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## EDITORIAL

### African Studies in Australasia: Views on China and New Zealand

**Tanya Lyons**

*Editor, Australasian Review of African Studies*

*President, African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific*

*Senior Lecturer, College Business, Government and Law, Flinders University*

*Research Fellow, Centre for Africa Studies, University of the Free State,*

*South Africa*

[editor@afsaap.org.au](mailto:editor@afsaap.org.au)

The publication of this second issue of the 38<sup>th</sup> volume of the *Australasian Review of African Studies* coincides with the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual AFSAAP Conference, held in Adelaide, South Australia November 23-24, 2017. This milestone is an achievement for AFSAAP, which has operated on a shoestring and the goodwill of members and volunteers since 1978. The annual conference is an essential event in the Australasian calendar, especially for those scholars and academics, researchers and students, who continue to be interested in the African continent. Their interest prevails despite Africa continually sliding off the international map of relevance in Australia and New Zealand. You have read this lament previously in these editorial pages (Lyons, 2017), yet it is continuously noteworthy in this particular forum. Indeed, the latest AFSAAP audit of African Studies topics available in Australian and New Zealand universities reveals the rather depressing demise of African issues from the tertiary curriculum. Therefore, it is worth going over in brief the remarkable survival story and history of African Studies in this region despite this trend.

To begin, I will briefly update the research I began with Elizabeth Dimock back in 2003, for the AFSAAP Conference held in Adelaide, at Flinders University (Lyons and Dimock, 2003; Lyons and Dimock 2007). It was not until 2014 that I was able to update this 2003 data with my colleague Aime Saba (Lyons and Saba, 2015) for the AFSAAP Conference held in Dunedin, New Zealand. That particular paper was also able to include data, for the first time from New Zealand University course availabilities, thanks to AFSAAP supporting this data-collection by

conducting a three yearly survey of African Studies scholars, academics, and topics or courses available in Australian and New Zealand Universities (see AFSAAP, 2011; 2014; 2017).<sup>1</sup>

In 2003, Lyons and Dimock concluded that “African studies exists in Australian universities because of the dedication of a core group of enthusiastic scholars who have had the opportunity to deliver topics on Africa, and develop research in specific fields of interest in their respective university departments” (Lyons and Dimock, 2003, 2007). Lyons and Saba (2015) then demonstrated “that knowledge about Africa in Australia remains limited” and not much had changed in the preceding decade. That was “despite the rapid increases in scholarships offered to Africans; and despite the ‘new engagement’ with Africa espoused by the former Labor government”. The budget cuts to international aid directed towards Africa by the current Liberal-Coalition government, has clearly not helped this appeal. Now in 2017, with the assistance of Wanda Warlik (who collected the data for AFSAAP across Australia and New Zealand), we can again confirm this trend. Not much has changed in the university and knowledge sectors, and the handful of African Studies topics available in Australian Universities appears to come down to a dedicated and small group of academics, who are able to teach either one or two undergraduate or postgraduate topics on Africa.

Yet, what this 2017 survey reveals is there are many more academics (approximately 58) who have an interest in Africa, and may indeed conduct research in Africa or on issues that affect Africans. However, these academics work in isolation from other Africanists (perhaps because of the generic attacks within the academy on ‘area studies’, which are not recognised as a ‘Field of Research’ (FoR), unlike Political Science or History for example, and therefore do not attract funding or workload points). It is noteworthy, that the majority of these scholars revealed through the AFSAAP (2017) survey of Africanists, are not members of AFSAAP, and are thus unlikely to be reading this editorial. Ignored at their own risk! Further research is needed, to ascertain why these interesting yet disparate scholars with an interest in African issues are not connected and networked through this region’s only academic association of scholars interested in African Studies. However interesting such speculation could be, instead, let us now turn to the number and types of topics that are

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<sup>1</sup> This editorial is based upon Tanya Lyons, ‘Trends in African Studies in Australia and New Zealand’, paper presented at the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual AFSAAP Conference, *Researching Africa in Australasia – The Way Forward*, South Australia, November 23-24, 2017.

available within the university sector for students to learn more about Africa in Australia and New Zealand (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Specific African Studies topics in Australian and New Zealand Universities 2003, 2011, 2014 and 2017**

<b>University</b>	<b>2017</b>
Adelaide	0
Australian National	0
Curtin	0
Flinders	Africa on a Global Stage. Africa: International Interventions. African Politics Global Issues.
La Trobe	Amanzi Springs Palaeolithic Site (Feb annually), South Africa. Australian-South African Geoarchaeological and Paleoanthropological Field School at the Drimolen hominin site (June annually, not offered in 2017).
Macquarie	0
Melbourne	Africa: Environment, Development, People. African Music and Dance. African Music and Dance Ensemble 1. African Music and Dance Ensemble 2. Politics and Contested Development: Africa.
UNSW (Canberra)	0
RMIT	0
Sydney	0
Victoria	Contemporary Africa and Social Change.
UWA	The International Politics of Africa. Peace and Security in Africa. Introduction to African History.
Wollongong	0
Monash (South Africa Campus)	0
<b>AUS-TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>
Otago, NZ	Transformations in Developing Countries. Sustaining Rural Livelihoods in Developing Countries.
<b>NZ- TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>REGION TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>

**Note: Universities listed with a score of 0 are included as they previously offered African Studies Topics – Refer to Lyons and Dimock (2003). Sources: Lyons and Dimock (2003); Lyons (2013); Lyons and Saba (2015); AFSAAP 2014; AFSAAP 2017**

## **African Studies Topics**

In 2017, according to the AFSAAP data collection project (AFSAAP, 2017) there were nine academic staff teaching 15 undergraduate or postgraduate topics with a pure focus on Africa in Australia and New Zealand universities (See Table 1). All of the academic staff that appeared in this audit, were contacted via email by this author to confirm the availability of their topics in 2017. From this survey it was determined that Victoria is the place to study African issues, with a total of five academic staff involved in teaching seven topics overall (which in 2017 included one field trip to Africa, and one field trip to an African-Australian community in Victoria).

With at least three academics involved in teaching five topics overall, the University of Melbourne has the most African Studies staff, and the most topics available to choose from (3 Music, 1 Geography, 1 Development Studies). Graeme Counsel has taught *African Music and Dance*, *African Music and Dance Ensemble 1*, and *African Music and Dance Ensemble 2* since 2014, and these have been offered since mid-2000 by other teaching staff. According to Counsel, “They are the only subjects devoted to the study of African music offered in Australia” (Counsel, 2017, *personal correspondence*). Simon Batterbury has taught *Africa: Environment, Development, People* at The University of Melbourne “continuously since 2005” (Batterbury, 2017, *personal correspondence*), however since 2017 it is now being taught by Peter Boateng (who is officially the newest African Studies academic now teaching in Australia). According to Boateng his topic has been popular, with between 130-170 enrolments (so it’s not as if students are uninterested in Africa, given the choice). The topic examines current issues on the African continent. Boateng “organised a seminal fieldtrip to an area where many African migrants have settled [in Victoria]. We had a panel discussion with invited speakers from various demographic and cultural groups of Africans, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, and other relevant organisations” (Boateng 2017, *Personal Correspondence*). Furthermore, at The University of Melbourne, at the postgraduate level, there is one topic offered entitled *Politics and Contested Development: Africa*. In 2017 the convener was Rachel Diprose.

La Trobe University offered a topic called *African Archeology* in alternate years, but according to the current topic convener Nicola Stern, it has not been offered since 2015 (Stern, 2017, *Personal Correspondence*). Nonetheless, her colleague Andy Herries has been able to offer two unique field trip experiences to South Africa as part of the Archaeology course at La Trobe University. *Australian-South African Geoarchaeological and*

*Paleoanthropological Field School at the Drimolen hominin site*, has been available since 2013, although it was not offered in 2017, it will return in 2018. “It has the equivalent of a full 12 week teaching load specifically on the Human Evolution and Archaeology of South Africa” (Herries, 2017, *Personal Correspondence*). The opportunity to attend a field trip to the *Amanzi Springs Palaeolithic Site, South Africa* “ran in May 2017 and we are there again in November 2017 with both Australian and South African students” (Herries, 2017, *Personal Correspondence*). 2017 was the first year that Herries taught this.

Victoria University offers just one topic *Contemporary Africa and Social Change*, taught by Charles Mphande, and this has been available (according to their website) at least since the AFSAAP data collection began in 2011.

However, the Victorians aren't all perfect! RMIT has previously offered one topic entitled *Contemporary Africa*, which was last taught between 2011 and 2014 by Jonathan Makuwira. However, it has not been offered since he left the university to take up a post as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Malawi University of Science and Technology. There are plans to offer it in the future, so it has remained on RMIT's books, however, for the purpose of this audit it was not available.

The University of Western Australia, closest of all universities in this region to Africa, and home to the Africa Research Cluster ([http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/research/clusters/Africa\\_Research](http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/research/clusters/Africa_Research)), boasts only two academic staff teaching between them only three topics. An *Introduction to African Politics* is taught by Jeremy Martens in History, and two Politics topics are taught by David Mickler - *The International Politics of Africa*, at third year undergraduate level; and at Masters level, *Peace and Security in Africa*. Indeed, the UWA's Masters in International Development promotes “Africa-related content and experts”, and yet out of the topics required in this degree, only 2 are specifically related to Africa, and they appear to only be elective choices among many (see <https://study.uwa.edu.au/courses/master-of-international-development>). There is another topic available within the ‘Mining’ course entitled *Ore Deposit Field Excursion* (South Africa). However, this is a technical topic, related only to Africa by the location of the excursion, and will thus not be included statistically in this study.

South Australia, home to the 2017 AFSAAP Executive, offers three topics on African Politics and International Relations at Flinders University. Taught by this author, at second year undergraduate level, *Africa on a Global Stage*; at third year undergraduate level, *Africa: International Interventions* (now a core topic in the Bachelor of International Relations,

rather than a usual elective choice); and *African Politics: Global Issues*, taught at the Masters Level. These have been on offer for over a decade.

At the Australian National University, there is only one topic available directly related to Africa and that is *Law and Governance in Africa*, taught by Jolyon Ford, but is offered only every two years due to low demand. It was not offered in 2017.

Macquarie University in New South Wales, once boasted a great topic on *Africa and Globalisation* taught by Geoffrey Hawker (former AFSAAP President). However, this topic was last offered in 2014. Hawker is now an Honorary Researcher at Macquarie and enjoying his retirement. This was the only topic offered across NSW related to African Studies directly, despite NSW being the birth-centre of the Australia-Africa University Network (AAUN).

New Zealand offers less opportunity to study Africa, however, at least there are two topics offered at the University of Otago on geography and development in Africa. Taught by Tony Binns, he focusses on the 54 African nations in *Transformations in Developing Countries*, and 60 percent of his topic *Sustaining Rural Livelihoods in Developing Countries* is based on African issues (Tony Binns, 2017, *Personal Correspondence*).

## **Views on China and New Zealand**

Given this dearth of African Studies opportunities in Australia and New Zealand, it remains remarkable that this journal is able to publish such high quality and original research on Africa and the African Diaspora in Australia and New Zealand. This issue of *ARAS* explores two unique perspectives on the role and influence of China across the African continent, and two fascinating studies on the issues facing members of the African community in New Zealand.

Firstly, Theo Neethling in his article *China's Evolving Role and Approach to International Peacekeeping: The Cases of Mali and South Sudan*, argues that China is not planning to re-colonise Africa – a general misconception construed from their intense activities across the continent – but rather is exercising strategic investment and interventions to ensure its own economic and diplomatic interests, and as Neethling states, to “exercise its global presence”. China’s most obvious interventions have been in its support for United Nations peacekeeping operations, which Neethling examines in relation to Mali and South Sudan. While historically non-interventionist, in the case of South Sudan, as Neethling argues below, “China has had to soften or forfeit its historical arm’s-length approach in view of the need to facilitate a political solution to the conflict in South Sudan and to secure its strategic interests”.

Secondly, in their article *China's Baby Steps in Africa: A Historical Reckoning of Chinese Relations with Mozambique and Sudan until 2011*, David Robinson and Benjamin Hale examine the involvement of China in both Sudan and Mozambique, to argue that while the critics of Chinese involvement in Africa may be right, it is only to some extent, because there are positive relationships being developed between African nations and China. These authors argue that it is not just 'extraction', but 'mutual exchange'. They demonstrate that authoritarianism and corruption in African states are not Chinese inventions, and while China may not overtly oppose these systems, neither do many western countries in their relations across Africa. Robinson and Hale argue that the Beijing consensus has simply provided an alternative to the Washington consensus, allowing agency for African states; and while China's military arms sales to the continent are "shameful", so too has the US built up its military interventions on the continent. Therefore, it is an exaggeration to suggest that China is taking any more steps across Africa than have already been taken by the West.

