how it should be done in concrete cases – I cannot go beyond developing the reasoning and developing the context. Moving from there to implementation will require considerable research and the energies of educators, linguists and policy makers alike. Research into which languages would be seen as acceptable or which could serve most speakers of discerned languages as designed language is needed, research into language policy and effective policy implementation is likewise needed.

I have argued that current educational systems in many African countries are wasteful and need to be re-thought bottom-up, rather than top-down. How would it be possible to use existing resources in a more efficient way, leading both to curricula that are more appropriate for local situations and to higher academic achievement overall? The study has given 'proof of concept' that African languages will be essential for that – but that in itself is not sufficient. How to go about this in concrete situations? What can educational systems deliver in Africa, under different language regimes? Where does the 'language barrier' lie in concrete cases? My schema for ease of language learning is based on US experiences. In comparison with those US experiences, how easy is it for which African learners to acquire sufficient foreign language knowledge (or to be taught such knowledge through education)? Those are questions that could occupy the energies of linguists and social scientists for years to come and attempting to

answer them might be more productive than investing more and more resources in merely recording social interactions between speakers.
In general, the institutional position of languages in a position to be developed as designed languages needs to be improved and strengthened. Thus, in Europe, there exists an organisation such as EFNIL,[3] that brings together all national language academies. In Africa, the only similar national institution seems to be BAKITA[4] in Tanzania. At the African level, there is ACALAN,[5] but it is grossly under-resourced and not very effective in what it does. Much more research and dialogue is needed at the national level, also to map both the linguistic and cultural similarities and differences and to use them as the basis for making the difficult choices in language development as well as in decentralisation and democratisation that will be needed in order to achieve an accelerated development path that is based on the values of Africa's peoples.

7.3. The search for empowerment

In chapter 1.2, I pointed out that I am inspired by a decolonial vision that seeks to build Africa on the basis of African cultures and languages and is carried by civil society. It is a vision that wants to base itself on ideas of African empowerment. But which ideas are empowering – and which ones are not? In order to add a bit of detail to the general vision, let us first look for a moment at what, then, does *not* fit in that vision. Typically, what does *not* fit are all ideas that somehow depict Africa as essentially static and unchanging and that either treat it as a coherent whole (the pre-scientific myth or trope of 'Africa as a Country') or as infinitely fragmented (the 'Tower of Babel' myth, both discussed in chapter 1.7). All of them tend to deny the possibilities of African agency and the potential for conscious policy choices to have a positive effect. A few examples:

- There is the idea that Africa's woes are caused by prevailing climatic conditions. If that is so, then obviously Africans are doomed – they are the victims of their geographic location and have no or only limited agency themselves. An example of this is

[3] European Federation of National Institutions for Language (EFNIL), http://www.efnil.org/, accessed 4 March 2020.
[4] The National Kiswahili Council (BAKITA), https://bakita.go.tz/eng/welcome, accessed 4 March 2020.
[5] African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), https://acalan-au.org/index.php, accessed 4 March 2020.

the Cool-Water idea, used by Welzel (2013). He advances the idea that the moderate climes of Europe caused Europe's advance, but that sooner or later, by some sort of natural process, Europe's blessings will spread to the rest of the world. Adopting this idea leads to severely restricted scope for African agency.

- There is the idea that there is something inherently 'wrong' in Africans or in African culture, leaving likewise little scope for African agency. An example of this is the idea by Van der Veen (2014) that Africa's problems are caused by 'important African characteristics of its political, economic and social culture'.[6] These characteristics are peculiar to Africa, and can be seen as well in Latin America, but '(o)nly in the Latin American countries that nevertheless had a sizeable proportion of the Indian population'.[7] Like Welzel, Van der Veen sees few options for Africans, except to work diligently at becoming 'modernized'. Another example is the idea that for any number of reasons, Africa is afflicted by an endemic disease called patrimonialism or neopatrimonialism, explaining the endemic corruption on the continent – a disease for which there is no apparent cure.[8]
- There is the idea that Africa's woes are caused by plotting of ruthless neo-colonial exploiters. In a vulgar Marxist view, this leads to the conclusion that the African masses have little choice but to welcome capitalism as a necessary step in history's unavoidable march to socialism. Again, this restricts African agency.
- There is the view that Africa will be fine once it has modernized. This leaves little scope for African paths to development. Yet, such paths may be relevant, and not only for Africa. When Greta Thunberg was asked at the 2020 Davos summit what she would like to change, her simple answer was: 'everything'. And indeed, in paragraph 28 of the UN Agenda 2030 (UN 2015: 12) world leaders say: 'We commit to making fundamental changes in the way that our societies produce and consume goods and services.'

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[6] Page 425 of the Dutch original, my translation.

[7] My translation, page 426 of the Dutch original: "Alleen waar het aandeel van de indiaanse bevolking in de Latijns-Amerikaanse landen toch aanzienlijk was[, in de Andes en in Midden-Amerika, bestonden serieuze statelijke organisatieproblemen, die soms het beeld van een 'falende staat' opriepen.]" For a polite criticism, see Sefue (2004).

[8] See Mkandawire (2015) for a discussion and critique of such theories.

> Such fundamental changes are also necessary in order to avoid or mitigate climate change. The modernity theory basically holds that Africa needs to 'catch up' with the rest of the world (especially the Global North) and to 'modernize', in the sense of becoming more like the North. Clearly, if the modern world needs 'fundamental changes' in order to become sustainable, then this same modern world can no longer be held up as the ideal that African countries should strive for. However, the opposite is also not right: it is also not right to claim that something cannot work in Africa because it has proven to be unsustainable in the developed world.

In line with a Pan Africanist vision, then, Africans will have to make their own choices and in doing so, they will of course take elements from elsewhere, but to that they will add elements of their own. They should neither be advised to take up the Northern development model lock, stock and barrel nor to reject it outright.

In this study, I looked more closely at a number of other disempowering ideas, especially related to culture and language.

- In the culture area, I have argued in chapter 3.1 how various ideas about culture work to obstruct a view of both the constants and the dynamics of African cultures and cultural identities. These are concepts of culture as related to artefacts or products, or view culture as the way our ancestors lived, or only associate negative things with culture, such as its use as a marker to artificially mobilize primordialist sentiments. I have also shown how authors tend to assume that culture needs homogeneity and they then say that because in practice they do not see such homogeneity (with individuals having 'multiple' and 'shifting' identities), culture as a concept is outdated. In general, there is often a confusion between what describes the level of individuals and what describes the level of larger groups. All these obstructions work together to create the situation already described by Claude Ake in 1993: referring to the concept of ethnicity as 'phenomenally problematic' in Africa, where there is a 'tendency to problematize the people and their culture, an error that continues to push Africa deeper into confusion.'
- In chapter 1.5, I have criticized another but related very common set of ideas on Africa, the idea that social engineering has complete freedom to build 'nations' in Africa, no matter what the underlying cultural basis is. If culture is unimportant (either

because Africa forms a cultural whole or because Africa is infinitely fragmented or because socialism is anyway going to make all men brothers), then it is logical that the sacrosanctity of current nation states is the starting point of any further thinking.

- The assertion that Africa has more than 2,000 living languages is often repeated uncritically and leads to an unwillingness to engage with language issues. This is not made any easier by the fashionable ideas discussed in section 4.1.1 about 'languoids'. These ideas lead to a neglect of language planning and language policy, and to a focus on discerned languages or language as spoken by people, away from a discussion of how designed languages and policies favouring indigenous designed languages can play a role as inclusive enablers rather than as exclusive gate-keepers. Furthermore, Africans have been raised with the idea – proven to be false both by research and through practice – that the best way to teach a child a foreign language is by using it as medium of instruction from an early age.

Together, this forms an entangled web of sometimes contradictory ideas that are called up time and again and work together to deny African agency. Together, these ideas on development, on culture, on identity, on nation building and on language truly form what I would call a ***toxic cocktail of ideas*** that a decolonial vision is up against. Together, they 'explain' Africa's misery and turn Africa into a passive recipient, in need of foreign intervention – essentially still following the colonial model. Let's recap: Africa's underdevelopment is explained either by its geographical location, or by faults in its culture. Those that dare to think about culture usually give it a negative connotation in connection with Africa. The only way out is through a modernization (or through socialism) that is seen as coming from outside of the continent. The continent is anyway seen as a 'tabula rasa', a blank sheet, ready to receive foreign-based social engineering recipes.

In chapters 1.2 and 1.5 I pointed to criticisms of the artificial nation states that were formed in Africa and to the related problem of endemic corruption, mismanagement and, in short, 'failed states'. The 'toxic cocktail' of ideas makes it impossible to contemplate a reconfiguration of some of Africa's more desperate nation states – as suggested by African thinkers such as Adebajo (2010) or, at the sub-national level in Nigeria, by Adejumobi (2004). For a critique of this complex of ideas, see also Prah (2004).

In the areas of language and education, the toxic cocktail also works in a way that is entirely disempowering. Linguistic categories that make

the continent look infinitely fragmented are imposed on it. The distinction between discerned and designed languages is not made and as a consequence, the importance of language policy is denied or simply ignored altogether. This means that a debate on using African languages in higher education is relegated to the fringes and does not take centre stage. The colonial system that equates foreign-language knowledge with social and economic progress is reproduced, leading to a reproduction of the rift between the elites and the masses of the population and hindering the development of cultural autonomy, a development anyway not well understood because of ideas of culture that see culture as something old-fashioned at best, negative at worst.

To give an example of ideas which I think *are* empowering, let me point to the results of the 'Tracking Development' project (Vlasblom, 2013). This study compared four Asian and four African countries and tried to explain the difference in development between the two sets of countries. The main finding was that in Africa, in contrast to Asia, investment in small-scale agriculture has been neglected. This finding, I think, *is* empowering, because it points the way to promising policy options that African countries can pursue. There is a link with language and education as well: if there is a dichotomy between the elite and the masses and if education is moulded on the colonial approach, then there is likely to be less attention to investment in agriculture, compared to when the elite also speak the language of the masses and when education is conceived in a bottom-up manner. Increasing productivity in agriculture requires educated farmers who have a good understanding both of agricultural science and who have the required business and marketing skills. The traditional idea that those who were without education could make a living by subsistence farming is flawed, because it stands in the way of agricultural, and thus of general development in Africa.

Developing a decolonial and empowering perspective, then, involves much more than pious statements and it cannot afford to ignore the language issue. Throughout this study, I have shied away from using hard to understand concepts such as 'epistemic oppression',[9] but I do think there is a case to be made for it. Attacking epistemic oppression, though, can only be done by looking at what it is composed of: a whole amalgam of partly scientific and partly pre-scientific theories, ideas, notions and myths that work together to form this toxic blend of ideas

[9] Epistemology is the philosophical field that deals with the theory of knowledge and how it is produced. Epistemic oppression as a term was highlighted by Dotson (2014) and refers to persistent exclusion, hindering contributions to knowledge production.

that needs to be unpacked and re-examined.[10] In this work, I hope to have provided at least some ammunition for that.
Fortunately, as I have shown, trends in enrolment are likely to push education systems to the limits of what they can achieve in terms of foreign-language teaching and will lead to increased pressure to switch to African languages, at least in parts of the higher education systems. Such a switch is entirely doable, as I hope to have demonstrated in the case studies of chapter six. It will contribute tremendously to the formation of new cultural autonomies.