The third article presented in these pages below comes from a fascinating study conducted in New Zealand. Louise Humpage and Jay Marlowe explore the technique of "Photovoice" in their article '*Remembering' Absent and Recent Pasts Through Photographs: Young Eritrean Women in New Zealand*'. In this study, Humpage and Marlowe examine the African diaspora in New Zealand, in particular focusing on five young Eritrean women and how they negotiate their individual and collective identities. The authors argue that the women's identities are mediated by 'post-memories' and 'autobiographical memories', which enables them to critically reflect on their Eritrean origins and past, and enables them to positively engage with their future in New Zealand.

The fourth and final article is entitled *African Mother's Experiences of Raising 'Afro-Kiwi Kids' in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. The authors Helene Connor, Irene Ayallo and Susan Elliot have reported on their findings from a wider research project, exploring the themes of "integration, language, connections with Maori culture, cultural reproduction and mothering practices". This research fills a blatant gap in the literature, and importantly demonstrates the opportunities and challenges for resettlement in New Zealand.

Finally, we are pleased in this issue of ARAS to be able to publish some great book reviews, which will provide our readers with a fascinating account of recent books in African Studies, half of which have been written by our esteemed colleagues in the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific.

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## ARTICLES

### China's evolving role and approach to international peacekeeping: The cases of Mali and South Sudan

Theo Neethling<sup>1</sup>

*Department of Political Studies and Governance  
University of the Free State, South Africa  
[neethlingt@ufs.ac.za](mailto:neethlingt@ufs.ac.za)*

#### **Abstract**

China's expanded involvement in post-Cold War United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations coincided with Beijing's efforts in the early 2000s to expand its economic and diplomatic influence globally through trade and diplomatic links. Towards the mid-2000s, China was involved in all seven UN peacekeeping operations on the African continent. At the same time, Beijing's views on peacekeeping have consistently been premised on state sovereignty and the associated principle of non-intervention and non-interference in the affairs of other states. However, as China's strategic and material interests have become more integrated with the African continent, Beijing has been compelled more and more to consider its national (economic) interests and to protect those interests. Consequently, China's growing involvement in peacekeeping has evolved and become increasingly more difficult to reconcile with the country's historical commitment to non-interventionism, as specifically evident in recent Chinese peacekeeping involvement in Mali and South Sudan. Furthermore, the sending of Chinese combat forces to Mali and South Sudan suggests that China has become more comfortable with UN combat operations under certain situations.

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## **Introduction**

The People's Republic of China's (hereafter 'China') global influence has been expanding in many ways. One area where China is taking a leading global role is in the area of UN peacekeeping. After all, China is by far the largest troop-contributing nation compared to the other permanent members of the UN Security Council. This is also applicable and of great relevance to the role of China on the African continent.

China is currently Africa's largest trading partner. Practically, this means that China is Africa's main export market while also its largest source of imports (Romei, 2015). Moreover, China—as an emerging superpower—has undoubtedly presented itself as a most important security actor on the African continent. This development has virtually brought an end to the time where the US, France and Britain dominated foreign influence on the continent. Moreover, China's increasing involvement with the African continent over the past 15 to 20 years is indicative of the remarkable transformation of the country's growing international footprint and so is the deepening and broadening of its involvement in UN peacekeeping operations. Significantly, in recent years, China has not hesitated to become involved in two of the most dangerous UN peacekeeping missions on the African continent, namely in Mali and South Sudan.

While China has a considerable economic footprint on the African continent, it has always remained firm in its adherence to a strict policy of non-intervention (or non-interference) in the affairs of African states. China's non-interventionism relates to the inviolability of state sovereignty as a rhetorical backbone of Chinese foreign policy that dates from Western and Japanese intervention and imperialism in China (Richardson, 2013). However, this policy has been under pressure where China has extensive interests. This is particularly clear in the field of UN peacekeeping. For many years, Chinese peacekeepers have assumed mainly relatively safe roles, and conducted tasks such as constructing infrastructure, guarding hospitals and administering medicine at clinics and hospitals. Premised on its policy stance of non-interference, Chinese troops have never been put in a position or been allowed to use force in any offensive manner. In this regard, China has deployed engineers, logistical units, medical units and transport functionaries to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, but not combat forces. In so doing, China has tried to convince African states and the international community that its policy objectives are well intentioned and non-offensive.

However, a change—even watershed—in China’s approach became evident when Beijing decided to send combat soldiers to two UN peacekeeping operations on African soil: first in Mali (2013) and, thereafter, South Sudan (2014). While the sending of combat forces to Mali indicated that China was becoming more comfortable with “UN combat missions under certain situations” (Lanteigne, 2014, p. 18), China’s policy of non-intervention has even been put to the test in South Sudan (Allison, 2015; Richardson, 2013). As Louw-Vaudran (2015) strikingly states, “(t)rying to make peace and build a stable Africa would imply some form of political involvement over the longer term”.

Following the abovementioned developments with regard to Mali and South Sudan (which will be further examined in the sections below), the pressing question is whether this implies the end of China’s policy of non-interventionism. This article is based on research that aimed to focus on matters relating to the point that China has long been a major, but quiet, contributor to UN peacekeeping, but which is now also a power that is assuming greater global responsibilities in a much more assertive manner. Moreover, as China’s interests on the African continent are on the increase, China is compelled to consider its national interest and now seems willing to protect that interest more assertively than before. These matters will be reviewed in the sections below. In view of this, a central argument of this paper is, first, that Beijing has emerged as a significant actor in international peacekeeping operations in general and Africa in particular. Second, that China’s expanding role in UN peacekeeping operations over the last two decades has helped Beijing to craft a positive and constructive image and reputation in the international arena. Third, that China’s emerging role on the African continent is part of a pragmatic reorientation and reassessment in Chinese policy-making circles, specifically where Beijing’s political interests and related investments are at stake.

The first part of this article reviews the historical context of China’s gradual entry into the peacekeeping arena, while the second part examines China’s economic interest in and involvement on the African continent, and the strategic elements underpinning its peacekeeping actions. The latter specifically relates to changes in China’s foreign affairs and what is considered a shift away from China’s traditional non-interventionist foreign policy approach, towards a more assertive or proactive role in dealing with actors on the African continent.

## **Contextualising China's contributions to UN peacekeeping operations**

In a world that is changing dramatically and ever more quickly, perceptions, analyses and policies can never be static. As in other parts of the international community, the Chinese government also realised that the Cold War-era perceptions of international security had to change and be refocused, especially given the challenges posed by phenomena such as international terrorism and the destabilising effects of state collapse. As in other parts of the world, 'non-traditional' security challenges have become a part of Chinese contemporary military strategy. This is of particular relevance to the African continent and, since the mid-2000s, China has increasingly been engaged in "long distance manoeuvres" on the African continent as part of UN peacekeeping operations (Lanteigne, 2014, p. 7).

Yet, China has not always assumed a positive stance on UN peacekeeping operations. Looking back, the Chinese situation in relation to UN peacekeeping can be described as a shift "from ardent opposition in the 1970s to avid support in the 2000s" (Wang, 2013). For about four decades, Beijing was highly sceptical of the UN's peacekeeping role, specifically because the Chinese leadership thought that the UN had been utilised for the Korean War (1950–1953) to legitimise and sanction actions that were viewed by China as aggressive military intervention (Ayenagbo et al., 2012) in a conflict where Chinese forces fought UN forces under a US command. Another reason for China's reluctance was its belief that the sovereignty of nations gave nations an inherent right to control their own affairs without intervention from third parties (Rogers, 2007).

Following the end of the Cold War and the significant changes to the international community, Chinese leaders moved to a position of active cooperation in UN activities. According to Wang (2013), the benefits of "demonstrating global responsibilities, extending economic and diplomatic influence and obtaining operational military experience," convinced Chinese leaders to make a "strategic change of heart".

In this context, the limited number of Chinese peacekeepers deployed to UN missions from the 1970s to the 1990s turned into a dramatic surge in Chinese peacekeeping participation in the 21st century. From January 2001 to January 2009, the number of Chinese 'Blue Helmets' deployed to UN missions increased from fewer than 100 in 2000 to close to 2000 in 2008 (UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2001, p. 1; UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2008, p. 1).

After joining the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and setting a new tone for Chinese support for UN peacekeeping in 1988, China deployed 20 military observers to the UN Transition Assistance

Group (UNTAG) to assist with the monitoring of elections in Namibia. This was followed by the deployment of five Chinese observers to the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) in the Middle East. A significant break with the past came when China contributed 400 engineering troops and 49 military observers to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1992 (Gill & Huang, 2013, p. 141). What is of interest is that, although China started to move beyond its previous reluctance toward UN peacekeeping operations and began to make personnel contributions to such operations, Beijing clearly had a marked preference for sending observers only. Chinese engineering contributions to UNTAC came as an exception, when two separate Chinese engineer battalions were committed, and thus became the first Chinese 'Blue Helmets' in the common use of this concept (Lanteigne, 2014, p. 5).

The abovementioned increase in contributions to UN peacekeeping operations also turned into more diversified contributions, such as transport and medical support. In 1999, China started to deploy civilian police to East Timor, followed by more police deployments to Haiti, Liberia, South Sudan and Timor Leste. In accordance with its public diplomacy rhetoric that Chinese peacekeepers were deployed with foreign considerations that corresponded with China's traditional friendship with developing nations, as well as peaceful development and cooperation, the Chinese Ministry of Defence reported in 2011 that their peacekeepers had built and repaired over 8700km of roads and 270 bridges. They also cleared over 8900 mines and various devices, and transported over 600,000 tons of cargo across a total distance of 9.3 million kilometres. In the medical field, 79,000 patients were treated (Gill & Huang, 2013, p. 142; Lanteigne, 2014, p. 6). Viewed from an International Relations theoretical perspective China's peacekeeping actions can be associated with key aspects of both the liberal and constructivists schools of thought. After all, the above-mentioned Chinese contributions seem to be based on cooperation among states (liberalism) as well as friendship premised on processes of social practice, interaction and shared ideas among states (constructivism). From a more general political and global perspective, China's involvement in the peacekeeping operations of the UN also shows how this emerging superpower is deliberately and systematically using peacekeeping as a diplomatic instrument, and how it is crafting its international public profile as that of a responsible major power (Wang, 2013).

Unlike the US, which operates 700 to 800 military bases abroad, China does not have a network of global military bases, but today exercises its global presence through involvement in several UN peacekeeping

operations (Campbell-Mohn, 2015). In August 2013, China was ranked among the top 20 troop-contributing nations in the world and it contributed far more than any of the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council (UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2013, pp. 1-3). In this regard, China contributed 32 civilian police, 40 military experts and 1703 troops to UN missions worldwide—a total of 1775 UN peacekeeping personnel. Three years later, in August 2016, China was listed as the 11th largest contributor to UN peacekeeping, with 2639 Chinese peacekeepers deployed to UN missions worldwide. This includes 173 civilian police, 30 military experts and 2435 troops (UN Department of Peacekeeping, 2016a, pp. 1-3). To put this into perspective, France was ranked 2nd among the Security Council permanent members with its contribution of 38 civilian police, 8 military experts and 821 troops—a total of 867 UN peacekeeping personnel (UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2016a, pp. 1-3).

What is of interest is that China is not only significantly contributing troops to UN peacekeeping operations, but is also listed as one of the top financial contributors (See Table 1).

**Table 1 Top 10 providers of UN peacekeepers 2016**

1.	United States of America	28.57%
2.	China	10.29%
3.	Japan	9.68%
4.	Germany	6.391%
5.	France	6.31%
6.	United Kingdom	5.80%
7.	Russian Federation	4.01%
8.	Italy	3.75%
9.	Canada	2.92%
10.	Spain	2.44%

Source: UN Department of Peacekeeping, 2016b

Against this background, Silalahi (2016) argues that there has been an overall shift in China’s foreign policy style, especially since Xi Jinping became the Chinese head of state in 2012. This shift is very evident in the field of peacekeeping and can be understood and described as a policy that is “more self-assured, more pragmatic and converges better with global norms” (Silalahi, 2016). In this way China is shaping its image and reputation in the global arena.

## **Drivers of Chinese peacekeeping contributions and new policy dynamics**

Silalahi (2016) maintains that China's decision to increase its role in international peace and security, specifically UN peacekeeping operations, is closely linked with how the Chinese government is shaping the country's reputation and image in the international community. As far as the motivations underlying Chinese peacekeeping contributions are concerned, Gill & Huang (2013, p. 141) suggest that Chinese peacekeepers have been deployed largely as a result of factors outside realist assumptions (that is, national interest and power projection). Chinese leaders have been specifically concerned with China's image and reputation, especially after the Tiananmen incident in 1989. Rogers (2007) concurs with this view and argues that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) needed to restore a politically congenial relationship with the broader international community. This relationship could be restored through actions ranging from disaster relief to participation in UN peacekeeping. In addition, China also sought regional confirmation of its status as a peaceful neighbour (Gill & Huang, 2013), and thus projected an image of a peace-loving and responsible major power. This means that its involvement in peacekeeping operations presented an opportunity to place China in a favourable light internationally, as well as domestically, which has been important to China and its armed forces (Rogers, 2007). Campbell-Mohn (2015) even asserts that China has been seeking to utilise peacekeeping as an instrument of soft power with a view to gaining international goodwill in order to soften responses to its provocative actions in the South China Sea.

What is clear from the preceding discussion is that there has been a sea change in China's attitude towards international peacekeeping operations. China's foreign policies have evolved from outright rejection of UN peacekeeping operations (1970s) to reluctant participation (1980s), to prolonged involvement in peacekeeping operations. What is also important is that there have always been limitations to China's involvement in peacekeeping operations (Taylor, 2008, p. 6). As already mentioned, Beijing's views on international peacekeeping were based on a strong respect for state sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in the internal politics of other countries (Shelton, 2008, p. 5). Accordingly, China remains principally opposed to actions perceived as interfering in the domestic affairs of states and will only become involved in peacekeeping if the host government concurs. In recent years, Beijing has also remained suspicious and sceptical that interventions carried out in the name of

'humanitarianism' are motivated by interests other than international solidarity or charity (Taylor, 2008, p. 6).

As China's presence on the African continent has deepened, however, expectations that it must engage less reservedly in the politics of peace and security have also increased (Davies, 2008, p. 3). In other words, China's growing global power status has taken Beijing to a position where it has to contend with expectations that it will play an ever greater role in global affairs, and at the same time deal with considerations of what sovereignty is and when it might be infringed within the framework and discourse relating to intervention and peacekeeping. This has basically necessitated a pragmatic reorientation and reassessment of Beijing's political interests by Chinese decision-makers, who increasingly have to fit their country into the role of a responsible great power and less of a developing country premised on a rigid policy stance of protection of state sovereignty at all costs (Taylor, 2008).

For many years, observers have debated the nature and scope of China's involvement on the African continent as it has sought a more active role in the international system in general and on the African continent in particular. Generally, China has pursued closer ties and stronger relations with non-Western countries, and African states have played an important role in the Chinese stratagem. What also makes this of interest is that many African states—like China—have been under pressure from Western states to liberalise their political systems. These African states have often been more than willing to go along with China's claims that Western demands for democracy and respect for human rights are thinly veiled imperialistic efforts for interfering in the domestic policies and practices of developing states, and thus for undermining their stability and progress (Tull, 2006). The Chinese government has been offering its African partners a mix of political and economic incentives and has successfully managed to drive home the message that increased Sino-African relations will result in a beneficial win-win situation for both entities. This has become a powerful glue between China and Africa and served as common ground for identity building between China and Africa vis-à-vis the 'paternalistic West' (Tull, 2006, pp. 459-461).

A clear indication of change in China's foreign policy and peacekeeping approach towards the African continent became evident in March 2013 when Beijing offered its support for a UN 'offensive brigade' to be deployed to the conflict-ridden eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Lanteigne, 2014, p. 17). The idea was that such a brigade would serve as part of the UN Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of

the Congo (known by its French acronym MONUSCO) to confront and disarm the destabilising rebel groups, such as the March 23 Movement (M23). Such a unit was to be created and mandated by the UN, contrary to previous UN peacekeeping protocols, to use force without necessarily being fired upon first (Lanteigne, 2014).

More recently, in September 2015, China's president Xi Jinping offered 8000 soldiers for a UN peacekeeping standby force. This offer was made at the UN headquarters in New York where Xi even agreed with then-US President Barack Obama that both countries should increase their 'robust' peacekeeping commitments, but that they should also try to allay fears that China's growing influence was a threat in world politics (Martina & Brunnstrom, 2015).

Against this background, Lanteigne (2014) asserts that, as China's involvement in international peacekeeping has developed, there has been a growing realisation that Beijing would have to reconsider its peacekeeping policies and start to prepare itself for the more challenging aspects of international peacekeeping. This includes China's traditional views on the sanctity of state sovereignty and non-intervention.

### **China's evolving peacekeeping role: The case of Mali**

An indication that China has become more accepting of international interventions under specific conditions (Lanteigne, 2014) relates to Beijing's decision in mid-2013 to send an infantry detachment to serve in the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)—a vulnerable country haunted by several anti-government military factions and multiple terrorist groups.

The UN deployment in Mali followed the collapse of the state in the north after radical Islamic armed groups initiated a series of attacks against government forces. Deployment was based on a tentative peace agreement between Bamako (the capital and largest city of Mali) and the Tuareg rebels in June 2013. An election was held shortly after in July 2013, but the northern parts remained unstable due to occasional attacks by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). As the peace agreement was struck, the UN mandated the formation of MINUSMA with a view to re-establishing the Malian state throughout the country (MINUSMA, 2016).

The Chinese detachment of combat forces was the first foreign deployment of Chinese combat troops in an international peacekeeping role (Lanteigne, 2014, p. 10). It was the first time that Beijing had sent a separate protection unit consisting of infantry and special forces to a UN peace mission—not only to protect its own peacekeepers, but UN

peacekeepers as well (Clingendael, 2015). China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, officially admitted that this marked a shift in Beijing's foreign policy. Chen Jian, head of the UN Association of China, a Chinese think-tank, also stated, "[t]his is a major breakthrough in our participation in peacekeeping ... with this our contribution will be complete. We will have policemen, medical forces, engineering troops and combat troops" (as quoted by Hille, 2013).

China's political and military leaders have thus gradually shown a more flexible foreign policy approach, while also acknowledging that China's need for resources and growing investments has developed to the point where it can no longer avoid sending combat troops to Africa. At the same time, the Chinese government does not want to create the impression that it is redirecting its foreign policy while rising to global power status. In the case of Mali, Beijing was swift to point out that China's commitment to the principles of non-intervention and rejection of military force as a means of conflict resolution remains unchanged. Yet, Foreign Minister Wang also admitted that China had to align its foreign policy with its expanding global interests when it decided to commit combat troops to the crisis in Mali (Hille, 2013; Murray 2013).

This certainly signalled a new direction—even a watershed—in China's engagement in international peacekeeping (Clingendael, 2015). It also indicates that China's security presence at the international level has reached the point where Beijing seems to be comfortable with conducting more offensive UN peacekeeping operations under certain conditions (Lanteigne, 2014, p. 18).

Although the responsibility of the PLA force in Mali was largely confined to a protection role for the MINUSMA headquarters and living areas of the peacekeeping forces, China's willingness to contribute to MINUSMA generally reflects Beijing's increasingly proactive approach to international peacekeeping. This willingness further coincides with the significant fact that, in 2013, China had about 15 times as many international peacekeepers as it did in 2000 (Murray, 2013, p. 2).

As far as the mainspring of China's involvement in UN peacekeeping operations is concerned, Clingendael (2015) contends that there are four general explanations for Chinese involvement in peacekeeping in Africa, namely:

- assuming responsibility as a global actor;
- gaining military experience;
- securing natural resources; and
- facilitating exports.

Mali is of limited interest as far as the latter two motivations are concerned, as the country has relatively little to offer China in terms of resources and an export market. However, involvement in MINUSMA signals China's emergence as an actor that plays a role as a guarantor of international order. Peacekeeping contributions to MINUSMA also help to protect Chinese civilians and their economic interests in Mali and the broader western African region, and to contribute to regional stability (Clingendael, 2015). In November 2015, three Chinese civilians were killed when 27 hostages lost their lives in an attack on the Radisson Blu Hotel in Mali's capital, Bamako (Tiezzi, 2016). This sparked a strong reaction from the Chinese government and calls for greater emphasis on peace and security in China's engagement with Africa. In other words, security has become an increasingly important concern for China, which coincides with Chinese business interests and a growing number of Chinese nationals living in Africa with a heightened possibility that they might be injured or killed (Louw-Vaudran, 2015). In 2014, the Nigeria-based terrorist group, Boko Haram, attacked a Chinese factory in neighbouring Cameroon, kidnapping ten Chinese nationals, demonstrating that Chinese economic interests and nationals in Africa have in some instances become the targets of extremist organisations (Lanteigne, 2014, p. 180).

Militarily speaking, Chinese involvement in peacekeeping provides important practical benefits for the PLA. The PLA is in a position to field-test equipment and obtain first-hand experience in addressing unconventional threats in potentially hostile environments, which enables China to integrate itself into multilateral international operations (Murray, 2013, p. 3). In Mali specifically, the PLA has the opportunity to engage in counterterrorism operations and develop China's interest in understanding the processes of radicalisation and extremism. Mali is also regarded by Beijing as a safer option than Syria, with a lower chance of possible confrontation with the US around interests in the Middle East (Clingendael, 2015).

China's decision to send infantry troops to Mali, however, exposed Chinese peacekeepers to more dangerous operations than before, and a Chinese member of MINUSMA was among four killed in attacks targeting UN facilities in Gao, Mali in June 2016 (Tiezzi, 2016). Twelve more peacekeepers were injured in the attack, including four Chinese soldiers. The Chinese Foreign Ministry responded swiftly by expressing its "deep condolences to the victims and sincere sympathies to the bereaved families and the injured" (Tiezzi, 2016). The other UN mission to which China has

deployed force protection units is South Sudan. This is discussed in the following section.

### **China as peacekeeper and mediator: The case of South Sudan**

Prior to China's deployment of combat troops in Mali, elite Chinese combat troops have also been spotted in South Sudan since 2011. South Sudan, of course, became independent from the rest of Sudan in 2011, after 30 years of war, as part of an international effort to reshape security in the region. Chinese companies saw South Sudan as a great economic prospect, and investment in the oil industry led to the settlement of a significant number of Chinese nationals in the country.

China immediately projected itself as the newly independent South Sudan's strongest foreign partner. Two years after South Sudan's independence, in 2013, civil war broke out in South Sudan between factions relating to the two dominant ethnic groups, the Dinka and the Nuer. Investors were hoping that the situation would stabilise, but this did not happen and the civil war continued unabated under the leadership of the two main political figures in the country, President Salva Kiir (a Dinka) as head of the official government, and (former) Vice-President Riek Machar (a Nuer) as leader of the group of insurgents or rebels (Rotberg, 2016; Vasselier, 2016).

China has been working hard to mediate between the belligerent parties in South Sudan. In contrast with Mali, where Chinese interests are relatively limited—although not insignificant in the African context (see Esterhuysen & Kane, 2014)—the rationale for Chinese involvement in the crisis in South Sudan is much clearer. As Humphrey (2013) observed, “If China is going to play a large investment role in sub-Saharan Africa, it must be willing to play a security role, too.”

In 2014, it was announced that China planned to send about 700 combat troops to South Sudan, where Chinese peacekeepers were deployed as part of the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS). Analysts such as Allison (2015) and Lanteigne (2014), regard the sending of Chinese combat troops as a matter of Beijing showing greater leniency in accepting interventions under specific conditions, such as seeking as much consent as possible from local and international actors. Otherwise, this development coincides with the fact that under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, the country has started to make significantly larger contributions and for the first time committed combat troops (Week in China, 2016). What is more, China armed its peacekeepers in South Sudan with advanced weaponry, such as armoured personnel carriers, anti-tank rockets and unmanned

drones, making it a true combat force with capabilities way beyond self-defence (Yincai, 2016).

On the one hand, it could be pointed out that China's mediating role in the Sudanese region was not really new in view of the fact that, in 2006, China had already exerted diplomatic pressure on the Sudanese government in Khartoum to permit UN peacekeepers into Darfur. On the other hand, China became the first permanent member of the UN Security Council to commit and deploy troops there (Gill & Huang, 2013, p. 154), and the deployment of Chinese combat troops in South Sudan indeed brought a deepening of Chinese engagement on the African continent. Moreover, comparatively speaking, on 31 August 2016, the numbers of Chinese peacekeepers deployed to UNMISS expanded to a total of 1066 (UN Department of Peacekeeping 2016c, p. 10), as opposed to a total of 363 Chinese peacekeepers on 31 August 2014 (UN Department of Peacekeeping, 2014).

Four key issues underpin South Sudan's importance to China and motivated Chinese contributions to international peacekeeping in South Sudan (Broga, 2014).

First, China is the main recipient of South Sudan's oil with over 66 per cent of total oil output. Instability and conflict in the country obviously threaten South Sudan's oil output and, since December 2013, conflict between the government and rebels has reduced output by 20 per cent, which partially contributed to oil price hikes to over \$99 per barrel in January 2014. This coincided with low levels of oil production in Libya and continued violence in Iraq (Broga, 2014).

Second, China is the biggest foreign investor in South Sudanese infrastructure. Since the 1990s, China has made heavy investments of about US\$20 billion in the oil infrastructure of the former (united) Sudan. After the 2011 partition, a pledge was made to invest an additional US\$8 billion in oil infrastructure. Given the Chinese experience of losing US\$8 billion in the Libyan conflict, it needed to avoid a similar experience in South Sudan (Broga, 2014).

Third, historically, Sudan is a long-standing ally of China with diplomatic links dating back to Sudanese independence in 1959. In this sense, South Sudan holds symbolic value for the Chinese government, and the close relationship between the two countries has undoubtedly inspired China's willingness to play a role in protecting stability (Broga, 2014).