7.4. Concluding remarks: towards regaining cultural autonomy

Vansina (1990: 259) sees autonomy, taken as self-determination, as key to the possibility of a cultural tradition to succeed. Wursten (2019: 31) makes a further point: democracy can only work if citizens perceive a measure of control and autonomy – the way they do this, is culturally determined. In chapter three, I have given evidence of the fact that Africa has a rich, but not an endless cultural diversity. In chapter five, I have pointed out that in the key area of higher education, it is possible to come to inclusive and rational choices for designed languages. In chapter 6.6.3 I argue that even though the link between culture and language is not strictly one on one and that it is to a certain extent malleable, there is not a complete freedom there. There are some linkages between culture and language that have a strong historical basis; building on these linkages can and does form elements for the emergence of new African cultural traditions, as predicted by Vansina. If we accept that cultural autonomy is a precondition to development, then we should at least devote some thoughts to what such a cultural autonomy would entail.
There is a rich literature on cultural autonomy, looking for example at the nation states in Eastern Europe or at the rights of minority cultures in North America.[11] It is impossible to treat this here, but it is possible to make a few general observations.
First of all, it is good to point out that in the literature, a distinction is frequently made between *regional* autonomy – that is territorially-based – and *cultural* autonomy, that is not (necessarily) territorial. Nimni (2007) has provided an example of how a model that allows for cultural, rather than regional autonomy could be implemented. This is relevant

[10] For an insightful discussion, see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020.
[11] For a useful historical overview see for example Roach (2004).

to bear in mind, because in Africa, territorial decentralisation is often seen as one way of combating bad governance issues on the continent. The idea is that by bringing the government closer to 'the people', it will also become more accountable. If territorial decentralisation roughly parallels ethnic or cultural lines (as is the case for example in Ethiopia and in Kenya), then indeed forms of territorial autonomy could also lead to forms of cultural autonomy. Of course, if (as in Kenya) the official language remains a colonial language, the dichotomy between the elite and the masses may remain.

To get an idea of what cultural autonomy would entail, it is good to look at the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a non-binding resolution adopted with an overwhelming majority by the UN General Assembly in 2007. The term indigenous peoples is not unambiguous, but Wikipedia cites a preliminary UN Working Group definition of 1982 that holds that

> 'Indigenous communities, peoples, and nations are those that, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society (…)'[12]

This definition is generally held not to apply to Africa, with the exception of small and distinct minorities such as the Khoisan peoples of Southern Africa or the Pygmies of Congo. However, it would be strange if such minorities would be given rights that are denied larger groups or majorities – the assumption is, in fact, that majorities already enjoy such rights and have denied them others – a situation that may not be applicable in many African countries.

Indigenous peoples, according to the declaration, have 'the right to self-determination'. 'By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.' (Article 3). According to Article 4, they 'have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.' Under Article 13, they have the right to use and develop their own languages. Article 14 gives them 'the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.' 2019 was the UN-sponsored 'International Year of Indigenous Languages'. One of the conclusions from that year was: 'The protection, support and promotion of linguistic

[12] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_peoples accessed 6 March 2020.

diversity and multilingualism is crucial for peace, development, good governance and reconciliation in our societies, as well as for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals'.[13]

Do African ethnolinguistic groups currently have the rights indigenous groups should have? Except perhaps for largely homogeneous countries such as Botswana or Madagascar and except perhaps for Ethiopia, they clearly do not. What is more, it is not even so obvious what larger cultural units exist, even though denying their existence is clearly impossible. Can they get such rights in future? Yes they can – but for that, conscious choices and conscious policies will be needed, based on knowledge that has a decolonial starting point.

[13] https://en.iyil2019.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/strategic-outcome-document_iyil2019_eng.pdf, annex page 7. Note that UNESCO is also planning a 'decade on indigenous languages', 2022 – 2032.

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Appendices

Appendix – Chapter 3.4: Hierarchical clusters and dendrogram[1]

Countries, number of ethnolinguistic groups, cluster membership

Country	Country code	Number of groups	Cluster number(s)	Largest number of groups in one cluster:
Algeria	DZ	2	3b	2
Bénin	BJ	7	8c, 24a, 32	4
Botswana	BW	9	13	9
Burkina Faso	BF	3	17a	3
Burundi	BI	1	1a	1
Cameroon	CM	4	2c	4
Cape Verde	CV	1	2a	1
Côte d'Ivoire	CI	5	8b, 24b	4
Egypt	EG	1	3b	1
Eswatini	SZ	1	6a	1
Ghana	GH	5	25b, 30a	4
Guinea	GN	5	11a, 20b, 20d	2
Kenya	KE	11	16a, 26, 28, 31	5
Lesotho	LS	7	16b	7
Liberia	LR	12	9	12
Madagascar	MG	6	14a	6
Malawi	MW	7	15a, 20a	5
Mali	ML	7	17b, 25a, 27	4
Mauritius	MU	4	22	4
Morocco	MA	2	3b	2
Mozambique	MZ	10	3a, 5b, 18a, 35	4
Namibia	NA	5	18c	5
Niger	NE	4	21a	4
Nigeria	NG	6	6b, 11b, 33b	4
São Tomé and Principé	ST	1	5c	1

[1] This information has also been published in Pinxteren, Bert van (2020a).

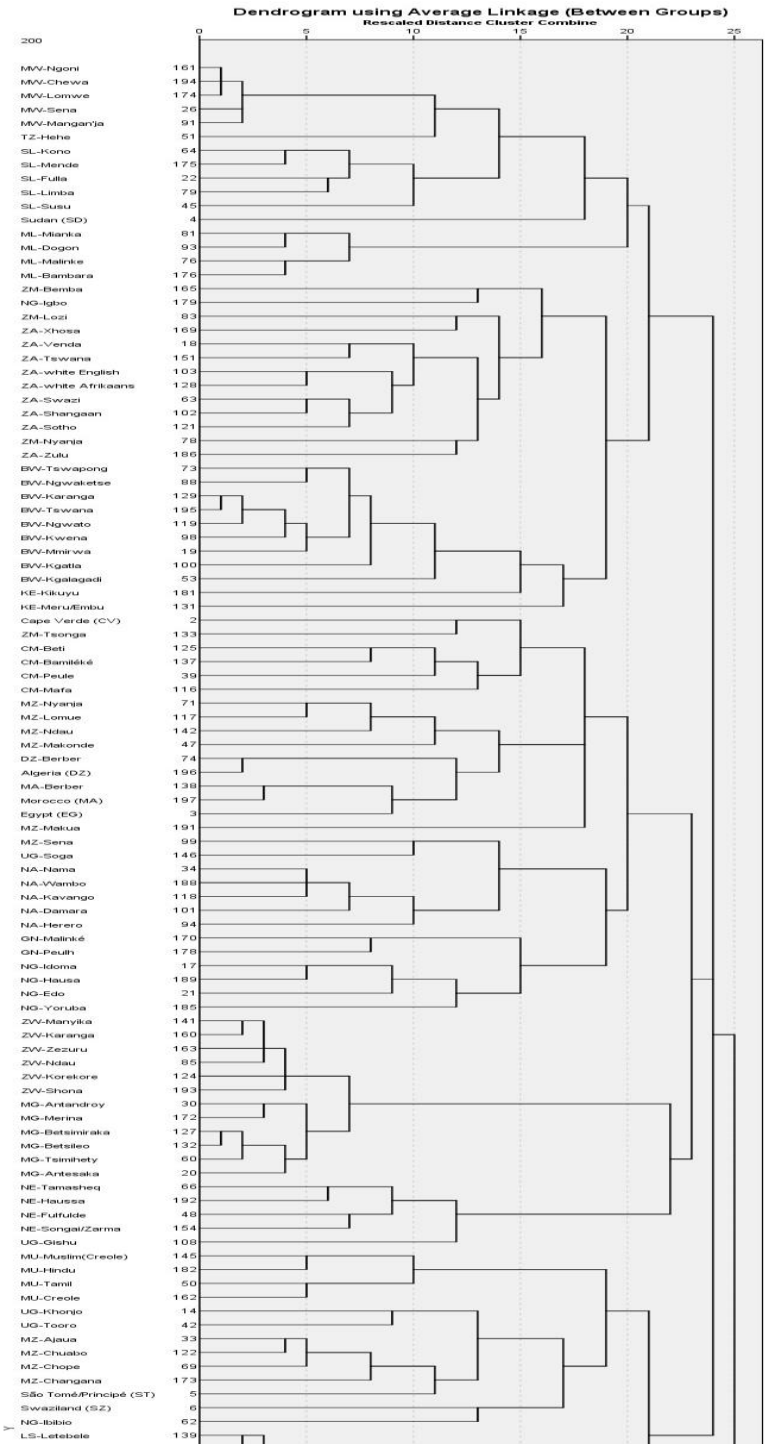
Senegal	SN	3	20c	3
Sierra Leone	SL	6	15c, 20c	5
South Africa	ZA	13	7a, 12b, 12d	8
Sudan	SD	1	4	1
Tanzania	TZ	14	1b, 10a, 15b, 19b,	6
Togo	TG	8	8a, 8c, 24a	4
Tunisia	TN	1	7b	1
Uganda	UG	14	1a, 1c, 5a, 10b, 18b,	3
Zambia	ZM	4	2b, 12a, 12c, 33a	1
Zimbabwe	ZW	8	14b, 16c, 29a	6