What should be especially clear from the above is that China has made large investments in South Sudan and has therefore been unusually proactive in diplomatic efforts to pacify matters in South Sudan,

particularly after the civil war slashed oil production by a third (Allison, 2015). Vasselier (2016) rightly argues that China's economic interest in South Sudan has required Beijing to become politically engaged in the country, thereby "contradicting its policy of non-interference in local politics". In an unusual move, the Chinese government even began funding several projects for the South Sudanese government, and supported this through the sale of weapons to South Sudan's armed forces, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The project, known as the Norinco weapons project, was aimed at cementing a strong relationship with the South Sudanese government in order to ensure a trustworthy partnership between the governments of China and South Sudan. The Chinese government even advocated a one-party system to maintain unity and avoid ethnically based politics, thereby effectively supporting the Dinka SPLA against the Nuer rebels, known as the SPLA in Opposition (SPLA-IO) (Vasselier, 2016), which clearly appears to be at variance with its non-interference policy.

Another extraordinary move away from China's traditional foreign policy stance of non-interventionism relates to a visit by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to South Sudan in January 2015—only weeks after China had committed 700 combat troops to South Sudan. From China's side, the visit was aimed at engaging in discussions with both warring parties in the South Sudanese conflict (led by President Salva Kiir and former Vice-President Riek Machar, respectively) on how to speed up political reconciliation. Also under discussion was the lingering conflict between South Sudan and its northern neighbour, Sudan. In Khartoum, Wang also held discussions with representatives from the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on how to promote the peace process in South Sudan. In doing so, China stepped into an unprecedented key mediation role between the conflicting parties in the Sudanese region (Tiezzi, 2015). In this regard, China realised that talking only to the government would not work, and that both main parties to the conflict had to be involved in pursuing peace. President Xi Jinping also offered to send 8000 more Chinese soldiers to help enforce peace in South Sudan, but this was not accepted by the UN and other actors, probably because the South Sudanese government did not support the initiative (Rotberg, 2016; Vasselier, 2016). Furthermore, even though China tends to work bilaterally, in the case of South Sudan Chinese representatives decided to become part of a Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, which monitors the implementation of the 2015 peace agreement. Although the Chinese representatives are currently passively observing the unfolding

of matters, they are represented in almost all of the weekly or monthly meetings and also engage with the International Monetary Fund's mission to South Sudan as well as the African Union (AU) (Vasselier, 2016).

In response to criticisms that China selfishly protects and pursues its own interests (Tiezzie, 2015), the Chinese government defended its position when Foreign Minister Wang Yi remarked that China has acted not in its own interest, but "on the responsibilities and obligations of a responsible world power". Significantly, he also acknowledged that "wars and conflict hurt the oil industry", which is where China has special interest, but added that damage to the oil industry would hit South Sudanese and Sudanese people hardest (Tiezzi, 2015). He specifically dismissed concerns that China's growing influence in international affairs was a threat (Silalahi, 2016). These developments prompted Richard Poplak, an author and journalist studying China's influence on the African continent to remark:

It comes down to interest. The Chinese have poured billions and billions into South Sudan, so many resources that it's almost baffling. This is a shift in realpolitik: you can't just talk all the time and not carry a big stick. The Chinese realised that (Poplak, cited in Smith, 2014)

To put matters into perspective, when China expanded into Africa in the post-Cold War period, it justified its dealings with illegitimate and dictatorial African leaders on the basis of China's strict adherence to a policy of non-intervention and a commitment to work for positive change in African states. African leaders have also mostly welcomed Chinese investments, which have come without any prescriptive policies or conditions (Tull, 2006; Allison, 2015). African leaders have further considered the Chinese approach a welcome alternative to American conceptions of 'world order' and the 'Washington consensus'. However, as Chinese investments on the African continent have continued to grow, China's stance of non-intervention has become harder to maintain. Beijing has become increasingly aware of its image and even more wary of being seen to support or facilitate pariah states. In addition, it has had to look more carefully at the protection of its growing interests, making peace and security of great concern. Tiezzi (2014) articulates this eloquently: "[a]s China's interests abroad grow, its policy of non-intervention will face more and more challenges. China's vision for a 'New Silk road' [will] see increased Chinese investment and trade in some of the most unstable regions in the world." The number of Chinese working in South Sudan has

now grown to a figure of 7000, including Chinese serving as UNMISS peacekeepers (Vasselier, 2016).

From another point of view, it should also be noted that the South Sudanese government has recently requested assistance from China in an effort to ensure its political survival. The national treasury was empty and the government had been unable to pay its civil servants, police and soldiers regularly. It was hoped that China would provide nearly US\$2 billion to re-develop oil fields and rebuild roads and infrastructure (Rotberg, 2016). Specifically, this pertains to a key petroleum-supplying field in the Unity State/Province and an important road between the capital, Juba, and Wau, a major city in the western part of the country. The latter is important, as it will keep the Dinka heartland connected to the South Sudanese capital. Most importantly, what should be noted here is that South Sudan's requests for assistance and funding provided China with substantial leverage and created political opportunities for China to push for peace accomplishments (Rotberg, 2016), effectively steering China away from its traditional non-intervention, non-interference policy stance. By the beginning of 2016, rumours had even spread in Juba that Chinese representatives were calling for the resignation of the South Sudanese Finance Minister, David Deng Athorbei, which, if substantiated, would constitute clear meddling in local politics. At the centre of the story was *Note 2016046*, signed by China's Ambassador to South Sudan, Ma Qiang. The note, dated 18 May 2016, was addressed to the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and expressed the Chinese government's disappointment in Athorbei's characterisation of China's oil production in South Sudan as exploitive (Vasselier, 2016).

As far as China's involvement in UNMISS is concerned, it should be noted that China's decision to send infantry troops to South Sudan—similarly to the case of Mali—exposed Chinese peacekeepers to more dangerous operations than before. On 10 July 2016, an armoured vehicle carrying Chinese soldiers was shelled. The incident occurred in Juba, and four soldiers were injured and two were killed, making them the second and third Chinese peacekeepers to be killed in 2016 as part of a UN peacekeeping operation in Africa (Week in China, 2016). The Chinese government reacted sharply to the death of these two peacekeepers with the PLA stating that it was “deeply shocked” and strongly condemning the attack on Chinese peacekeepers (Kuo & Yinyin, 2016).

Finally, from the above it is clear that South Sudan has been a theatre of challenges and opportunities for China. In this volatile and turbulent environment, Beijing felt compelled not only to make a substantial peacekeeping contribution to UNMISS, including deploying combat troops,

but also to assume a number of new political roles, such as mediating between parties and engaging in peace talks in a multilateral framework. Certainly, this has put Chinese foreign policy principles under pressure and further steered Chinese involvement in international peacekeeping operations into a new context (Vasselier, 2016).

One can thus argue that China's peacekeeping experience in South Sudan over the past years has coincided with a measure of change in China's foreign policy, and tacit recognition from China that some kind of intervention is sometimes needed to protect its strategic interests. Although China's involvement in peacekeeping in South Sudan should not be overestimated or overstated in terms of its scope and extent, it does seem to signal the beginning of a far more assertive role for China in Africa's peace and security issues (Allison, 2015). It could safely be argued that a rethink of China's foreign policy had taken place. China is indeed now operating differently in Africa, as it can no longer take an arm's-length approach towards peace and security where its interests are at stake. At the same time, it also appears that China is beginning to assume the responsibilities and duties associated with a global power.

### **Evaluation and conclusion**

Since China joined the UN in 1971, a significant evolution and change in Beijing's views and approach towards UN peacekeeping has become evident. Beijing has gradually demonstrated a more positive stance on UN peacekeeping operations and indicated greater openness and willingness to participate as a contributor to such operations.

A shift in Chinese peacekeeping policy has occurred between the Cold War and post-Cold War era, while China has continuously signalled growing confidence towards a role in the development of UN peacekeeping policy and practice. Today, China is contributing peacekeepers in substantial numbers to UN peacekeeping operations in South Sudan, Mali, Darfur and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In doing so, China has deliberately communicated a message that its rising profile does not present a strategic threat to other major powers, but that China should be regarded as a friend to developing nations and intends to be more responsive to international expectations and the need to reduce tensions and conflicts. Borrowing from liberals and constructivists in international relations theory, China's involvement in peacekeeping has created an opportunity to assume an identity based on cooperation and partnerships relating to the solving of modern security issues and active support for international stability (Silalahi, 2016; Lanteigne, 2014).

Realists, however, from a more sceptical point of view, will disagree with liberals and constructivists and be more inclined to offer explanations such as “[p]eace and security in Africa is suddenly in China’s interests too” (Allison, 2015). They will argue that this has been particularly evident in China’s increased contributions of combat personnel to UN peacekeeping operations, specifically its deployments of combat forces in recent years to Mali and South Sudan. Realists will also argue that the dramatic surge in Chinese peacekeeping participation in the 21st century coincided with Beijing’s efforts in the early 2000s to deliberately start to expand its global economic and diplomatic influence through trade and diplomatic links. In other words, China considers participation in the activities of international organisations, including UN peacekeeping operations, as a way to expand its global influence (Wang, 2013).

The approach in this paper regarding the abovementioned theoretical debates is not to favour any one theory or school of thought over another, but rather to recognise the value of all the relevant theories in an eclectic way. From the above analysis, this article would further like to advance three broad perspectives. First, Beijing has emerged as a significant contributor to UN peacekeeping operations in general and Africa in particular. In fact, China is the only country in the global arena that significantly contributes both troops and financial means to UN peacekeeping operations. This stands in direct relation to China’s growing engagement and influence in the international arena, as well as the fact that China is Africa’s largest trading partner. While China’s growing international role has been in accordance with its increasing peacekeeping contributions, it should also be clear that Beijing intends to demonstrate that China is a global power and regards peacekeeping as an instrument to exert greater influence on international affairs at the level of UN involvement. Unlike the US, which operates hundreds of military bases throughout the world, China has come to exercise its global presence, including in Africa, through peacekeeping operations.

Second, China’s expanding role in UN peacekeeping operations over the last two decades has helped Beijing craft a positive and constructive image and reputation in the international arena. In this regard, international peacekeeping in general and peacekeeping in Africa in particular yield diplomatic benefits for China. China’s participation in international peacekeeping is, in fact, an important arm or instrument of its public diplomacy, which has increasingly been aimed at projecting China and its image as that of a responsible global power. It also allows China to respond to African requests or challenges and acts as a confidence-building measure

with both African governments and the AU as the preeminent African regional organisation. Indeed, China's peacekeeping experience shows how this emerging superpower has deliberately and systematically used peacekeeping as a diplomatic instrument to this effect.

Third, China's emerging role on the African continent is part of a pragmatic reorientation and reassessment in Chinese policy-making circles, specifically where Beijing's political interests and related investments are at stake. As its strategic and material interests have become more integrated and entangled with African concerns, Beijing has been compelled to consider its national interest and protect its growing interests in Africa more closely. As a consequence, China's growing involvement in peacekeeping has become more difficult to reconcile with Beijing's historical commitment to non-interventionism, particularly as witnessed in the case of South Sudan. In the latter case, China has had to soften or forfeit its historical arm's-length approach in view of the need to facilitate a political solution to the conflict in South Sudan and to secure its strategic interests.

Although a more proactive involvement by China in South Sudan seems to be motivated or driven by pure necessity, this is no reason to regard the case of South Sudan as a substantive future tendency for China's foreign policy and its involvement in peacekeeping operations. Although China is being forced to adopt high-risk strategies in cases of overseas investment, like in South Sudan, it is still "defined by careful impartiality" (Brogan, 2014). Moreover, China's increased involvement "sits uneasily" with China's long-held policy of non-intervention (Week in China, 2016). Therefore one can safely argue that China's presence on the African continent is highly unlikely to turn into a new form of colonialism in Africa. China is certainly acutely aware of the pitfalls associated with the politics of interventionism, especially in developing nations. However, it is commonly known that China has overtaken the US as the world's largest net oil importer and it needs other mineral resources for its growing economy. This means that when and where China's strategic and related economic interests are under threat, it might require or motivate Beijing to apply at least some measure of hard power alongside soft power. After all, it would be unrealistic to expect a situation where African leaders welcome China's presence on the African continent as an acceptable alternative to the American conception of 'world order' and further encourage China's economic and commercial investments, but stay opposed to Beijing utilising its available diplomatic and even military instruments where Chinese interests and related foreign investments face risk.

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## China's Baby Steps in Africa: A Historical Reckoning of Chinese Relations with Mozambique and Sudan until 2011.

David Robinson  
*Edith Cowan University*  
[d.robinson@ecu.edu.au](mailto:d.robinson@ecu.edu.au)

Benjamin Hale  
*Edith Cowan University*  
[bhale@our.ecu.edu.au](mailto:bhale@our.ecu.edu.au)

### **Abstract**

China's presence in Africa has grown rapidly over the past two decades, as Africa's oil and minerals have become increasingly important for China's resource-hungry economy. China's network of relations with developing states began its expansion during the 1990s, and by the early Twenty First Century had become an increasing cause for concern amongst Western commentators. Critics of Chinese influence in Africa argue that China's economic relations are self-serving, and that their actions might detrimentally affect progress for democratisation, human rights, and sustainable development in Africa. Others argue that, in fact, Chinese policies aim to create long-term stability and development in African nations, on a mutually beneficial basis. This article will assess Chinese policies as implemented in the period up to 2011, in the two African nations of Sudan and Mozambique. Criticisms of Chinese relations with Africa will be considered, which commonly include that those relationships will hurt African economies, encourage corruption and authoritarianism, and threaten the security of African civilians. This article concludes that there is some truth to each of these criticisms, but that the reality is more complex, varies substantially from case to case, and does not preclude positive outcomes from these growing relations.