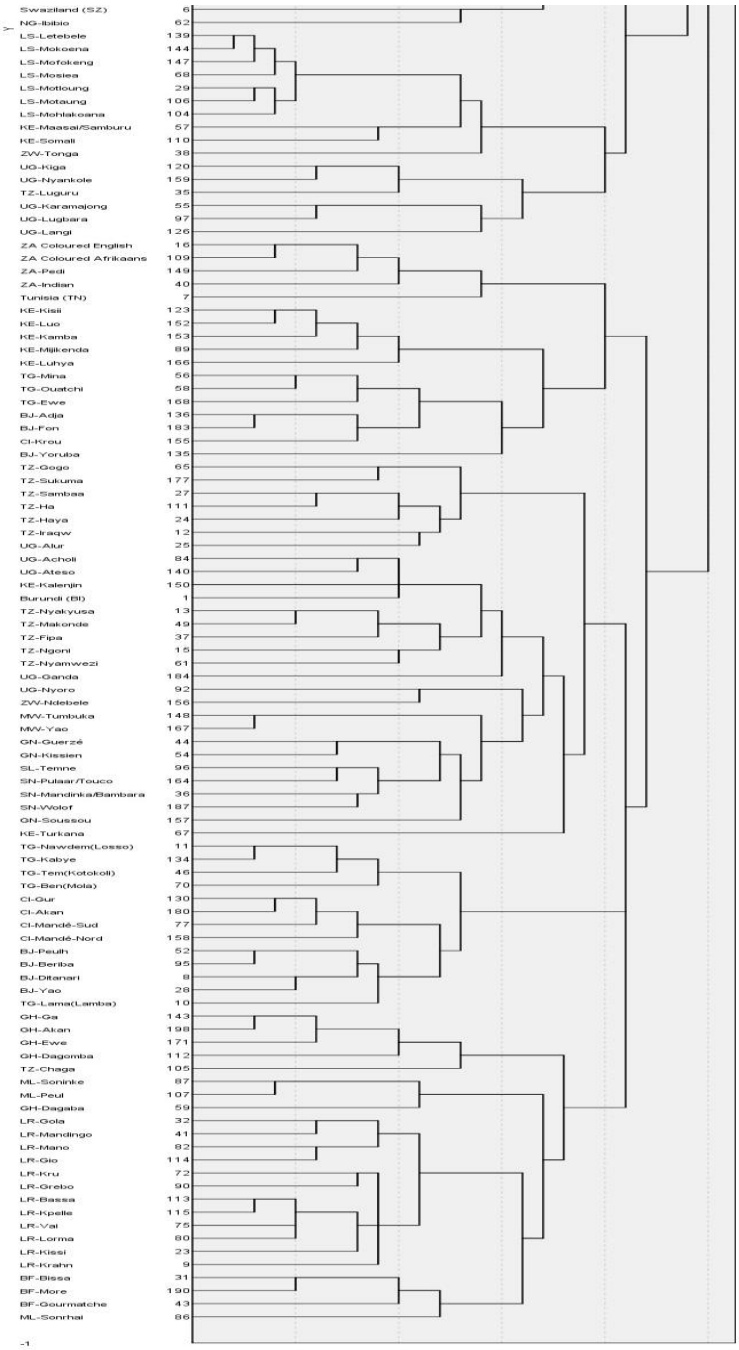
Ethnolinguistic group clusters

Cluster	**Subcluster**	**Groups**
1	1a	**Burundi;** Kenya, Kalenjin; Uganda: Acholi, Ateso
	1b	Tanzania: Fipa, Makonde, Ngoni, Nyakyusa, Nyamwezi
	1c	Uganda: Ganda
2	**2a**	**Cape Verde**
	2b	Zambia: Tsonga
	2c	**Cameroon**: Bamiléké, Beti, Mafa, Peule
3	3a	Mozambique: Lomue, Ndau, Makonde, Nyanya
	3b	**Algeria**, Algeria-Berber; **Egypt; Morocco**, Morocco-Berber
4		**Sudan**
5	5a	Uganda: Khonjo, Tooro
	5b	Mozambique: Ajaua, Chuabo, Chope, Changana
	5c	**São Tomé/Principé**
6	**6a**	**Eswatini**
	6b	Nigeria: Ibibio
7	7a	South Africa: "Coloured" Afrikaans, "Coloured" English, Indian, Pedi
	7b	**Tunisia**
8	8a	Togo: Ben (Mola), Kabye, Nawdem (Losso), Tem
	8b	Côte d'Ivoire: Akan, Gur, Mandé-Sud, Mandé-Nord
	8c	Benin: Beriba, Ditanari, Peulh, Yao; Togo: Lama
9		**Liberia:** Bassa, Gio, Gola, Grebo, Krahn, Kissi, Kpelle, Kru, Lorma, Mandingo, Mano, Vai
10	10a	Tanzania: Gogo, Ha, Haya, Iraqw, Sambaa, Sukuma
	10b	Uganda: Alur

11	11a	Guinea: Malinké, Peulh
	11b	Nigeria: Edo, Hausa, Idoma, Yoruba
12	12a	Zambia: Lozi
	12b	South Africa: Shangaan, Sotho, Swazi, Tswana, Venda, "White" Afrikaans, "White" English, Xhosa
	12c	Zambia: Nyanja
	12d	South Africa: Zulu
13		**Botswana:** Karanga, Kgalagadi, Kgatla, Kwena, Mmirwa, Ngwaketse, Ngwato, Tswana, Tswapong
14	**14a**	**Madagascar:** Antandroy, Antesaka, Betsileo, Betsimaraka, Merina, Tsimihety
	14b	Zimbabwe: Karanga, Korekore, Manyika, Ndau, Shona, Zezuru
15	15a	Malawi: Chewa, Lomwe, Mangan'ja, Ngoni, Sena
	15b	Tanzania: Hehe
	15c	Sierra Leone: Fulla, Limba, Kono, Mende, Susu
16	16a	Kenya: Maasai/Samburu, Somali
	16b	**Lesotho:** Letebele, Mofokeng, Mohlakoana, Mokoena, Mosiea, Motaung, Motloung
	16c	Zimbabwe: Tonga
17	**17a**	**Burkina Faso**: Bissa, Gourmatche, More
	17b	Mali: Sonrhai
18	18a	Mozambique: Sena
	18b	Uganda: Soga
	18c	**Namibia:** Damara, Herero, Kavango, Nama, Wambo
19	19a	Uganda: Kiga, Nyankole
	19b	Tanzania: Luguru
20	20a	Malawi: Tumbuka, Yao
	20b	Guinea: Guerzé, Kissien
	20c	**Senegal:** Mandinka/Bambara, Pulaar/Toucouleur, Wolof; Sierra Leone: Temne
	20d	Guinea: Soussou
21	**21a**	**Niger:** Fulfulde, Haussa, Songai/Zarma, Tamasheq
	21b	Uganda: Gishu
22		**Mauritius:** Creole, Hindu, Muslim(Creole), Tamil
23		Uganda: Karamajong, Langi, Lugbara
24	24a	Benin: Adja, Fon; Togo: Ewe, Mina, Ouatchi
	24b	Côte d'Ivoire: Krou

25	25a	Mali: Peul, Soninke
	25b	Ghana: Dagaba
26		Kenya: Turkana
27		Mali: Bambara, Dogon, Malinke, Mianka
28		Kenya: Kamba, Kisii, Luo, Luhya, Mijikenda
29	29a	Zimbabwe: Ndebele
	29b	Uganda: Nyoro
30	30a	Ghana: Akan, Dagomba, Ewe, Ga
	30b	Tanzania: Chaga
31		Kenya: Meru/Embu
32		Benin: Yoruba
33	33a	Zambia: Bemba
	33b	Nigeria: Igbo
34		Kenya: Kikuyu
35		Mozambique: Makua


Dendrogram using Average Linkage (Between Groups)
Rescaled Distance Cluster Combine
0
5
10
15
20
25
200
MW-Ngoni 161
MW-Chewa 194
MW-Lomwe 174
MW-Sena 26
MW-Mangan'ja 91
TZ-Hehe 51
SL-Kono 64
SL-Mende 175
SL-Fulla 22
SL-Limba 79
SL-Susu 45
Sudan (SD) 4
ML-Mianka 81
ML-Dogon 93
ML-Malinke 76
ML-Bambara 176
ZM-Bemba 165
NG-Igbo 179
ZM-Lozi 83
ZA-Xhosa 169
ZA-Venda 18
ZA-Tswana 151
ZA-white English 103
ZA-white Afrikaans 128
ZA-Swazi 63
ZA-Shangaan 102
ZA-Sotho 121
ZM-Nyanja 78
ZA-Zulu 186
BW-Tswapong 73
BW-Ngwaketse 88
BW-Karanga 129
BW-Tswana 195
BW-Ngwato 119
BW-Kwena 98
BW-Mmirwa 19
BW-Kgatla 100
BW-Kgalagadi 53
KE-Kikuyu 181
KE-Meru/Embu 131
Cape Verde (CV) 2
ZM-Tsonga 133
CM-Beti 125
CM-Bamiléké 137
CM-Peule 39
CM-Mafa 116
MZ-Nyanja 71
MZ-Lomue 117
MZ-Ndau 142
MZ-Makonde 47
DZ-Berber 74
Algeria (DZ) 196
MA-Berber 138
Morocco (MA) 197
Egypt (EG) 3
MZ-Makua 191
MZ-Sena 99
UG-Soga 146
NA-Nama 34
NA-Wambo 188
NA-Kavango 118
NA-Damara 101
NA-Herero 94
GN-Malinké 170
GN-Peuln 178
NG-Idoma 17
NG-Hausa 189
NG-Edo 21
NG-Yoruba 185
ZW-Manyika 141
ZW-Karanga 160
ZW-Zezuru 163
ZW-Ndau 85
ZW-Korekore 124
ZW-Shona 193
MG-Antandroy 30
MG-Merina 172
MG-Betsimiraka 127
MG-Betsileo 132
MG-Tsimihety 60
MG-Antesaka 20
NE-Tamasheq 66
NE-Haussa 192
NE-Fulfulde 48
NE-Songai/Zarma 154
UG-Gishu 108
MU-Muslim(Creole) 145
MU-Hindu 182
MU-Tamil 50
MU-Creole 162
UG-Khonjo 14
UG-Tooro 42
MZ-Ajaua 33
MZ-Chuabo 122
MZ-Chope 69
MZ-Changana 173
São Tomé/Principé (ST) 5
Swaziland (SZ) 6
NG-Ibibio 62
LS-Letebele 139


Swaziland (SZ) 6
NG-Ibibio 62
LS-Letebele 139
LS-Mokoena 144
LS-Mofokeng 147
LS-Mosiea 68
LS-Motloung 29
LS-Motaung 106
LS-Mohlakoana 104
KE-Maasai/Samburu 57
KE-Somali 110
ZW-Tonga 38
UG-Kiga 120
UG-Nyankole 159
TZ-Luguru 35
UG-Karamajong 55
UG-Lugbara 97
UG-Langi 126
ZA Coloured English 16
ZA Coloured Afrikaans 109
ZA-Pedi 149
ZA-Indian 40
Tunisia (TN) 7
KE-Kisii 123
KE-Luo 152
KE-Kamba 153
KE-Mijikenda 89
KE-Luhya 166
TG-Mina 56
TG-Ouatchi 58
TG-Ewe 168
BJ-Adja 136
BJ-Fon 183
CI-Krou 155
BJ-Yoruba 135
TZ-Gogo 65
TZ-Sukuma 177
TZ-Sambaa 27
TZ-Ha 111
TZ-Haya 24
TZ-Iraqw 12
UG-Alur 25
UG-Acholi 84
UG-Ateso 140
KE-Kalenjin 150
Burundi (BI) 1
TZ-Nyakyusa 13
TZ-Makonde 49
TZ-Fipa 37
TZ-Ngoni 15
TZ-Nyamwezi 61
UG-Ganda 184
UG-Nyoro 92
ZW-Ndebele 156
MW-Tumbuka 148
MW-Yao 167
GN-Guerzé 44
GN-Kissien 54
SL-Temne 96
SN-Pulaar/Touco 164
SN-Mandinka/Bambara 36
SN-Wolof 187
GN-Soussou 157
KE-Turkana 67
TG-Nawdem(Losso) 11
TG-Kabye 134
TG-Tem(Kotokoli) 46
TG-Ben(Mola) 70
CI-Gur 130
CI-Akan 180
CI-Mandé-Sud 77
CI-Mandé-Nord 158
BJ-Peulh 52
BJ-Berba 95
BJ-Ditanari 8
BJ-Yao 28
TG-Lama(Lamba) 10
GH-Ga 143
GH-Akan 198
GH-Ewe 171
GH-Dagomba 112
TZ-Chaga 105
ML-Soninke 87
ML-Peul 107
GH-Dagaba 59
LR-Gola 32
LR-Mandingo 41
LR-Mano 82
LR-Gio 114
LR-Kru 72
LR-Grebo 90
LR-Bassa 113
LR-Kpelle 115
LR-Vai 75
LR-Lorma 80
LR-Kissi 23
LR-Krahn 9
BF-Bissa 31
BF-More 190
BF-Gourmatche 43
ML-Sonrhai 86
-1

Appendix – Chapter 3.5 - a: scores per country and per ethnolinguistic group

The data for Ethiopia and Rwanda are taken from the analysis of the World Values Survey data.