## **Introduction**

The phenomenal economic rise of China and its growing presence in Africa has been the centre of much recent debate among international relations researchers (Raine, 2009; Scott, 2008; Friedman, 2010; Hofstedt, 2009). Ian Bremmer (2010) notes that, in their attempts to attain Great Power status, “[a]uthoritarian governments everywhere have learned to compete internationally by embracing market-driven capitalism” (p. 4). Having now undergone two decades of unprecedented capitalist expansion, Africa’s oil and natural resources have motivated China to deepen relations with the continent in its quest to import increasing quantities of raw materials and energy products (Jakobson, 2009); indeed, Africa soon became China’s second largest supplier of oil after the Middle East (Alden & Alves, 2009). By the 1990s China’s contact with Africa began to increase rapidly, with many observers noting that its attitude toward African states was often in contrast with the West’s saviour narrative. At China’s 2006 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, for example, Kenneth King (2006) noted that:

the view of Africa in Beijing was one of life rather than death and disease; richness of colour and of culture rather than poverty; dynamism, energy and opportunity for business ... [were] highlighted, and not their poverty, disease and poor governance. (p. 6)

While these commentators have argued that the new Sino-African partnerships are “based on long-term stability, equality and mutual benefit” (Yi-Chong, 2008, p. 26), others have raised concerns about China’s impact on issues of democratisation, human rights and sustainable development (Liang, 2008). Taylor (2008) highlights that, “[i]n a nutshell...China will do business with anyone, regardless of their human rights and/or democratic record” (p. 65). Three key criticisms are common in the literature regarding China and Africa, namely: 1) that China is primarily motivated by extractive economic interests in its relations with Africa and that this will only hurt African economies (Large, 2008); 2) that Chinese political and economic relations with African governments may encourage authoritarianism or corruption, or at least undermine Western efforts to correct these issues (Alden & Alves, 2009); and 3) that Chinese military support is an important part of relations with African states, and may pose a human security threat to African civilians (Reeves, 2006). This article will set out the details of the economic, political and strategic relations between

China and the African states of Mozambique and Sudan, and the impacts relations have had on these nations. Each case study will be examined in turn, before making a final assessment of the accuracy of these criticisms regarding the pre-2011 period.

It has been argued by some analysts that China's relations with the government of Sudan constitute an important case study of China sustaining an undemocratic regime and undermining Western sanctions (Pant, 2008). China's ambiguous position in relation to the Darfur Genocide—providing peacekeepers and supporting a peace process while still backing the Government of Sudan—was far from satisfactory for many observers (Large, 2008; 2016). Mozambique is another state that has embraced relations with China although, in contrast to Sudan, the former Portuguese colony has been heralded as a poster child for Western-backed democratisation and economic reform (Reisinger, 2009). During the period under study (1994-2011) Mozambique had one of the fastest growth rates in trade and investment with China of any single nation, with the evolution of the Sino-Mozambican relationship described by Horta (2007) as “just short of meteoric” (p. 1). The intensity of this relationship was later affirmed in 2016, when Mozambique became the first African nation to upgrade relations with China through a ‘Partnership and Global Strategic Cooperation Agreement’, strengthening bilateral relations in all fields (*Club of Mozambique*, 2016; *Macauhub*, 2016; Stremlau, 2015). Mozambique's relationship with China in this period was also interesting for three reasons: it was not centred on oil or gas; Mozambique is one of the least-developed nations on earth; and Mozambique also had strong international relations with the West. Indeed, it was cited as a political and economic ‘success story’ of Western influence in Africa through aid and cooperation (Reisinger, 2009).

This article examines China's developing relationships with Sudan and Mozambique in the pre-2011 era. The aim is to compare and contrast the political, economic and strategic forms these relationships have assumed, evaluate how they have affected the nations under investigation, and assess how they reflect on broader debates about China's aims and impacts in Africa. The year 2011 has been chosen as an appropriate date for periodisation for this study due to a number of factors. At the beginning of 2011 the southern half of Sudan formally proclaimed its independence as South Sudan—dramatically altering the dynamics of Chinese relations with those states. For Mozambique, 2011 marked a turning point due, on the one hand, to the eruption of new political instability related to popular protests and the remilitarisation of the RENAMO opposition movement and, on the

other hand, due to the discovery of massive offshore gas reserves (Freedom House, 2012; *Macauhub*, 2017). Additionally, China's broader continental and global relations were affected in 2011 by the move to prioritise South Africa as an African partner through its acceptance into the political and economic BRICS alliance (Smith, 2011) and the Obama administration's announcement of a geostrategic 'pivot to Asia' later that year (Clinton, 2011). Some observers described this move as the de-prioritisation of containing Chinese influence in Africa, as evidenced by the "downgrading of Africa [as] contained in official expressions of U.S. grand strategy since 2011" (Gaudilliere, 2014, p. 5).

This article will argue that analysis of the details of China's relations with Mozambique and Sudan in the period under study supports the claim that, economically, China has been primarily driven by the aim of extracting natural resources, but that this has not necessarily been negative for African economies. Further, it indicates that Chinese activities have lessened Western leverage to induce reforms, but only in cases where Western leverage was already minimal. And, finally, that while military support was not a primary driver of China's relations with African states, in the cases of oppressive governments, such as in Sudan, Chinese assistance may empower regimes in the violent repression of their citizens.

### **China and Africa from an international relations perspective**

Describing China's changing relationship with Africa, Campbell (2008) quotes both Antonio Gramsci that, "the old is dying yet the new is yet to be born", and Chinese leader Hu Jintao that "China and Africa share increasing common interests and have a growing mutual need" (p. 92). The expanding literature on Sino-African relations reflects this deepening engagement, with concerns ranging from "control over energy resources to exploitive economic practices and support of rogue or corrupt regimes, perpetuating instability and undermining international pressure for reform" (Hofstedt, 2009, p. 79). Western commentators such as Pant (2008), Halper (2010) and Scott (2008) are critical of Chinese involvement in African countries, labelling Chinese foreign policy as self-serving and neo-colonialist. They argue that China promotes harmful environmental practices, fosters corruption, and undermines International Monetary Fund (IMF) efforts to enhance transparency and combat poverty. However, many Africans view China favourably when compared to the US and, given the failure of the IMF's Structural Adjustment Programs, view China's state-supported model of growth as an attractive alternative to neo-liberal policy prescriptions (Jacques, 2009).

Recent research in South Africa and Nigeria confirms that many Africans view the United States and China as the best examples of developed economies in roughly equal numbers (Poushter, 2016). Since the early establishment of Sino-African relations in the late 1950s, China has developed from a marginal actor to an influential player on the continent. Official Chinese Communist Party (CCP) documents divide China's economic and trading relations with Africa into three distinct periods: 1949-1978, 1979-1994, and 1995 onwards, with the emphasis shifting from ideological and diplomatic engagement to more pragmatic economic and commercial interests (Campbell, 2008). Lauren Johnston (2016) concurs, labelling these periods as: 'Political Alliances' 1950-1979; 'Independent Development' 1979-1995; 'Interdependent Development' 1995-2013; and adding a fourth period of 'Comprehensive Development' 2013-present.

The first period of modern Chinese engagement with Africa coincided with the period of decolonisation following World War Two. It was forged heavily in the rhetoric of unity in the anti-colonial struggle and solidarity between developing nations, and institutionalised in the 1955 Bandung Conference, the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation and the Non-Aligned Movement (Mohan & Power, 2008). Throughout the next few decades, China provided support to several African independence struggles and assisted newly independent African nations by providing doctors, technical experts, and infrastructure (Jakobson, 2009). By the 1980s China's activity in Africa had shrunk dramatically (Yi-Chong, 2008) but, after China experienced international isolation following the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, Chinese diplomats increasingly sought contacts throughout the developing world (Jakobson, 2009). African leaders responded positively to Chinese overtures, and their growing diplomatic relations were strengthened with the rising importance of energy resources to China's foreign policy in the 1990s (Mohan & Power, 2008).

China's drive to diversify its energy sources followed its transition to a net oil importer in 1993 (*Human Rights Watch*, 2003; Hong, 2011). Oil quickly came to constitute 80 percent of China's imports by value, making Africa China's second largest supplier of oil after the Middle East, and China the second largest destination for African oil after the United States (Alden & Alves, 2009). Sino-African trade increased by around 30 percent each year from 2002 (reaching US\$114.8 billion in 2010 despite the financial crisis) (Sutter, 2012; *BBC News Online*, 2009), making China Asia's leading importer of African products and Africa's third largest trading partner after the United States and France (Broadman, 2007; Jakobson, 2009).

Chinese investment in Africa grew by a factor of 300 between 1990 and 2007 to around US\$14 billion (Naidu, Corkin, & Hermin, 2009). A notable area for this was in enhancing Chinese food security, with growing efforts to secure land to produce food for export to China (Raine, 2009; *Xinhua*, 2008). Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows to Africa primarily concentrated on the extractive industries, but there was some diversification into other sectors (Broadman, 2007). Detailed analysis shows that over this period China had only “a modestly stronger attraction to natural resources” than Western investors (Chen, Dollar, & Tang, 2015, p. 7). The importance of securing energy and food resources for China cannot be overstated, with sustained economic growth and resource security being central to the CCP regime’s survival (Cornelius & Story, 2007). The deepening China-Africa relationship became incontrovertible following the official proclamation of 2006 as ‘China’s Year of Africa’, with 48 African leaders hosted in Beijing at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, and extensive touring of African capitals by members of the Chinese leadership (Jakobson, 2009; Pant, 2008).

Throughout this period China forged strong relationships in Africa through a diverse array of projects and policies concerning business and aid—described by some as a ‘noodle bowl’ approach (Johnston & Yuan, 2014). China cancelled almost US\$3 billion of African debt (Bräutigam, 2010), pledged US\$10 billion in concessional loans to African countries (Horta, 2009), expanded scholarship programmes for tens of thousands of Africans to study in China, and built hundreds of schools and medical centres in Africa (Hofstedt, 2009). China also invested billions of dollars a year in funding roads, railways, dams and power projects across Africa that had been neglected as unprofitable by Western aid agencies and businesses (Naidu, Corkin, & Hermin, 2009). Together with China’s role as the “self-proclaimed champion of the developing world ... [giving] a voice to less-developed countries in institutions largely dominated by Western interests” (Currier & Dorraj, 2011, p. 4), these efforts helped China to successfully enlist African support at the United Nations to block eleven UN condemnations of Chinese human rights abuses, and increase Taiwan’s international isolation (Alden, 2007; Hofstedt, 2009).

Commentators noted that the willingness of Chinese policymakers to “adapt their strategies to suit the particular histories and geographies of the African states with which they engage” (Carmody & Taylor, 2010, p. 497) has been a critical factor in China’s success in forging Sino-African relations, both in terms of cynically manipulating systems and providing real desired outcomes for elites and populations (Jakobson, 2009).

## **China and Mozambique**

China's first contact with Mozambique may have been during the sixteenth century, and Portuguese recruitment of Chinese workers into the colony from the mid-1800s meant that Mozambique hosted a Chinese community of around 20,000 at independence in 1975 (Chichava, 2008; Ilhéu, 2010). During Mozambique's War of Independence, commencing in the 1960s, China supplied training, equipment and money to various Mozambican liberation organisations, and was among the first countries to subsequently recognise the FRELIMO party government (Chichava, 2008). Sino-Mozambican relations cooled shortly thereafter, due to Mozambique assuming positions on international issues at odds with China, but improved in the early 1980s and have sustained low-level trade and aid relations into the 1990s (Jackson, 1995; Taylor, 2006).

Since the late 1990s the Sino-Mozambican relationship has flourished, beginning with the 1997 establishment of a US\$20 million incentive fund for Chinese companies to operate in Mozambique, and the 2001 creation of a Joint Economic and Trade Commission (Roque, 2009). Mozambique soon had one of the fastest growth rates in trade and investment with China experienced by any single nation, and notably that growth was not driven by oil and gas (Horta, 2007 & 2011). In turn, Mozambican politicians welcomed Chinese interest, with President Armando Guebuza making clear that they were "very satisfied with the support offered by China" (Ilhéu, 2010, p. 57), and that China was "a partner and not a colonizer" (Chichava, 2008, p. 2). Beyond the political class, a number of independent surveys undertaken during the period found that Mozambicans generally welcomed the Chinese and that "members of Mozambique's civil society [were] generally enthusiastic about China's [aid] and [investment] projects" (Ilhéu, 2010, p. 55). China's strong focus on building infrastructure made it a particularly appealing partner for a nation devastated by war (Roque, 2009), with former Prime Minister Luisa Diogo concluding that, although Mozambique, "should not close [its] eyes and forget [its] traditional partners... we need cooperation with China" (cited in Hanlon, 2010b, p. 2).

### ***Economic Relations***

#### **Aid**

In the pre-2011 period a major share of economic input from China was in the form of aid. This encompassed Chinese grants for public projects, cheap loans, and programmes of social, cultural, technical and humanitarian cooperation. Programmes included hundreds of scholarships for

Mozambican students to pursue higher education in China (Horta, 2011); training for 500 Mozambican professionals in China; the building of rural schools (Ilhéu, 2010); and funding for long-distance learning (*AIM News*, 2011). Medical assistance included free medical supplies (Ilhéu, 2010) and teams of Chinese doctors to work in Mozambican hospitals (*AllAfrica.com*, 2010a). In one cultural exchange, China provided sporting coaches for Mozambican athletes (*AllAfrica.com*, 2011a). China forgave US\$22 million of debt in 2001 (Horta, 2007) and another US\$20 million in 2007, clearing debt that had accumulated since the 1980s (Ilhéu, 2010). President Hu Jintao also promised during his 2007 visit to provide US\$170 million in loans and technical co-operation (Roque, 2009). While these figures seem small, in the Mozambican context they are not insignificant. This gives China a comparatively larger impact-for-investment ratio than in more developed countries (Moss & Rose, 2006).

### Investment

Concessional loans advanced by the Export-Import Bank of China (*China Exim*) often out-competed similar loans from the World Bank because they were cheaper and free of heavy conditionalities (African Forum and Network on Debt and Development [AFRODAD], 2008). Further, the Chinese completed projects more efficiently than competitors: “They bring everything, they set up everything in place...everything is handled by them... It’s very easy and fast” (Nordling, 2011, pp. 560-562). Many loans funded the building of infrastructure, including “roads, bridges, military installations and hospitals” (Horta, 2011, p. 10). Mozambique’s transport infrastructure had long needed upgrading, with decades of deterioration adding considerable time and cost to long-distance economic activity. Chinese companies were involved in one third of all road construction during these years, including constructing “important transportation link[s] between the north and south of the country” and with neighbouring countries (Roque, 2009). Chinese funding for major railway projects was also forthcoming.

In the capital Maputo alone, Chinese funding paid for the construction of Mozambique’s new National Parliament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, High Court and National Conference Centre (Ilhéu, 2010). Chinese companies refurbished the symbolically important Polana Hotel, the most luxurious in Maputo (*Macauhub*, 2009). China funded and built the FIFA-approved 42,000-seat Zimpeto national soccer stadium (Globoport, 2011), and invested more than US\$65 million in the modernisation of Maputo International Airport (*Sudan Tribune*, 2011). They also began work on a

Chinese-funded US\$439-million housing project outside Maputo to build a 5,000-house middle-class suburb, accompanied by “roads, schools, clinics and a shopping centre” (*The Times - South Africa*, 2011). Projects such as building a bridge across Maputo Bay, a road to Mozambique’s southern tip, and schemes to decongest city traffic were also being considered (*AIM News*, 2011). Seventy-two new Chinese-donated diesel buses were also a conspicuous presence in Maputo (*Macauhub*, 2011a).

More widely, China expanded the Vilanculos aerodrome—a key tourist gateway—(*Macauhub*, 2010d) and Chinese companies were involved in building urban water supplies (*Macauhub*, 2010c), cement factories (*Cemnet.com*, 2010), cotton processing plants (*AllAfrica.com*, 2010c), and vehicle assembly workshops (*AllAfrica.com*, 2010b). A still-awaited ‘mega-project’, the Chinese-funded US\$2.3 billion Mphanda Nkuwu Dam in central Mozambique, was also being discussed with excitement (Horta, 2007).

For agriculture, China built a US\$6 million research centre in Mozambique to facilitate scientific research, training, and technological development (*Macauhub*, 2011b), the goal being to eventually increase Mozambican rice production from 100,000 to 500,000 tonnes per year (*SciDevNet*, 2009). China also proposed plans for developing food production in Mozambique’s most fertile province, Zambezia, with a project that would involve huge plantations, cattle fields, canals and up to 3000 Chinese workers (Ilhéu, 2010).

### Trade

Meanwhile, bilateral trade between Mozambique and China increased dramatically from US\$120 million in 2006 to US\$690 million by 2010 (Horta, 2011). Mozambique’s main exports to China were minerals, and natural resources like wood, oil seeds, cotton, vegetables, and seafood (Ilhéu, 2010); indeed, Mozambique has exported these to China in recent years at higher levels than would be predicted by some empirical trade models, and more than proximate coastal economies such as Kenya and Tanzania (see, for example Johnston, Morgan, & Wang, 2015). The expansion of mining operations was Mozambique’s most dramatic area of development, with investments made by the Brazilian company Vale Moçambique (aiming to sell iron concentrate to China) (*Macauhub*, 2010a), along with Chinese companies like Wuhan Iron and Steel Corp (*Reuters*, 2010). Chinese businesses were signalling plans to invest more than US\$13 billion in Mozambique over the subsequent decade in infrastructure, mining, agriculture and tourism, including US\$5 billion in coal mining

promised by the Chinese company Kingho (Horta, 2011). The modernisation of Beira harbour was projected to facilitate a potential export gateway for Chinese companies in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Horta, 2011). In line with Chinese tourism plans, investors began building new five-star hotels around Maputo, worth more than US\$230 million (Hanlon, 2010a). Mozambique's imports from China were, meanwhile, "dominated by vehicles and parts, electrical appliances and iron and steel articles, construction materials and related machinery, manufactured goods, like footwear, bags, electronic products, [and] textiles" (Ilhéu, 2010, p. 54).

### ***Political and Strategic Relations***

Following Mozambique's post-Cold War peace process and inaugural multi-party elections, Sino-Mozambican political relations were oriented towards building stronger political linkages, and facilitating and encouraging growing economic ties. Paula Roque (2009) noted that:

Sino-Mozambican co-operation has for the last ten years centred around high-level diplomatic visits and exchanges of legislative bodies, political parties and government agencies; foreign policy co-ordination in regional and international affairs; and the development of economic and trade co-operation in infrastructure, agriculture and natural resource extraction. (p. 4)

Under the close scrutiny of the media and civil society, Chinese investors went out of their way to win public support in Mozambique while the government did much to ensure the proper regulation of Chinese companies (Roque, 2009). However, the huge potential impact of Chinese investment in Mozambique's economy quickly won over devoted pro-Chinese proselytes in the political class, who were willing to minimise the negatives of engagement with the emerging giant.

### **Domestic**

Since 2007, a number of high profile Chinese politicians have visited Mozambique, including President Hu Jintao, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, as well as a steady stream of lower officials. The Mozambican President Armando Guebuza and Prime Minister (Luísa Diogo and subsequently Aires Ali) travelled to China annually for high-level meetings with their Chinese counterparts (Marks, 2010; Seabra, 2011; *Macauhub*, 2011c). Mozambique produces minerals such as gold, tantalum and bauxite, and its

Mozal aluminium smelter is Africa's second largest producer of aluminium. Deposits of other minerals such as copper, iron ore, manganese and titanium have also been discovered (Yager, 2004). Mozambique has three relatively large coal deposits, with reserves estimated at about 2.4 billion tonnes and mines likely to last 35 years. Detected natural gas accumulation were estimated at the time to hold 3.5 trillion cubic feet of gas (Cuvilas, Jirjis, & Lucas, 2001), and oil had been discovered in Mozambique's north, though not necessarily in commercial quantities (Hanlon, 2010a). Overall, Chinese economic interest, while focused on investment in Mozambique's extractive industries (mining, forestry and agriculture) along with tourism, has been pursued with the perspective of maintaining the long-term, stable relationship needed to develop these resources (Horta, 2011).

### Regional

Mozambique's transport infrastructure is also logistically important to other Chinese projects throughout the region—specifically in neighbouring Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe, all of which are landlocked with Mozambique their closest exit to the sea (Horta, 2011). The ports at Maputo, Beira and Nacala all have great potential to service the region, and during the period under study several projects were seeking to base their regional offices in Maputo. China's assistance to upgrade infrastructure relating to harbours, roads and railways would thus benefit Chinese enterprise across the region (Roque, 2009).

### Global

Diplomatically, Mozambique does not have great influence on the world stage, but it does belong to larger associations of interest to China. China has sought to build alliances of states within global institutions capable of defending Chinese interests. To this end, China has exerted effort to broaden its relations with the Portuguese-speaking countries—with annual Lusophone conferences held in Macau (*Macauhuh*, 2010b; Ilhéu, 2010), as well as to forge alliances within the United Nations with the aim of influencing votes regarding China (Pant, 2008).

Within Africa, Mozambique also belongs to the African Union and the Southern African Development Community, which China has also sought to influence politically, and whose interdependent transport systems and increasing economic integration create regional marketing opportunities for investors. Strategically, Mozambique's significance lies in its position on the Mozambique Channel, through which 30 percent of world oil passes (including *en route* to China) (Seabra, 2011).

Given that China's potential Great Power-rival India was developing relations with East African states, and upgrading its navy with "state-of-the-art aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, and other surface combatants" (Holslag, 2009, p. 26), China had strategic reasons to establish relations with states throughout the region. The growing threat of piracy in the Indian Ocean, although centred far to the north of Mozambique, also presented a reason for increasing security cooperation regarding shipping along the Mozambican coast (Seabra, 2011). Militarily, however, the Sino-Mozambican relationship remained very low-level, involving only meetings between defence ministers (*Xinhuanet*, 2009); technical, logistical and infrastructure assistance in the form of vehicles, computers, uniforms and houses (Chichava, 2008, p. 8); and funding for non-lethal equipment that had risen to US\$3 million a year by 2011 (*AllAfrica.com*, 2008; *AIM News*, 2010). This stands in contrast with Mozambique's relations with the US military, which was involved in actively training Mozambican forces for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations (Portuguese Institute of International Relations and Security [IPRIS], 2010).

Overall, during this period commentators emphasised that Chinese activity was being watched closely by the media and civil society, and that the Mozambican government remained quite active in ensuring proper regulation of Chinese enterprises (Roque, 2009). However, with the relatively large amount of Chinese aid and investment in Mozambique, it is no surprise that high-level Mozambican politicians continued to praise the relationship or deflect criticism. President Guebuza, for example, characterised those who criticised China as "delirious" (*AllAfrica.com*, 2011b). A former Mozambican foreign minister noted that, "[i]n the end it's up to us, the Chinese like anyone else have their interests and will plunder us to the extent that we let them" (Horta, 2009).

### **Sudan and China**

Following decades of British rule over Sudan, independence was granted in 1956 to a national administration dominated by Northern Sudanese officials (Johnson, 1988). Ethnic and religious tensions between Sudan's northern and southern territories would result in two civil wars, one fought primarily between Southern Sudanese militia and the Sudanese military from 1962 to 1972, and another from 1983 to 2002 between the Southern SPLM/A and central government forces with allied Arab militia (Chapman, 2008; Flint & de Waal, 2008). During these periods Sudan was ruled by a series of military regimes and unstable democratic governments which were unable to decisively end the conflict with the south (Chapman,

2008). Sudan has thus had a very turbulent and militarised post-civil war history.

As with other African states, China evoked its shared connections in fighting colonialism in order to construct a portrayal of deep historical connections between the two nations (International Crisis Group, 2012). Low-level political and economic links were forged in Sudan's post-independence period, with sales of fighter jets to Sudan in the late 1960s and the provision of small loan and aid packages in the 1970s. China supported Khartoum in its conflict with southern Sudan, and benefitted politically in 1971 from a failed coup attempt by the Sudanese Communist Party for which Khartoum blamed the Soviet Union (Shinn, 2009). From the 1980s China became a significant source of antipersonnel and antitank mines for Sudan (*Human Rights Watch*, 2003).

Colonel Omar al-Bashir seized power in Sudan on 30 June 1989, installing a military dictatorship that aimed to maintain power through a national divide-and-rule strategy, using Arab militias to repress insurgencies in troubled regions such as Darfur (Collins, 2008). Most observers were highly critical of the Bashir regime's persecution of minority groups, violations of human rights, and campaigns of 'Arabisation' and 'Islamisation' against non-Arab southerners and Nuba peoples (Adar, 1994; Verney, 1995; Burr & Collins 2003). As Sudan's relations with the West began to deteriorate, Beijing became the default patron of the regime and was able to gradually expand its influence. International isolation deepened for Sudan from 1993, after it was placed on the United States' list of 'state sponsors of terrorism'. The oil company Chevron had originally invested in Sudan, but by the 1990s had abandoned its concessions. Sudan then invited China to replace Chevron in the Sudanese petroleum industry. This led quickly to a dramatic rise in Chinese activity in Sudan (Shinn, 2009)—driven by China's increasing reliance on imported oil—which included China's increased provision of ammunition, helicopters, military aircraft and armoured vehicles (*Human Rights Watch*, 2003).