Country/ethnolinguistic group	'Fix vs Flex'	IVR	IDV	PDI
Algeria	96	30	65	61
Algeria-Berber	96	11	69	65
Benin	72	33	96	86
Benin-Adja	79	43	78	88
Benin-Beriba	77	31	87	74
Benin-Ditanari	77	4	88	74
Benin-Fon	78	56	95	84
Benin-Peulh	78	12	88	78
Benin-Yao	82	4	88	70
Benin-Yoruba	84	33	93	76
Botswana	51	22	65	71
Botswana-Karanga	52	15	68	72
Botswana-Kgalagadi	96	-4	60	68
Botswana-Kgatla	47	30	59	71
Botswana-Khurutshe	72	14	73	75
Botswana-Kwena	77	13	72	73
Botswana-Mmirwa	45	18	70	77
Botswana-Morolong	95	17	73	69
Botswana-Ngwaketse	73	11	58	66
Botswana-Ngwato	36	15	62	72
Botswana-Sarwa	96	-16	57	63
Botswana-Tswana	49	28	66	71
Botswana-Tswapong	44	9	59	73
Burkina Faso	79	20	79	69
Burkina Faso -Fulfulde	76	48	68	60
Burkina Faso-Bissa	51	5	77	74
Burkina Faso-Gourmatche	71	11	56	73
Burkina Faso-Gourounsi	71	40	95	85
Burkina Faso-Marka	74	2	95	70
Burkina Faso-More	78	11	75	67
Burundi	106	9	93	76
Cameroon	85	52	70	68

Country/ethnolinguistic group	'Fix vs Flex'	IVR	IDV	PDI
Cameroon-Bamiléké	77	53	76	72
Cameroon-Bassa	77	41	72	70
Cameroon-Beti	84	71	72	64
Cameroon-Kapsiki	100	59	57	50
Cameroon-Mafa	96	18	69	71
Cameroon-Peule	120	42	95	61
Cape Verde	51	37	59	61
Côte d'Ivoire	82	38	78	68
CdI-Akan	80	25	94	67
CdI-Gur	73	10	78	67
CdI-Krou	73	38	69	76
CdI-Mandé-Nord	79	5	79	67
CdI-Mandé-Sud	72	19	91	68
Egypt	98	6	65	63
Ethiopia	60	37	64	
Ethiopia-Amharic	63	49	62	
Ethiopia-Gurage	73	49	55	
Ethiopia-Oromo	58	50	68	
Ethiopia-Sidama	56	30	58	
Ethiopia-Tigrinya	69	52	72	
Ghana	106	72	87	89
Ghana-Akan	108	84	89	90
Ghana-Dagaba	101	58	86	74
Ghana-Dagomba	98	39	84	86
Ghana-Ewe	114	79	94	70
Ghana-Frafra	91	37	71	77
Ghana-Ga	100	77	90	86
Ghana-Gonja	75	44	82	86
Ghana-Kusaal	77	72	85	65
Guinea	73	39	94	75
Guinea-Guerzé	96	55	86	78
Guinea-Kissien	92	49	75	69
Guinea-Malinké	73	20	84	70
Guinea-Peulh	84	15	75	89
Guinea-Soussou	50	15	82	86
Kenya	80	29	67	69
Kenya-Kalenjin	75	37	94	71

Country/ethnolinguistic group	'Fix vs Flex'	IVR	IDV	PDI
Kenya-Kamba	83	29	60	72
Kenya-Kikuyu	51	29	70	70
Kenya-Kisii	74	60	67	77
Kenya-Luhya	76	65	66	71
Kenya-Luo	81	37	67	78
Kenya-Maasai/Samburu	71	40	66	71
Kenya-Meru/Embu	67	11	53	68
Kenya-Mijikenda	50	20	48	74
Kenya-Somali	108	29	64	60
Kenya-Turkana	78	14	64	65
Lesotho	94	-1	58	69
Lesotho-Letebele	82	0	56	72
Lesotho-Mofokeng	77	-4	60	67
Lesotho-Mohlakoana	116	-11	59	70
Lesotho-Mokoena	77	12	55	70
Lesotho-Mosiea	74	-7	59	63
Lesotho-Motaung	75	12	51	72
Lesotho-Motloung	107	-20	55	68
Liberia	73	31	78	87
Liberia-Bassa	96	34	75	76
Liberia-Belle	40	37	67	87
Liberia-Gbandi	51	38	96	91
Liberia-Gio	71	36	78	87
Liberia-Gola	91	42	83	88
Liberia-Grebo	46	63	91	88
Liberia-Kissi	66	21	60	87
Liberia-Kpelle	80	22	91	87
Liberia-Krahn	49	48	70	85
Liberia-Kru	77	61	74	87
Liberia-Lorma	48	43	96	88
Liberia-Mandingo	72	43	92	87
Liberia-Mano	71	29	82	87
Liberia-Vai	78	53	76	91
Malagasy	42	30	58	78
Malawi	45	41	65	72
Malawi-Chewa	35	51	62	71
Malawi-Lomwe	48	56	64	71

Country/ethnolinguistic group	'Fix vs Flex'	IVR	IDV	PDI
Malawi-Mangan'ja	77	53	70	70
Malawi-Ngoni	50	32	61	75
Malawi-Sena	44	56	62	66
Malawi-Tumbuka	50	40	76	65
Malawi-Yao	50	69	64	73
Mali	82	29	92	87
Mali-Bambara	83	48	82	87
Mali-Bozo	75	60	76	88
Mali-Dogon	72	29	94	87
Mali-Malinke	81	32	88	88
Mali-Mianka	81	12	74	85
Mali-Peul	75	29	96	87
Mali-Senufo	107	31	95	86
Mali-Soninke	78	36	84	88
Mali-Sonrhai	71	11	54	88
Mauritius	108	44	76	73
Mauritius-Creole	110	20	93	68
Mauritius-Hindu	111	24	77	76
Mauritius-Muslim(Creole)	111	30	76	89
Mauritius-Tamil	122	40	76	78
Morocco	75	0	66	62
Morocco-Berber	113	-15	60	55
Mozambique	79	22	51	63
Mozambique-Ajaua	21	-10	54	46
Mozambique-Bitonga	105	52	61	53
Mozambique-Changana	91	31	61	54
Mozambique-Chope	73	49	63	52
Mozambique-Chuabo	79	-3	38	52
Mozambique-Lomue	65	0	34	49
Mozambique-Makonde	100	-2	60	55
Mozambique-Makua	73	15	58	51
Mozambique-Ndau	73	-8	53	51
Mozambique-Nyanja	66	-22	27	48
Mozambique-Sena	82	-4	49	50
Namibia	76	-2	76	74
Namibia-Damara	74	8	70	68
Namibia-Herero	100	-8	77	72

Country/ethnolinguistic group	'Fix vs Flex'	IVR	IDV	PDI
Namibia-Kavango	70	-8	96	75
Namibia-Nama	77	-2	74	65
Namibia-Wambo	78	-4	77	76
Niger	73	2	93	72
Niger-Fulfulde	71	11	72	68
Niger-Haussa	71	7	92	75
Niger-Kanuri	83	-7	72	76
Niger-Songai/Zarma	78	-3	88	76
Niger-Tamasheq	98	-12	74	78
Nigeria	90	59	78	89
Nigeria-Edo	71	47	71	88
Nigeria-Efik	93	62	71	63
Nigeria-Hausa	97	59	71	87
Nigeria-Ibibio	74	66	77	76
Nigeria-Idoma	98	62	73	75
Nigeria-Igbo	97	67	94	89
Nigeria-Ijaw	99	55	59	71
Nigeria-Nupe	135	23	78	101
Nigeria-Urhobo	78	56	92	89
Nigeria-Yoruba	99	67	86	88
Rwanda	84	46	66	87
São Tomé and Principé	82	61	68	60
Senegal	73	37	69	69
Senegal-Diola	79	19	73	73
Senegal-Mandinka/Bambara	75	44	61	88
Senegal-Pulaar/Toucouleur	76	26	69	71
Senegal-Wolof	70	47	69	69
Sierra Leone	104	62	94	68
Sierra Leone-Fulla	99	47	88	63
Sierra Leone-Kono	74	21	72	46
Sierra Leone-Limba	112	48	84	75
Sierra Leone-Mende	96	60	97	61
Sierra Leone-Susu	121	87	74	71
Sierra Leone-Temne	113	70	95	76
South Africa	78	34	56	86
South Africa Coloured-Afr	74	34	49	87
South Africa Coloured-English	82	60	42	87

Country/ethnolinguistic group	'Fix vs Flex'	IVR	IDV	PDI
South Africa-Black	75	38	58	86
South Africa-Indian	78	68	56	89
South Africa-Pedi	77	29	49	88
South Africa-Shangaan	83	39	60	87
South Africa-Sotho	72	33	64	88
South Africa-Swazi	68	34	53	89
South Africa-Tswana	51	29	55	78
South Africa-Venda	51	37	60	87
South Africa-white-Afrikaans	72	73	53	88
South Africa-white-English	52	88	47	89
South Africa-Xhosa	79	40	59	78
South Africa-Zulu	74	37	56	74
Eswatini	77	29	71	72
Tanzania	107	35	73	75
Tanzania_Zigua	98	20	67	76
Tanzania-Chaga	102	24	74	85
Tanzania-Fipa	72	26	95	72
Tanzania-Gogo	135	6	62	75
Tanzania-Ha	115	12	69	86
Tanzania-Haya	95	54	78	73
Tanzania-Hehe	100	-5	63	68
Tanzania-Iraqw	77	54	79	77
Tanzania-Luguru	144	-29	62	60
Tanzania-Makonde	109	25	75	84
Tanzania-Mwera	121	6	95	86
Tanzania-Ngoni	92	2	77	74
Tanzania-Nyakyusa	95	38	94	76
Tanzania-Nyamwezi	102	10	59	77
Tanzania-Nyiha	91	17	92	74
Tanzania-Pare	109	53	71	77
Tanzania-Sambaa	121	17	77	72
Tanzania-Sukuma	123	29	71	87
Togo	84	37	82	72
Togo-Adja	66	47	82	67
Togo-Ben(Mola)	75	-5	88	68
Togo-Ewe	74	73	91	73
Togo-Ife(Ana)	80	68	82	75

Country/ethnolinguistic group	'Fix vs Flex'	IVR	IDV	PDI
Togo-Ilposso	74	59	95	68
Togo-Kabye	72	38	86	68
Togo-Lama(Lamba)	82	26	82	69
Togo-Mina	66	68	93	87
Togo-Nawdem(Losso)	71	35	83	67
Togo-Ouatchi	74	53	93	86
Togo-Tem(Kotokoli)	79	35	91	68
Tunisia	51	68	63	88
Uganda	74	27	70	66
Uganda-Acholi	69	30	74	68
Uganda-Alur	97	-5	72	65
Uganda-Ateso	49	11	91	67
Uganda-Ganda	68	37	72	66
Uganda-Gishu	83	17	73	72
Uganda-Karamajong	97	-5	58	61
Uganda-Khonjo	97	11	64	64
Uganda-Kiga	131	-9	57	69
Uganda-Langi	73	23	75	71
Uganda-Lugbara	84	-3	73	65
Uganda-Nyankole	103	0	62	71
Uganda-Nyoro	73	5	93	63
Uganda-Soga	71	47	73	62
Uganda-Tooro	94	11	64	70
Zambia	104	32	65	75
Zambia-Bemba	104	36	68	71
Zambia-Kaonde	97	39	66	78
Zambia-Lala	126	41	54	71
Zambia-Lozi	104	29	66	85
Zambia-Namwanga	124	83	66	76
Zambia-Ngoni	78	14	52	88
Zambia-Nyanja	101	35	56	89
Zambia-Tsonga	103	39	66	75
Zimbabwe	101	37	77	72
Zimbabwe-Ndebele	93	28	79	71
Zimbabwe-Shona	102	29	76	73
Zimbabwe-Tonga	107	-1	71	64

Appendix - Chapter 3.5 - b: technical information on the analysis

For the analysis, the latent variable (the Hofstede/Minkov dimension) is taken as a given and variables in the new data set are sought that correlate in larger or smaller measure with these dimensions. They are then given different weights (somewhat comparable to factor analysis), with a view to maximising the correlation.
Variables may correlate with a dimension in an imperfect way: it could be that, for example, lower values are structurally too low or too high. In order to (partly) compensate for that, it is possible to assign different weighing factors to different parts of the scale at the variable level. In addition, it is possible that the scale that results from combining the constituent variables shows a similar imperfection that can be (partly) compensated by assigning different weighing factors to different parts of the scale. These weights are given below.
However, before any of this can be done, it is important to first get a data set with as large a number of overlapping countries or groups as possible. For the Afrobarometer data and the published Hofstede/Minkov data, that is not directly possible: the number of overlapping countries is not more than a handful, and that only for the dimension of IVR. Therefore, an indirect approach was necessary, using the World Values Survey as intermediary step. World Values Survey data are appropriate, because there are between 31 and 47 counties for which both World Values Survey data and Hofstede/Minkov scores are available.
This led to a four step – approach:

1) replicating the Hofstede/Minkov dimensions in the WVS data for overlapping countries;[1]
2) using this replication for calculating scores for countries and ethnolinguistic groups for which no Hofstede/Minkov dimension data are available yet;
3) replicating this information in the Afrobarometer data for overlapping countries and groups; and lastly,
4) using this replication for calculating scores for new countries and ethnolinguistic groups.

For the dimensions of PDI, MAS, UAI and IVR, I used as starting point the scores as normalized to a range between zero and 100 as published on the website of Geert Hofstede.[2] For IDV and Fixed versus Flexible (LTO), the latest data are based on a new study done by Minkov et al in 54 countries. I used the factor scores as published in Minkov et al (2017) and (2018a).

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[1] Compared to Hofstede/Minkov, I have reversed the scores for IDV and Fix-Flex (LTO), making for better scale alignment (i.e. extreme scores all oriented towards the same end of the scale).
[2] http://geerthofstede.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/6-dimensions-for-website-2015-12-08-0-100.xls retrieved 13 February 2018

A detailed description of steps 1 and 2 is available from the author, but it is basically the same as that followed for steps 3 and 4, detailed below. In these steps, it turned out to be possible to correlate four out of the six Hofstede/Minkov dimensions to data from WVS, at correlations *r* of between .87 and .90, all with p<0.001. These were the dimensions of Fixed versus Flexible (LTO), IVR, IDV and PDI. Unfortunately, it was not possible to establish clear correlations between WVS data and the MAS and UAI dimensions. Step three led to information on between 29 and 41 countries or ethnolinguistic groups that are included both in the WVS data and in Afrobarometer round 6 data.
In order to distinguish ethnolinguistic groups the same method was used as that employed in the previous section.

Fixed versus Flexible (or LTO)

There are 41 countries and ethnolinguistic groups that are both in the WVS and in the Afrobarometer survey with sufficient sample sizes.
It turned out to be possible to construct a scale for this dimension based on ten Afrobarometer questions:

- Q4b. Your present living conditions
- Q10a. How often felt unsafe walking in neighbourhood
- Q26b. Citizens avoid criticizing government
- Q35. Opposition parties examine government vs. cooperate
- Q42b. People must obey the law
- Q52k. Trust traditional leaders
- Q69a. Who responsible: MPs do jobs
- Q69c. Who responsible: president does job
- Q71a. People can fight corruption
- Q75a. Right or wrong: not paying for the government services

Those who feel less safe walking in the neighbourhood also tend to be less 'fixed'. On the other hand, those who are more 'fixed' are more likely to disapprove not paying for government services. Conceptually, it seems that those wo are more 'fixed' seem to feel more secure as part of the community and place a higher absolute value on community norms. These Afrobarometer items seem to measure this.
The best individual correlation between a question and the index was Q75a, *r* = .56. The lowest correlation was with Q42b, *r* = -.01. However, removing that question from the set gave lower overall correlations. The correlation that was achieved between the WVS-derived data and the Afrobarometer data was .87, p<0.001.
Theoretically, it is of course possible that adding new countries will lead to scores that are outside of the zero to 100 range. For LTO, this is what happened. Several countries show as being outside this range. In the Afrobarometer data, country scores above 100 were registered for Ghana (106), Mauritius (108), Sierra Leone (104), Tanzania (107), Zambia (104) and Zimbabwe (101). The

highest-scoring ethnolinguistic group were the Lala of Zambia, with a score of 126.[3]

Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR)

There are 42 countries and ethnolinguistic groups that are both in the WVS and in the Afrobarometer survey with sufficient sample sizes.
It turned out to be possible to construct a scale for IVR based on three questions:

- Q4a. Country's present economic condition
- Q5. Your living conditions vs. others
- Q38. President free to act vs. obey the laws and courts

Those who are more indulgent tend to be more optimistic about their own living conditions, but less optimistic about the economy as a whole.
The best individual correlation between a question and the index was Q4a, $r = -.57$. The lowest correlation was Q38, $r = -.28$. Removing that question from the set and replacing it by other questions gave lower overall correlations. The correlation that was achieved was .91, $p<0.001$.
Whereas for 'Fixed versus Flexible' the top part of the scale was too low (leading to scores of above 100), the reverse was true for IVR. Several African countries show as more restrained than what can be shown at the minimum of the scale: Namibia scored -2. Again, this effect was stronger at the ethnolinguistic group level. The lowest score was for the Luguru of Tanzania, with a score of -29.

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

As with 'Fix vs Flex' (LTO), there are 41 countries and ethnolinguistic groups that are both in the WVS and in the Afrobarometer survey with sufficient sample sizes.
It turned out to be possible to construct a scale based on four questions:

- Q10a. How often felt unsafe walking in neighbourhood
- Q26d. Citizens request personal assistance from elected leaders
- Q52k. Trust traditional leaders
- Q89e. Neighbours: immigrants and foreign workers

Statistically, comparing many countries, IDV and PDI are related, although the two scores can be different from each other in individual countries. Like with PDI, in more collectivist countries citizens expect personal assistance from leaders more (Q26d). They place more trust in traditional leaders (Q52k). Who their neighbours are is more important to them (Q89e).
The best individual correlation between a question and the WVS scale was Q89e, $r = .73$. The lowest correlation was Q52k, $r = -.44$. The correlation that was achieved was .92, $p<0.001$.

Power Distance Index (PDI)

[3] Sample size is minimal, n=39

For PDI, there are 29 countries and ethnolinguistic groups that are both in the WVS and in the Afrobarometer survey with sufficient sample sizes.
It turned out to be possible to construct a scale based on seven questions:

- Q3. Overall direction of the country
- Q26d. Citizens request personal assistance from elected leaders
- Q26f. Citizens agree with community on political issues
- Q37. Parliament makes laws vs. president does
- Q68a. Performance: President
- Q69c. Who responsible: president does job
- Q75a. Right or wrong: not paying for the government services

Conceptually, there seems to be a clear relationship between these questions and PDI. Groups that value power distance more seem to be more inclined to expect personal assistance from leaders. They are less inclined to hold the President responsible for not doing his job.
The best individual correlation between a question and the WVS scale was Q37, $r = -.71$. The lowest correlation was Q75a $r = -.02$. The correlation achieved was .89, $p<0.001$.
Not every question was asked in every country. In case of missing values, I used a value for my calculation that was taken from the country or ethnolinguistic group that scored the most similar on all the other questions relevant for that dimension. This same value was then used for all ethnolinguistic groups from that country. This means that the scores for certain dimensions in a few countries should be treated with some caution. Specifically, this concerns:

- Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Eswatini and Tunisia for PDI;
- Algeria, Cape Verde, Egypt, Mauritius, São Tomé and Sudan for IDV;
- Cape Verde, Mauritius, Mozambique, São Tomé and Principé and Eswatini for 'Fix versus Flex'.

For all these countries there was only one missing value, with the exception of 'Fix versus Flex' for Eswatini, for which there were three missing values.
In most cases, the scores on the individual variables are the statistical mean for that variable, as calculated in SPSS. Raw scores were calculated by multiplying the scores with their weights and then taking the average. The general formula for converting these scores to a range that fits with a scale running from zero to 100 is:
$S_{Dim} = Min_{ref} + ((R - Min_{raw})/F)$
In this formula, S_{Dim} stands for the score on a particular dimension; Min_{ref} stands for the minimum Hofstede/Minkov score for the range of countries and groups that overlap (meaning either the overlap between Hofstede/Minkov countries and the WVS countries, or the overlap between WVS countries and ethnolinguistic groups and Afrobarometer countries and ethnolinguistic groups). R stands for the raw score. Min_{raw} is the lowest raw score for the range of countries and groups that overlap.
F in this formula is $\Delta_{raw}/\Delta_{ref}$, where Δ_{raw} is the difference between the highest and the lowest value in the range of raw scores for overlapping countries and groups and Δ_{ref} is the difference between the highest and lowest value in the range of Hofstede/Minkov or WVS scores for overlapping countries and groups.