Economically, modern Sudan has been characterised as a failing state, lacking the capacity to effectively govern its remote provinces and provide basic utilities for much of its population (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012; *The Fund for Peace*, 2017). Although in the early 1970s Sudan was considered the 'bread basket of the Arab world', the adoption of counterproductive economic policies in line with World Bank and later IMF conditions resulted in "more scarcity, skyrocketing inflation rates, huge budget and balance of payment deficits, economic stagnation and widespread poverty"

(Maharn, cited in Elhadary & Samat, 2012, p. 214). International sanctions only intensified these issues. The relationship between China and Sudan was thus, though deeply unequal, a rare source of revenue. However, there is a strong argument that, throughout the period under study, the strong linkage between Chinese investment in Sudan's oil industry and Chinese arms sales to Khartoum meant that the relationship was far from beneficial for the Sudanese population (*Human Rights Watch*, 2003).

### ***Economic Relations***

#### Aid

Prior to 1989 aid was central to China's economic relations with Sudan, though this was composed of only small-scale "barter trade, concessionary loans, arms transfers and medical assistance as well as assorted infrastructure construction projects" and was without significant impact (Large, 2008, pp. 94-95). During these decades, Chinese aid to Sudan remained less than that offered by the World Bank and IMF (Nour, 2011). By 1999 China was providing 17 percent of all loans and grants made to Sudan but, after dwindling in the first years of the millennium, this rose rapidly to 76 percent of loans and grants from 2005-2007. This fell again following the 2008 economic crisis. These figures most likely reflect the divergent aid practices of the West and China in reaction to Sudanese government-sponsored attacks in the Darfur region (Nour, 2011). It has been noted that a majority of this funding went to infrastructure projects, which have wide social benefits while also assisting Chinese extractive industries (Nour, 2011; Yagoob, Adam, & Zuo, 2015). The Chinese also devote aid to "grandiose and prestigious projects and buildings ... that are perceived as unproductive investment that few traditional donors would be willing to finance" (Nour, 2011, p. 6).

Large (2008) notes that Chinese aid specifically to Darfur emphasised more humanitarian development, including the construction of 120 schools. However, in general China's education-related aid to Sudan was minor and focused on higher degrees in Engineering and the Sciences, implying motivations beyond altruism (Nour, 2011). Nour (2011) concludes that, while implied conditionalities attached to Chinese aid to Sudan—to allow Chinese investment and to purchase Chinese goods—are negative, Chinese aid assists with sustainable development by complementing local investments and facilitating local capacity-building through training. Others concur regarding the positive impacts of Chinese aid projects, though point

critically to the prominence of loans in Chinese aid (as opposed to grants) as increasing Sudan's external debt burden (Yagoob, Adam, & Zuo, 2015).

### Trade

Sino-Sudanese trade also grew remarkably through this period, as the booming oil-based economy resulted in increasing Sudanese demand for Chinese manufactured goods (Large, 2008). China's role as Sudan's leading trading partner became indisputable, with bilateral trade estimated at around US\$2.56 billion in 2004, US\$3.9 billion in 2005 and US\$5.7 billion in 2007 (Large, 2007, p. 58; Large, 2009, p. 616), and with Sudan importing US\$2.4 billion in manufactured goods from China in 2007 (around 30 percent of all Sudanese imports) (IMF, 2012, p. 467). By 2009, more than half of Sudan's exports were purchased by China, giving it the highest export dependency on China of any African state (Johnston & Yuan, 2014).

### Investment

China's investment in the Sudanese oil industry during the 1990s turned the fledgling industry into the driving force behind Sudan's economic growth, and transformed Sudan into a net oil exporter. Although the American company Chevron invested millions of dollars in oil exploration from the 1970s onwards, civil conflict in Sudan and international pressure eventually forced its withdrawal from the region (Yi-Chong, 2008). The Canadian company Arakis purchased Chevron's concessions in 1992, and in 1996 formed the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company in consortium with the China National Petroleum Company (CNPC), Malaysia's Petronas Carigali Overseas Sudan Berhad, and Sudan's national oil company Sudapet Limited, with China owning the largest share (Yi-Chong, 2008; *Human Rights Watch*, 2003). China's investment in the oil industry increased during the 2000s with growing profitability and the acquisition of further concessions (Lee, Chan, & Chan, 2011; Large, 2007). By the late 2000s total Chinese investment in Sudanese oil was estimated at around US\$4.7 billion, with up to 82 percent of Sudan's oil exports going to Chinese distributors (Shinn, 2009; IMF, 2012, p. 467).

China complemented its investment by employing CNPC's 'construction arm' to build a refinery close to Khartoum, a 1500km pipeline to the Red Sea, and engaging in oilfield surface engineering (*Human Rights Watch*, 2003). As a consequence, the number of Chinese workers living for prolonged periods in Sudan increased threefold between the early 1990s and 2006, reaching a peak of around 24,000 (Hong, 2011), with suggestions

Chinese convict labour may also have been employed there (*Human Rights Watch*, 2003; Chellaney, 2010). Chinese economic cooperation in Sudan also secured contracts for large infrastructure projects such as railroads, bridges, communications networks, hydro-electric facilities, the Khartoum airport, textile plants, the (environmentally deleterious) Merowe and Kajbar Dams, and a major water pipeline system (Reeves, 2007; Large, 2008; Foster, Butterfield, Chen, & Pushak, 2008; Sutter, 2012). However, much of China's infrastructure in Sudan is oriented towards facilitating oil extraction, including the construction of all-weather roads and airstrips, and the Khartoum refinery in which China has a 50 percent stake (Hong, 2011).

Improvement in Sudan's economy throughout this period was largely due to Chinese-led foreign investment in the Sudanese oil industry, with Sudan's GDP increasing by an average of 6 percent annually from 1997 onwards (Abdalla, 2008). Poverty levels in Sudan were said to have declined from 64 to 46 percent between 2005 and 2009 (Abdalla, 2008; Elhadary & Samat, 2012). Drastically improved economic growth rates and a powerful new political ally enabled Khartoum to cut ties with Western financial institutions in the 1990s and pursue a state-sponsored economic reform program supported by Chinese investment (Elhadary & Samat, 2012). It has been argued, however, that although "the new and expanding wealth of the Khartoum boom may have been a reality in the capital...very little of this new wealth 'trickled down' into the countryside" (Collins, 2008, p. 238).

### ***Political and Strategic Relations***

While the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) may be an 'old friend' of Sudan, with diplomatic relations dating back to 1959, China only became important to Sudan's foreign relations from the early 1990s as China's new outreach to Africa coincided with increasing international hostility to Sudan's National Islamic Front (Large, 2008). Growing economic ties were complemented by extensive political contact involving regular tours by leading CCP officials, including former President Hu Jintao and former Premier Wen Jiabao, and "high-level links between key members of the Sudanese and Chinese governing elite and business executives" (Large, 2007, p. 58). China used its influence in global institutions, such as the UN Security Council, to block or dilute resolutions detrimental to Sudan (Halper, 2010). In return, al-Bashir's administration favoured Chinese companies when awarding contracts and supported China at international forums by publicly backing China's Tibet and Taiwan policies (Shinn, 2009). However, China's growing concern about being seen as a

responsible rising power, together with growing criticism of China's conduct by Western and African commentators, made China's non-interference policy increasingly untenable. As a result China's policy towards Sudan underwent slight changes resulting in "the first instance where China actively lobbied an African government to permit a UN mission on its soil...via active brokering and indirect pressure" (Holslag, 2009, p. 30).

Though an economic element, the Sino-Sudanese arms trade was also a central political component of the countries' bilateral relationship. China had a long history of supplying arms to Sudan prior to the 1990s, but this accelerated through the mid-1990s to encompass supply of the vast majority of Sudan's imported small arms, and sophisticated weapons systems such as modern fighter aircraft (*Human Rights Watch*, 2003; Jakobson, 2009; Shinn, 2009).

From the late 1990s China also helped Khartoum establish what would become the third largest domestic arms industry in Africa, including three weapons factories, one of which was designed for assembling Chinese tanks (Shinn, 2009; Sutter, 2012). Following talks between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and People's Liberation Army in Beijing in March 2002, military relations rapidly deepened. This manifested in high profile state-to-state diplomatic relations, including talks between senior military figures at the Sudanese Ministry of National Defence in October 2005, and a Chinese tour of the SAF Chief of Joint Staff in April 2007 (Large, 2008). Despite China's emphasis on 'unconditionality' in its relations and non-interference in other nations' internal affairs (Karumbidza, 2007), during this period a 2006 UN panel identified 222 Chinese military vehicles and vast numbers of Chinese shell casings that had been used in the genocidal war in Darfur, spurring claims of Chinese complicity (Shinn, 2009). Various commentators, including the long-time Sudan-watcher Eric Reeves, were damningly critical of China's involvement with Khartoum, arguing that the provision of weapons to the Sudanese government directly supported Bashir's genocidal policies, and that China's support for the regime in the UN Security Council prevented both finding a workable solution to the Darfur conflict and efforts towards regime change (Reeves, 2006; Shinn, 2009; Lee, Chan, & Chan, 2011).

Ultimately, oil development became "deeply interwoven in patterns of conflict in Southern Sudan" (Large, 2007, p. 59), as enlarged government oil revenues facilitated the development of the Sudanese arms manufacturing industry and the expansion of the Sudanese government war machine aimed at militarily dominating oil-producing areas (Large, 2007).

On the other hand, later in the period, Chinese pressure on Khartoum was instrumental in persuading al-Bashir's regime to allow a joint UN-African Union peacekeeping mission into the Darfur region (Shinn, 2009).

## **Conclusions**

Examining the cases of Mozambique and Sudan, in relation to the first criticism that China is primarily motivated in its relations with Africa by extractive economic interests, and that this will only hurt African economies (Large, 2008), in both nations the extraction of primary commodities—oil, gas, and minerals—has certainly been the primary driver of Chinese engagement. However, both case studies demonstrate a more diversified Chinese strategy to win elite and popular support by building infrastructure, improving agriculture, and engaging in broad trade, as well as in training, education and medical care. Rather than simple extraction, this instead seems to point to a mutually beneficial, “balanced and long-term approach to promoting African economic growth” (Hofstedt, 2009, p. 86; Ling, 2010). During the period under study, Chinese trade and investment in Africa did aid development, “if for no other reason than that little investment [was] forthcoming from other sources” (Taylor, 2006, p. 951).

In relation to the second criticism, that China may encourage authoritarianism and corruption, or that China's financial alternatives for African states lessen Western leverage for democratic reform (Alden & Alves, 2009), this also seems to be the case, albeit with some caveats. China's relations with the government of Sudan demonstrate that its policy of non-interference in states means an acceptance of authoritarianism, while its relationship with the government of Mozambique indicates at least a willingness to turn a blind eye to corruption. However, in both these cases, no significant change in the nature of the regimes followed their deepening of relations with China. China did not create these conditions, though it may help to perpetuate them. Meanwhile, while Chinese support for dubious governments is widely (and rightly) criticised, often little is said about Western relations with authoritarian and corrupt governments, such as those in Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Chad or Uganda, to name just a few (Sautman & Hairong, 2007).

In terms of undermining Western leverage in these states, again this seems to be true. As Arrighi (2007) notes, “China has played a leading role ...in rerouting the Southern [financial] surplus to Southern destinations...thereby relaxing the hold of the IMF and other Northern-controlled financial institutions on Southern countries” (p. 382); however,

in the cases of both Mozambique and Sudan, prior Western economic policies were themselves either ineffectual or damaging to the national economies (Jakobson, 2009). Politically, China's undermining of sanctions and the UN arms embargo on Sudan certainly undermined Western efforts to change policies in that country (Shinn, 2009). But it is only in the already isolated state that China became a lifeline for the regime; in the case of Mozambique, its complex political and economic relations regionally and globally mean that the political establishment still has much to lose if threatened with sanctions.

Geo-strategically then, and in relation to the third criticism, was military support an important part of China's relations with African states? And has it posed a human security threat to African civilians? In the case of Mozambique this was a negligible issue, while in Sudan it was of great importance. Chinese military sales and assistance to Sudan were relatively small, but they may have been of great impact. The Darfur genocide would no doubt have taken place regardless, but being willing to passively support these events is shameful. Nevertheless, claims of a Chinese military focus do divert attention from the main military activity taking place in Africa, which is the widespread expansion of American military dominance in the form of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) under the pretence of fighting terrorism, and through which the US actively participates in combat (Yi-Chong, 2008). Ultimately, beyond minor arms sales, even those who suspect China of nefarious military designs have little evidence to point to (Holslag, 2009).

This analysis of Chinese relations with Mozambique and Sudan has thus confirmed some of the critics' claims, while bringing some conclusions into question. While economic relations were primarily extractive, in the context of an extremely poor economic starting level and with the addition of Chinese aid and development projects, the net economic effects seem to have been positive. Chinese relations may have facilitated corruption and authoritarianism, but they were not the cause; they may have undermined international leverage on states, but seemingly only if that leverage was already minimal; and Western nations themselves have otherwise shamelessly supported many corrupt and authoritarian states in Africa. Finally, while China was willing to provide inappropriate military support in Africa - which may have fed into conflict against civilians - claiming that it was a primary element of China's relations with African states, seems an exaggeration.