The Hofstede scores are already in a zero to 100 range. The Minkov scores were converted to that same range.
The effect of this is that the minimum WVS score on any dimension is equal to the minimum score on that dimension in the overlapping group of countries for which I have a Hofstede/Minkov score.
Each score was then multiplied by a final factor, depending on its position in relation to one or more tipping points for the scale of that dimension.
In some cases, I preferred to reverse the scale. There, $S_{Dim} = 100 - (R - Min_{raw})/F$.
The table below shows which Afrobarometer round 6 variables were included and the weight given to the variables. Column 1 shows the variable. For every dimension, column TP shows the 'tipping point' for those variables where this is applicable: values above this point were multiplied by the factor in column W1, values at or below with the factor in column W2.

Dim:	'Fix vs Flex'			IVR			IDV			PDI		
Var:	W1	W2	TP	W1	W2	TP	W1	W2	TP	W1	W2	TP
Q3										-2.00	-1.00	1.60
Q4a				1.30	1.40	1.90						
Q4b	0.50											
Q5				-1.75								
Q10a	2.00	2.50	1.30				-1.15					
Q26b	-1.50											
Q26d							-1.30			-3.10		
Q26f										0.25		
Q35	2.25											
Q37										-2.70	-4.10	2.30
Q38				0.60								
Q42b	1.00											
Q52k	-0.50						-0.25					
Q68a										-0.75	1.00	2.70
Q69a	2.00											
Q69c	-0.80	-0.30	2.10							-6.00		
Q71a	1.00											
Q75a	-2.50									4.10	3.80	2.50
Q89e							0.40	0.30	2.70			

Variable weights and tipping points

The table below gives the scale tipping points and the weights, used after the calculation of the raw scores.

	'Fix vs Flex'		IVR		IDV		PDI	
	TP	W	TP	W	TP	W	TP	W
>	90	1	55	0.95	87	0.94	86	1.01
>	81	0.87	38	0.75	82	1.11	81	1.04
>	61	1.05	28	1.00				
remaining		0.85		1.75		0.97		0.97

Scale tipping points and weights

Appendix - Chapter 3.6: Full list of country scores used and their sources

The country scores for Africa are those given in chapter 3.5. Scores for Ethiopia and Rwanda (in bold) have been calculated from World Values Survey data.
The scores in *italic* (for the non-African countries) are the latest Minkov factor scores for the LTO and IDV dimensions, recalculated to a scale from zero to 100. The scores for the IVR and PDI dimensions are taken from the Hofstede website.[4] However, compared to Hofstede/Minkov, I have reversed the scores for IDV and LTO (Fix-Flex), making for better scale alignment (i.e. extreme scores all oriented towards the same end of the scale).

Africa	Dimension			
	LTO	IVR	IDV	PDI
Benin	72	33	96	86
Burundi	106	9	93	76
Botswana	51	22	65	71
Burkina Faso	79	20	79	69
Cameroon	85	52	70	68
Cape Verde	51	37	59	61
Côte d'Ivoire	82	38	78	68
Ethiopia	**60**	**37**	**64**	
Ghana	106	72	87	89
Guinea	73	39	94	75
Kenya	80	29	67	69
Lesotho	94	-1	58	69
Liberia	73	31	78	87
Malagasy	42	30	58	78
Malawi	45	41	65	72
Mali	82	29	92	87
Mauritius	108	44	76	73
Mozambique	79	22	51	63
Namibia	76	-2	76	74
Nigeria	90	59	78	89
Rwanda	**84**	**46**	**66**	**87**
São Tomé and Principé	82	61	68	60
Senegal	73	37	69	69

[4] https://geerthofstede.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/6-dimensions-for-website-2015-12-08-0-100.xls accessed 11 May 2020.

Sierra Leone	104	62	94	68
South Africa	78	34	56	86
Eswatini	77	29	71	72
Tanzania	107	35	73	75
Togo	84	37	82	72
Uganda	74	27	70	66
Zambia	104	32	65	75
Zimbabwe	101	37	77	72
Arab region				
Algeria	*96*	30	*65*	61
Egypt	*98*	6	*65*	63
Morocco	*75*	0	*66*	62
Tunisia	*51*	68	*63*	88
Iraq		17		
Jordan		43		
Asia				
China	*22*	24	*45*	80
Hong Kong	*8*	17	*40*	68
India	*48*	26	*60*	77
Indonesia	*38*	38	*86*	78
Iran	*86*	40	*59*	58
Japan	*0*	42	*30*	54
Kyrghyzstan		39		
Malaysia	*52*	57	*57*	100
Pakistan	*50*	0	*86*	55
Philippines	*52*	42	*65*	94
Singapore	*32*	46	*45*	74
South Korea	*13*	29	*33*	60
Taiwan	*13*	49	*48*	58
Thailand	*32*	45	*64*	64
Turkey	*63*	49	*42*	66
Vietnam	*43*	35	*80*	70
Europe				
Azerbaijan		22		
Belarus		15		

Cyprus		70		
Estonia	*18*	16	*40*	40
Finland	*62*	57	*37*	33
France	*37*	48	*29*	68
Georgia		32		
Germany	*41*	40	*17*	35
Hungary	*42*	31	*20*	46
Italy	*39*	30	*24*	50
Moldova		19		
Netherlands	*32*	68	*0*	38
Norway	*65*	55	*31*	31
Poland	*50*	29	*42*	68
Romania	*66*	20	*42*	90
Russia	*41*	20	*43*	93
Serbia	*48*	28	*75*	86
Slovenia	*51*	48	*73*	71
Spain	*51*	44	*26*	57
Sweden	*47*	78	*10*	31
Switzerland	*26*	66	*32*	34
Ukraine	*47*	14	*36*	
United Kingdom	*49*	69	*11*	35
Latin America				
Argentina	*69*	62	*40*	49
Brazil	*70*	59	*50*	69
Chile	*85*	68	*40*	63
Colombia	*92*	83	*56*	67
Mexico	*75*	97	*52*	81
Peru	*93*	46	*63*	64
Trinidad and Tobago	*87*	80	*84*	47
Uruguay	*74*	53	*64*	61

Summary

1. Introduction

The introduction starts with a 'vignette', a short discussion of Adichie's novel Americanah. The novel has been translated into a number of languages, but is unavailable in Igbo, the mother tongue of the author. This is identified as a specific 'African absurdity'. Adichie's views on this issue are discussed; they all point to the complicated relationship between cultural identity, language and education.

The next sections of the introduction discuss various aspects of the problem. The first examines ideas on who is an 'African' and what an African perspective means in this context. The study defines a point of view that is in solidarity with African thinkers (notably Prah). The next section looks at the way languages are counted and shows that this has political and social elements that need to be taken into account. Then, the function of education in society is briefly examined, using the terminology of cultural capital developed by Bourdieu and Passeron.

The next two sections look at identity from two different angles. The first looks at identity and the nation state. It discusses the difficulty of nation-building in situations where a common cultural framework is lacking. The second looks at identity and internationalism and criticizes Marxist approaches for downplaying the role of culture.

The last section criticizes two pre-scientific myths about Africa, the 'Africa as a country' and the 'Tower of Babel' myth, that both stem from defining Africans by what they are *not*. It calls for a vision based on what Africans *are* like or what they are becoming, starting from African self-representations and exploring the possibilities for African agency.

2. Research question and research methods

The chapter starts with quoting Vansina (1992), who attributes the problems with Africa's development to the destruction of Africa's cultural traditions during the colonial period. Vansina predicted the emergence of new cultural traditions, based in part in African languages. If true, the first indications of such an emergence should already be visible, given that the prediction was made 30 years ago. The link between culture and language and the role of education in this context is discussed, leading to three research questions:

- How can we describe current large-scale cultural differences and similarities in Africa, using the methods and terminology of cross-cultural psychology?
- Why are African languages currently not being used more in higher education as medium of instruction?
- What possibilities are there for rational language-in-education policies in Africa?

The chapter ends with a discussion on research methods and the position of the researcher.

3. Culture

This chapter deals with the first research question. It is divided into seven sections. The first discusses various definitions of culture and related concepts such as those of nation, people, ethnic group and polity. It concludes with defining culture as a value system that serves as a common set of reference to a people.

The second section describes the approach of cross-cultural psychology. It discusses its uses and the criticisms made of it and positions the study within the field, aligning itself essentially with the work of Hofstede and Minkov.

The third section provides an exploratory look at cultural differences and similarities in a few countries of Africa (Ghana, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini and South Africa) using existing literature. It concludes that this literature offers few clues for making comparisons of this type.

Sections four, five and six present new data generated through cross-cultural psychology research, making use of the World Values and Afrobarometer surveys. Information is provided on 200 ethnolinguistic groups from 35 African countries. The study uses three lenses: hierarchical cluster analysis; scores on cultural dimensions; and a comparison of scores from Africa with those from other parts of the world. The concluding section seven shows that in most countries, the old ethnolinguistic group distinctions no longer correspond one on one to cultural differences. In some countries, a national culture seems to be developing; in others, this is not the case. There is no clear pattern that applies across Africa. Cultural differences within Africa are as large as those in other continents and there is a large degree of overlap in scores from different continents. Yet, at the continental level, the averages from Africa are different from those from other continents and in that sense, there are some African commonalities, although this should not obscure sight of the large differences that exist as well.

4. African languages in higher education

This chapter addresses the second research question. It is divided into three sections. The first section points out how the fashionable tendency to speak about 'languoids' and about 'language as something people do' may lead to a neglect of the importance of formalized language and of language policy. It proposes a new conceptual distinction (inspired by Kloss) between *discerned* and *designed* languages. The first term, more linguistic in nature, points to the political and social act of pronouncing a (dia)lect to be a language. The second term, more sociological in nature, refers to those languages that have been built to become languages for formalized use in educational and other domains. This is similar to what others have called 'intellectualised' languages. The greatest advantage of this distinction over others is that it points to the possibility that one designed language can actually serve as the formalized language for speakers of a number of discerned languages. The section discusses arguments for education in a designed language that is close to the mother tongue and examines why attempts at introducing this in Africa have not been successful. It contends that existing explanations do not take low

enrolment levels in education into account. It points out that language abilities are not distributed evenly within populations. It asks the following theoretical question: is the number of people an education system is expected to educate up to tertiary level higher than, equal to, or lower than the number of people an education system can reasonably be expected to teach a designed language to the level needed for such education? It points out that in Africa, at present, low enrolment levels in higher education may explain why a switch to African languages has not yet been made.

The second section examines this idea in greater depth by comparing Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER) in higher education in selected countries in Africa and in other parts of the world, as well as their historic evolution. It proposes as a working hypothesis that there is a 'language barrier' approximately at the level of a GER of 40% for the highest level of secondary education and at the start of tertiary education. Below this level of enrolment, any language can be used as medium of instruction. Above this level, a switch to a designed language that is close to (one of the) discerned mother tongue(s) becomes necessary. Currently, all African countries are below this level. Given historical developments however, it is likely that some countries will breach this level in the next decade or so.

Section three concludes that an important new explanation for the lack of use of African languages in higher education lies in enrolment levels. This explanation is currently not mentioned in the literature. The analysis comes to the new conclusion that a transition to using a limited number of indigenous designed languages will become necessary in a number of African countries in the next decade or so.

5. Rational choices for language in education

This chapter has five sections. The first outlines the importance of inclusive language policies for citizenship. The second, making use of existing literature and the distinction between discerned and designed languages outlined above proposes four principles that should underly rational language policies:

1. Develop a limited number of designed languages for education.
2. Designed languages should be chosen in such a way that they are easy to learn for as many speakers of discerned languages as possible.
3. Strive for inclusivity: choose designed languages in such a way that all have to exert a relatively low but relatively equal effort to learn them.
4. Make use of existing bilingualism as a resource.

The third and fourth sections examine the problem of which languages are easy or difficult to learn for speakers of which other languages. They propose that Levenshtein distances (Normalized Edit Distances) as calculated through the Automated Similarity Judgement Program and database (ASJP) can provide a way of approximating a categorisation of easy and difficult language pairs. In a novel application, Levenshtein distance scores are benchmarked against a US schema for ease and difficulty of language learning, leading to five categories for ease of language learning, going from very easy to very difficult.

The fifth section concludes that these four principles, together with the schema for ease or difficulty of language learning for the first time provide an instrument for starting a discussion on rational choices for language use in higher education.

6. Five case studies

This chapter shows the power of the theoretical insights gained in the previous chapters by presenting five brief case studies on as many countries: Tanzania, Congo (Brazzaville), Ethiopia, Ghana and Botswana. The case studies show a number of things. One is that indeed, it is generally not possible to map cultural differences and linguistic differences onto one another in a one-on-one way. This also means that a switch to using African languages in and by itself does not need to pose a threat to national unity.

The case studies show that at the level of secondary education, there must already be problems in a number of countries, because enrolment levels are such that the 'language barrier' is in sight or has been breached. In all countries, it would be possible in theory to arrive at rational choices for a limited number of designed languages. Such choices would greatly increase educational efficiency. It might be possible that in some countries, such as Ghana, English could be used as medium of instruction alongside indigenous languages as well. The case study for Ghana also examines the possible use of pidgin as an alternative solution, but concludes that this would not work. The case study for Botswana points to the importance of cross-border collaboration in developing designed languages such as Sotho-Tswana. It also contains a plea for the protection of Khoisan languages, which represent a unique human heritage. The most complicated situation is that of Ethiopia, which is the country that has language policies most conducive to local languages. In order to reach solutions for Ethiopia that are both practical and equitable, the study suggests a fifth principle, in addition to the four listed earlier:

5. Build incentives for linguistic collaboration among related linguistic communities.

The case studies also lead to a different perspective on decolonizing education. The plea is for rethinking the educational pyramid bottom-up, instead of top-down. Where colonial education was geared to only providing quality education to a small elite, education in future will have to ensure that all receive an education appropriate to their level and profit from that education.

Lastly, this chapter revisits the relationship between identity, culture and language. It concludes that even though there is a relationship, it is not one-on-one. To a limited extent, it can be influenced by policy. However, literature suggests that large linguistic and cultural differences may be much more difficult to overcome than smaller differences. Using indigenous designed languages will prove to be key to accelerating social and technological innovation.

7. Language, Education and Identity revisited

The concluding chapter is divided into four sections. The first of these is a summary of the main findings and a discussion of the limitations. The study gives a 'proof of concept' that will need more and more precise research and inputs from local scientists to give it more practical applicability. It points to a large research agenda (section two), in which the search for rational language policies will have to occupy a central position.

Section three, entitled 'the search for empowerment' examines the ideas developed on culture and language within a wider context of a number of ideas that are either limiting or increasing the possibilities for African agency. It points out that there is an entangled web of notions that together form a toxic cocktail of ideas, blocking a decolonial vision. Developing a decolonial and empowering perspective will involve untangling and defusing that web and cannot afford to ignore the language issue.

The concluding section looks at the concept of 'cultural autonomy' as defined through a number of UN statements. It makes the point that many groups in Africa currently do not have the cultural rights that indigenous groups should have. Yet, obtaining such rights is one precondition for reaching sustainable development.

The study contains a number of appendices that provide more detail on the hierarchical cluster analysis, on the method for obtaining cultural dimension scores and on the scores themselves.

TAAL, ONDERWIJS EN IDENTITEIT IN AFRIKA Samenvatting

1. Inleiding

De inleiding begin met een 'vignet', een korte bespreking van Adichie's roman Amerikanah. Die roman is vertaald in een aantal talen, maar is niet verkrijgbaar in het Igbo, de moedertaal van de auteur. Dit wordt geduid als een specifiek 'Afrikaanse absurditeit'. De opvattingen die Adichie zelf hierover heeft worden besproken; ze wijzen allemaal op de ingewikkelde relatie tussen culturele identiteit, taal en onderwijs.
De volgende paragrafen van de inleiding bespreken diverse aspecten van dit probleem. Paragraaf twee gaat in op opvattingen over wie een 'Afrikaan' is en wat een Afrikaans gezichtspunt betekent in deze context. De studie kiest een positie van solidariteit met bepaalde Afrikaanse denkers (met name Prah). Paragraaf drie kijkt naar hoe talen worden geteld en laat zien dat dat verbonden is met politieke en sociale elementen die niet buiten beschouwing kunnen worden gelaten. Daarna wordt de maatschappelijke functie van onderwijs kort besproken, met gebruikmaking van de terminologie van cultureel kapitaal, zoals ontwikkeld door Bourdieu en Passeron.
De daaropvolgende twee paragrafen bespreken identiteit, vanuit twee verschillende gezichtshoeken. De eerste daarvan kijkt naar identiteit en de natiestaat. De paragraaf bespreekt de moeilijkheid van natievorming in omstandigheden waar een gemeenschappelijk cultureel kader ontbreekt. De tweede kijkt naar identiteit en internationalisme en bekritiseert Marxistische benaderingen die het belang van cultuur onvoldoende onderkennen.
De laatste paragraaf benoemt en bekritiseert twee voor-wetenschappelijke mythes over Afrika, de mythe van 'Afrika als een land' en de 'Toren van Babylon'-mythe. Beide mythes komen voort uit een definitie van hoe Afrikanen *niet* zijn. Het pleidooi is voor een visie die gebaseerd is op hoe Afrikanen *wel* zijn of hoe ze worden, met als uitgangspunt hoe Afrikanen zichzelf zien. Zo'n benadering zoekt naar mogelijkheden voor Afrikaanse actoren om hun toekomst vorm te geven.

2. Onderzoeksvragen en methodes van onderzoek

Dit hoofdstuk begint met een citaat van Vansina (1992), die de problemen met betrekking tot de ontwikkeling van Afrika toeschrijft aan de vernietiging van Afrikaanse culturele tradities in de koloniale periode. Vansina voorspelde het ontstaan van nieuwe culturele tradities, gedeeltelijk gebaseerd in Afrikaanse talen. Als die voorspelling

klopt zouden de eerste tekenen van een dergelijke ontwikkeling al zichtbaar moeten zijn, omdat de voorspelling 30 jaar geleden is gedaan. Het verband tussen cultuur en taal en de rol van onderwijs in deze context wordt besproken en leidt tot drie onderzoeksvragen:

- Hoe kunnen we huidige grootschalige culturele verschillen en overeenkomsten in Afrika beschrijven met behulp van de methodes en terminologie van de interculturele psychologie?
- Waarom worden Afrikaanse talen tegenwoordig niet vaker gebruikt als onderwijstaal in het hoger onderwijs?
- Welke mogelijkheden zijn er voor rationele beleidskeuzes voor onderwijstalen in Afrika?

Het hoofdstuk sluit af met een bespreking van de gekozen methodes van onderzoek en de eigen positie van de onderzoeker.

3. Cultuur

Dit hoofdstuk behandelt de eerste onderzoeksvraag. Het bestaat uit zeven paragrafen. De eerste behandelt verschillende definities van cultuur en verwante concepten, zoals die van natie, volk, etnische groep en volksgemeenschap. De paragraaf eindigt met een definitie van cultuur als een waardesysteem dat een gemeenschappelijk referentiekader vormt voor een volk.
De tweede paragraaf beschrijft de benadering van de interculturele psychologie, hoe die wordt gebruikt en wat de kritiek erop is. Hier wordt een positie bepaald binnen de discipline, die in de basis aansluit bij het werk van Hofstede en Minkov.
De derde paragraaf poogt op basis van de literatuur een eerste beschouwing te geven van culturele verschillen en overeenkomsten in een aantal Afrikaanse landen (Ghana, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini en Zuid-Afrika). De conclusie is dat de literatuur weinig aanknopingspunten bevat voor dit soort vergelijkingen.
Paragrafen vier, vijf en zes geven nieuwe resultaten van intercultureel onderzoek dat gebruik maakt van twee enquêtes: de World Values Survey en de Afrobarometer survey. Er wordt informatie gegeven over 200 ethnolinguïstieke groepen uit 35 Afrikaanse landen. De gegevens worden op drie manieren gepresenteerd: via hiërarchische clusteranalyse; via scores op culturele dimensies; en via een vergelijking van Afrikaanse scores met die uit andere werelddelen. De concluderende zevende paragraaf laat zien dat in de meeste landen de oude ethnolinguïstieke groepsverschillen niet meer één op één samenvallen met culturele verschillen. Er zijn aanwijzingen dat zich in sommige landen een nationale cultuur vormt. In andere landen is dit

niet het geval. Er valt geen algemeen patroon te ontdekken dat voor heel Afrika geldt. Culturele verschillen binnen Afrika zijn net zo groot als die in andere werelddelen. Ondanks dat zijn de gemiddeldes voor Afrika toch verschillend van die van andere werelddelen en in die zin zijn er gemeenschappelijk Afrikaanse kenmerken, hoewel dit het zicht op de grote culturele verschillen die óók bestaan niet mag verbergen.

4. Afrikaanse talen in het hoger onderwijs

Dit hoofdstuk behandelt de tweede onderzoeksvraag. Het bestaat uit drie paragrafen. De eerste daarvan stelt de modieuze trend aan de kaak om te spreken over 'languoids' en over taal als 'iets dat mensen doen'. Deze trend kan leiden tot een verwaarlozing van geformaliseerde taal en van taalbeleid. In de paragraaf wordt een nieuw conceptueel onderscheid voorgesteld (geïnspireerd op de indeling van Kloss) tussen *onderscheiden* en *ontworpen* talen. De eerste term is van meer taalkundige aard en verwijst naar de politieke en sociale daad waardoor een dia(lect) als taal wordt aangemerkt. De tweede term is meer sociologisch van aard en heeft betrekking op talen die zijn uitgebouwd om op een geformaliseerde manier te gebruiken in het onderwijs en op andere terreinen. Dit laatste begrip heeft overeenkomsten met wat anderen 'geïntellectualiseerde' talen hebben genoemd. Het grootste voordeel van dit onderscheid, in vergelijking tot andere indelingen, is dat het verwijst naar de mogelijkheid dat één ontworpen taal kan dienen als de geformaliseerde taal voor sprekers van een aantal onderscheiden talen. De paragraaf bespreekt redenen om de voorkeur te geven aan onderwijs in een ontworpen taal die dicht bij de moedertaal ligt en analyseert waarom pogingen om dit in Afrika te introduceren geen succes hebben gehad. De stelling is dat bestaande verklaringen de lage participatiegraad in het onderwijs niet noemen. Taalvaardigheid is echter niet gelijkmatig over bevolkingen verdeeld. De paragraaf stelt de volgende theoretische vraag: is het aantal mensen dat hoger onderwijs moet worden gegeven door een onderwijssysteem hoger dan, gelijk aan of lager dan het aantal mensen dat via een onderwijssysteem een ontworpen taal kan leren tot het niveau dat nodig is voor hoger onderwijs in die taal? De paragraaf veronderstelt dat in het huidige Afrika de lage participatiegraad in het hoger onderwijs kan verklaren waarom er nog geen overstap naar Afrikaanse talen is gemaakt.

De tweede paragraaf onderzoekt dit idee met meer diepgang. Dat gebeurt door de bruto participatiegraad in het hoger onderwijs (de GER, naar de Engelse term) in bepaalde landen in Afrika te vergelijken met landen in andere delen van de wereld, zowel nu als door de jaren

heen. De werkhypothese die wordt voorgesteld is dat er een 'taalbarrière' bestaat bij een GER van ongeveer 40% voor einde van het middelbaar en het begin van hoger onderwijs. Onder deze participatiegraad kan iedere willekeurige taal gebruikt worden als onderwijstaal. Daarboven echter zal een omschakeling naar een ontworpen taal die dichter ligt bij één van de onderscheiden moedertalen nodig worden. Op dit moment ligt de participatiegraad in alle Afrikaanse landen nog onder de 40%. Op basis van historische ontwikkelingen valt echter te verwachten dat binnen ongeveer één decennium een aantal landen boven dit niveau uit zal komen.
Paragraaf drie concludeert dat een belangrijke nieuwe verklaring voor het feit dat Afrikaanse talen nu niet gebruikt worden in het hoger onderwijs ligt in de participatiegraad. Deze verklaring wordt in de literatuur tot nu toe nog niet behandeld. Deze analyse leidt tot de nieuwe conclusie dat een omschakeling naar het gebruik van een beperkt aantal autochtone ontworpen talen ergens in de loop van het komende decennium nodig zal zijn in een aantal Afrikaanse landen.

5. Rationele keuzes voor onderwijstalen

Dit hoofdstuk bestaat uit vijf paragrafen. De eerste daarvan behandelt het belang van een inclusief taalbeleid voor burgerschap. De tweede maakt gebruik van bestaande literatuur en van het begrippenpaar onderscheiden en ontworpen talen zoals behandeld in het vorige hoofdstuk om vier principes voor te stellen die de basis zouden moeten vormen voor rationeel taalbeleid:

1. Ontwikkel een beperkt aantal ontworpen talen als onderwijstalen.
2. Die ontworpen talen moeten zó gekozen worden dat ze zo makkelijk mogelijk te leren zijn voor zoveel mogelijk sprekers van onderscheiden talen.
3. Streef naar inclusie: kies ontworpen talen zó dat het voor iedereen ongeveer even makkelijk is om ze te leren.
4. Gebruik bestaande meertaligheid als hulpmiddel.

De derde en vierde paragraaf behandelen de kwestie welke talen makkelijk of moeilijk te leren zijn voor sprekers van welke andere talen. De stelling is dat Levenshtein-afstanden (genormaliseerde bewerkingsafstanden) een manier kunnen vormen om een categorisering van taalparen van makkelijk naar moeilijk te benaderen. Die afstanden worden berekend in het bestaande programma voor geautomatiseerde herkenning van de taalverwantschap en het daaraan verbonden gegevensbestand (ASJP). De Levenshtein-afstanden krijgen

een nieuwe toepassing door ze te ijken aan een Amerikaans schema voor makkelijke en moeilijke talen. Dat leidt tot vijf categorieën voor de moeilijkheid van het leren van een andere taal, van heel makkelijk tot heel moeilijk.
De laatste paragraaf concludeert dat met behulp van deze principes en met het schema voor de moeilijkheid voor het leren van een andere taal het voor het eerst mogelijk wordt een discussie te beginnen over rationele keuzes voor onderwijstalen in het hoger onderwijs.

6. Vijf gevalstudies

Dit hoofdstuk laat de kracht van de theoretische inzichten zoals verkregen in de voorgaande hoofdstukken zien via vijf korte studies van evenveel landen: Tanzania, Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopië, Ghana en Botswana. Deze gevalstudies leiden tot een aantal inzichten. Eén daarvan is dat het inderdaad meestal niet mogelijk is om één op één culturele verschillen te koppelen aan taalkundige verschillen. Dat betekent ook dat een omschakeling naar Afrikaanse talen op zichzelf geen bedreiging hoeft te vormen voor de nationale eenheid van een land.
De gevalstudies laten zien dat er op het niveau van het middelbaar onderwijs ook nu al problemen moeten bestaan in een aantal landen, omdat de participatiegraad zo hoog is dat de 'taalbarrière' in het zicht komt of al is doorbroken. In alle onderzochte landen zou het in theorie mogelijk moeten zijn om te komen tot rationele keuzes voor een beperkt aantal ontworpen onderwijstalen. Dergelijke keuzes zouden de efficiëntie van het onderwijs zeer ten goede komen. Het zou kunnen dat in sommige landen, zoals Ghana, Engels als onderwijstaal wordt gehandhaafd, naast autochtone talen. De studie van Ghana bespreekt ook het mogelijk gebruik van pidgin als een alternatief, maar komt tot de conclusie dat dat geen oplossing biedt. Uit de studie van Botswana komt het belang naar voren van grensoverschrijdende samenwerking in de ontwikkeling van ontworpen talen zoals het Sotho-Tswana. De studie biedt ook een pleidooi voor de bescherming van de Khoisan talen, die een uniek menselijk erfgoed vertegenwoordigen. De meest gecompliceerde situatie doet zich voor in Ethiopië; dat is ook het land met het taalbeleid dat het gunstigst is voor lokale talen. Om voor Ethiopië oplossingen te bereiken die zowel praktisch haalbaar als eerlijk zijn stelt de studie een vijfde principe voor, in aanvulling op de vier boven aangehaalde:

5. Bouw prikkels in voor taalkundige samenwerking tussen verwante taalgemeenschappen.

De gevalstudies leiden ook tot een aanvullend perspectief op de dekolonisatie van het onderwijs. Het pleidooi is om de onderwijspyramide van onder naar boven te denken, in plaats van van boven naar beneden: waar het koloniale onderwijs gericht was op een kwalitatief goed onderwijsaanbod dat beperkt bleef tot een kleine elite moet in de toekomst goed onderwijs zorgen voor een aanbod dat aangepast is aan ieders niveau en waar iedereen ook wat aan heeft.
Tenslotte bekijkt dit hoofdstuk nogmaals de relatie tussen identiteit, cultuur en taal. De conclusie is dat hoewel er een relatie is, die relatie niet één op één is. De relatie kan in beperkte mate beïnvloed worden door beleid. De literatuur lijkt er op te wijzen dat grote taalkundige en culturele verschillen veel moeilijker te overbruggen zijn dan kleinere. Het gebruik van lokale talen zal ook van groot belang blijken voor het versnellen van sociale en technologische innovatie.

7. Taal, onderwijs en identiteit opnieuw bezien

Het afsluitende hoofdstuk bestaat uit vier paragrafen. De eerste bevat een samenvatting van de belangrijkste uitkomsten en een discussie van de beperkingen van het onderzoek. De studie bewijst dat het concept deugt, maar toont ook aan dat meer en preciezer onderzoek nodig zal zijn en dat de inbreng van lokale wetenschappers nodig zal zijn om de praktische toepasbaarheid van de verkregen inzichten te vergroten. Paragraaf twee gaat verder met het uiteenzetten van een omvangrijke onderzoeksagenda, waarin de zoektocht naar rationeel gefundeerd taalbeleid een centrale plek zal moeten hebben.
Paragraaf drie heet 'de zoektocht naar empowerment' en beziet de ontwikkelde ideeën over cultuur en taal binnen een bredere context, kijkend naar diverse ideeën die de mogelijkheden voor Afrikanen om hun eigen toekomst vorm te geven beperken, dan wel vergroten. Er wordt gewezen op een web van onderling verweven opvattingen die samen een giftige cocktail van ideeën vormt dat de ontwikkeling van een dekoloniale visie in de weg staat. Om een dergelijke visie te ontwikkelen zal het nodig zijn om dat web te ontrafelen en te ontmantelen – dat kan niet zonder ook naar taal te kijken.
De afsluitende paragraaf beziet het concept 'culturele autonomie' zoals dat wordt gedefinieerd in een aantal verklaringen van de VN. Er wordt gesteld dat veel Afrikaanse groepen nu niet de culturele rechten hebben die autochtone groepen zouden moeten hebben. Het verkrijgen van dergelijke rechten is echter een voorwaarde voor het bereiken van duurzame ontwikkeling.

De studie bevat een aantal bijlages die meer details bieden over de hiërarchische clusteranalyse, over de methode om de scores voor de culturele dimensies te berekenen en over die scores zelf.

Curriculum Vitae

Bert van Pinxteren (Amsterdam, 1955) has an MA in adult education and community organization from the University of Amsterdam (1981) and a Research Master in African studies from Leiden University (2018). He was admitted as a Ph.D. researcher to the Graduate School of Humanities of Leiden University in August 2018. Bert has worked in a number of international NGOs, notably on environment and development issues. He started his career at the Holland Committee on Southern Africa, one of the largest anti-apartheid solidarity groups in the Netherlands, where he was responsible for recruiting Dutch teachers for work in newly-independent Zimbabwe. He spent four years in Kenya as fundraising expert for the Environment Liaison Centre International and its worldwide network of grassroots NGOs. He then worked, among others, as coordinator of Friends of the Earth International, where he was responsible for a growth in the number of organisations in the network and in funding. After spending a period working in the sector of Internet for research and education he ended his career as senior programme officer at ActionAid.