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## 'Remembering' Absent and Recent Pasts Through Photographs: Young Eritrean Women in New Zealand

Louise Humpage  
University of Auckland  
[l.humpage@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:l.humpage@auckland.ac.nz)

Jay Marlowe  
University of Auckland  
[jm.marlowe@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:jm.marlowe@auckland.ac.nz)

### **Abstract**

This article presents a Photovoice project that explores the narratives of five young women of Eritrean heritage living in New Zealand. The photographs taken by the women suggest that their current individual and collective identities are mediated by two different kinds of 'memories': 'post-memories' of an absent past in their ancestral country that they were too young to experience, which build identity and belonging at the collective level, *and* 'autobiographical memories' of recent, lived experiences which remind participants of their individual achievements since resettlement and/or help them articulate a future in New Zealand.

### **Introduction: Identity, memory and belonging**

This article explores the narratives of five young women of Eritrean heritage who resettled in Auckland, New Zealand as children or were born and raised there. It finds that 'memories' are used to navigate two social worlds: that of their ancestral country and New Zealand. Migration always requires a fine and strategic balance between retaining key aspects of one's culture alongside adopting new ways of being and thinking in the new settlement environment. A vast literature indicates the difficulties of achieving this balance, particularly amongst young people whose personal experience of the 'old' world may be limited or non-existent and is thus mediated by the experiences and memories of parents and older family members (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Brough, Gorman, Ramirez, & Westoby, 2003; Humpage, 2009).

Forced migration adds another dimension to these dynamics because there has been limited or no active choice to migrate to a particular host country, which often enhances nostalgia and longing for a homeland that may no longer exist outside of an individual's or group's memory (Rosińska, 2011). Importantly, this may be true for a person who is not technically a 'refugee', that is, someone who has been assessed and accepted as having a well-founded fear of persecution according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1951) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. For instance, a person may have experienced forced migration but been accepted for resettlement under family reunification criteria, or born in a country of settlement to parents who arrived as refugees. Experiences of displacement, political violence and upheaval are nonetheless a powerful and enduring part of the lived experiences of those of refugee background, no matter which immigration pathway was taken. Previous research has identified the significant hurdles faced by refugees as they make New Zealand 'home' (see, for example, Bloom, O'Donovan, & Udahehuka, 2013; Humpage, 2009).

This research utilises the Photovoice method, which has been found to offer space for people from refugee backgrounds to identify affirmative experiences associated with migration, not only deficits and adversities (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012). Informed by Freire's influential pedagogy on critical consciousness, the Photovoice approach creates opportunities for and gives voice to participants as they reflect upon their social, cultural and political histories and ascribe meanings to lived experience (Carlson, Engebretson, & Chamberlain, 2006). Correspondingly, this article demonstrates the complex ways in which young Eritrean women negotiate and navigate the intersections between identity, memory and belonging.

Identity is neither static nor monolithic, but is rather a dynamic, complex process. While the particularities of culture and identity may shift within new settlement contexts, there is strong historical evidence of migrants maintaining long cultural traditions and an unwillingness to change beliefs, actions or perspectives after resettlement (Yuval-Davis, 2011). 'Culture' is, of course, complex, with Benhabib (2002) describing it as a horizon that recedes every time one approaches it, in that it is contestable, contextual and situated. In particular, young people "do the work of self-making and belonging without straightforward recourse to traditional and predictable identity categories, including ethnicity, and with new skills of mobility and fluidity" (Raffaetà, Baldassar, & Harris, 2015, p. 424).

Nonetheless, culture is often linked to ethnic identity (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992) and women have traditionally been framed as embodying ethnic boundaries; the socially constructed barriers that to some degree separate and maintain ethnic communities. This is because women tend to carry responsibility for reproducing and maintaining culture. Boundaries become slippery when people no longer live within the confines of their cultural surroundings, but can be maintained through codes of both appearance and conduct. While the gendering of ethnic boundaries is often framed as inherently oppressive for women (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992), studies do show how migrant women can exercise agency in this process (D'Sylva & Beagen, 2011; Humpage, 2000).

Women are also often framed as symbolic bearers of nationhood (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992). There is frequently considerable overlap between ethnicity and nationality, particularly in migration contexts where internal ethnic, religious and linguistic differences within a country can be blurred or misunderstood by host societies. The understanding of refugees as 'stateless' persons further complicates notions of nationhood, particularly in countries like Eritrea where, as later discussion will highlight, concepts such as 'nation' and 'state' are relatively recent constructs contextualized by the protracted thirty-year war that led to Eritrea's creation. Within resettlement contexts, where gaining residency or citizenship in the host country does not automatically result in belonging to that nation (Hoyle, 1999), multiple notions of nationhood may exist simultaneously as the past and current identities and lives of refugees intersect. Here our findings support those of recent studies of Eritreans settling across Europe which examine the complexity of identity and belonging in the settlement space (Belloni, 2016; Graf & Thieme, 2016).

When cultural norms or everyday practices of nationalism can no longer be taken for granted, as they might have been at 'home', memory becomes extremely important to identity and belonging. Rosińska (2011) notes that in migration:

Memory plays a triple role: it is identity-forming by maintaining the original identification; it is therapeutic because it helps bear the hardships of transplantation into a foreign culture; and it is also community-forming, by creating a bond among those recollecting together. (p. 39)

We found evidence all three roles were important for our Eritrean participants in New Zealand as well as evidence of Hirsch's (1999)

distinction between ‘autographical memory’ and ‘post-memory’. In many cases our young participants’ cultural and national identities were shaped by practices and events they had not personally experienced. In this sense, the term ‘memory’ is contested, at times being used to describe what we refer to as an ‘absent’ past, drawing on collective symbols, events and histories relating to Eritrea, where most of the participants have never lived. ‘Traditional’ food, clothing, events and other activities thus intersect with, and are mediated by, the new life in resettlement (D’Sylva & Beagen, 2011; Somerville, 2008).

As the next section highlights, Photovoice has considerable potential to convey such experiences and sentiments: photographs themselves ‘capture’ memories and, as one of our participants noted, help us to ‘remember’ past events. Of course, not all memories are positive. Previous research on refugees and memory has focused heavily on the ongoing impact of trauma memories, and photographs often render refugees speechless and helpless, focusing on the universal trope of suffering (Halilovich, 2011; Mannik, 2013). Nonetheless, our data show that even memories of trauma or suffering can stimulate a sense of belonging at the collective and/or personal level.

Memories, as with any narrative, are partial and selected aspects of a particular experience that nonetheless provide powerful insights into belonging. This is a multi-layered and multi-scalar emotional attachment to feeling at ‘home’ which “becomes articulated, formally structured and politicized only when it is threatened in some way”, such as through migration (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 10). Yuval-Davis (2011) argues that belonging can be constructed via: (1) social locations (sex, race, class or nation); (2) identifications and emotional attachments told through group narratives; and (3) ethical and political value systems with which people judge their own and others’ belonging. The focus here is largely on the second facet, although the facets interact in complex ways and are not subsumable to each other, and the group narratives our participants draw upon are intimately linked with their Eritrean identity (although this may well reflect their specific social locations as ethnic Tigrinya, Orthodox Christians and women). Despite being young and, in some cases, born in New Zealand, the participants’ photographs highlight how group narratives facilitate the ‘remembering’ of a cultural and national past that our participants did not themselves experience or were too young to assimilate, thus encouraging a collective sense of belonging within their national community. The photographs also, however, depict a personal sense of belonging within broader New Zealand society via memories of a more

recent, lived past. First, however, we discuss the Photovoice methodology and our participant sample.

### **Photovoice study design and sample**

Photovoice is a community-based research tool that aims to balance research and action, offering research subjects a say in how their experiences are represented, and potentially enabling them to influence the outcomes of policy decisions (Wang, 2006). It involves giving participants a camera to take photographs of the people and things that have meaning to them, then to explain these in their own words so that researchers can understand what each photograph represents to them. Like other researchers (for example, Wang, 2006; Green & Kloos, 2009), we found the method allowed our young adult participants to become more active in the research process—rather than just passively responding to researcher-led questions—thus moving away from the tendency for young people to be talked about and spoken for rather than engaged in any meaningful way.

The data presented here are drawn from a wider Photovoice project asking young people (aged 18–25) from refugee backgrounds to take photographs and reflect on their lives in Auckland within several key themes: ‘my home,’ ‘my learning experiences,’ ‘my employment experiences,’ ‘my friendships,’ ‘my life in New Zealand,’ and ‘where I feel I belong’. Participants were recruited by a third party via an Auckland organisation representing refugee communities and were trained and interviewed by a young research assistant of European descent familiar with refugee issues. Each participant was given a digital camera and took as many photos as they wished in relation to these themes over three weeks, with the total number of photos taken by each participant ranging from 40 to 150. Having allowed the researchers to download these photos, each was discussed as part of a semi-structured interview in relation to the overall themes noted above. This study was approved by the university human participant ethics committee and participants gained informed consent from the people depicted in the photographs and agreed to allow us to present the pictures that follow.

Our sample was never intended to be representative of young refugee-background people and, instead, focused on exploring what the narratives emerging around the photographs told us about belonging and identity among this cohort. We have chosen to focus on the data from only the young Eritrean women in order to highlight key similarities in the role of *memory* in culture and identity, as well as some differences that remind us that we should not homogenise the experiences even of those who come

from the same country, ethnic group, religion, gender or age group. Given ethical concerns, we have chosen not to name our participants and allocated each an alpha identifier of A to E which we have summarised below.

<b>Participant ID</b>	<b>Time living in New Zealand</b>
A	5 years
B	2 years
C	3 years
D	10 years
E	New Zealand born

To put the research data in context, it is important to discuss the specific history of Eritrea and its diaspora in New Zealand.

### **Historical context and resettlement in New Zealand**

New Zealand has resettled Eritrean refugees since the late 1990s, the result of the mass displacement of Eritrea’s population following a torrid history of conflict and controversy over its borders, as well as gross human rights violations under repressive military rule. Eritrea’s borders—occupying a strategic location on the Horn of Africa, next to the Red Sea and bordering Sudan, Ethiopia and Djibouti—were established during a period of Italian colonial rule that ended in 1941. A decade of British administrative control (until 1952) was followed by the United Nations establishing Eritrea as an autonomous region within the Ethiopian federation. Ethiopia’s annexation of Eritrea as a province in 1962 triggered a 30-year war for independence against Ethiopian forces, which ended when the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front captured Asmara from the Ethiopian Army regime and formed a provisional government in 1991. Independence followed a referendum in 1993 (Connell, 2010; Hoyle, 1999).

Given this history, national identity-building since independence has been preoccupied with highlighting Eritrea’s distinctiveness from Ethiopia. While Triandafyllidou (1998) highlights that the “identity of a nation is often defined and/or redefined through the influence of ‘significant others’, namely other nations or ethnic groups that are perceived to threaten the nation, its distinctiveness, authenticity and/independence” (p. 594), this can be complicated by cultural and linguistic similarities between different ethnic groups (Hoyle, 1999). Nevertheless, it may still explain why, since independence, nationalism has also been promoted through the wide use of flags and the map of Eritrea by businesses and at special family events such as weddings, while those who sacrificed their lives or limbs in the war are regarded as special symbols of the nation (Hoyle, 1999).

Eritrea's President Isaias Afewerki of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice has been in power since 1993 and leads the country's only political party. It actively promotes a homogenous perspective of being Eritrean that reinforces the understandings of national identity noted above and limits the articulation of other narratives of national identity (Connell, 2010). For instance, Reporters Without Borders (2016) has ranked the country last in the world for press freedom over the last nine years. Despite its ratification, Eritrea's 1997 constitution has also never been fully implemented and national elections have not taken place since 1991. Human Rights Watch (2015) estimates that six percent of the Eritrean population has since fled, with an estimated 5,000 people leaving Eritrea each month (although these figures are contested, especially by the Eritrean Government). National events and memories are thus highly politicised within Eritrea and in the diaspora. Such memories are likely divided along political, ethnic and generational lines.

New Zealand's 2013 Census records 243 Eritrean people living there, a 31 percent increase since 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Eritreans continue to arrive in small numbers under the quota refugee system and as asylum seekers, while fewer immigrate under the family reunification programme. Three of our five participants arrived under the refugee quota, while one young woman resettled under the family reunification category and another was born in New Zealand. These experiences largely mirror census data, which found that 81 percent of Eritreans living in New Zealand in 2013 were born overseas, only 62 percent of whom were born in Eritrea. Participants were all Orthodox Christians, as are half of Eritreans in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Dirar (2007) notes that distinctions between Orthodox Christianity and Islam, which are dominant in Northeast Africa, have deeply rooted local traditions that have become core elements of identity within Eritrea; they are also associated with linguistic differences between the two groups (Hoyle, 1999). Participants were also all identified with the Tigrinya ethnic group, the largest in Eritrea, and, although only their Eritrean identity was specifically discussed, this may have been conflated with Tigrinya cultural norms (as is the case in Eritrea since independence). Of those participants born overseas, one had arrived ten years previously and the remainder had settled in New Zealand between three and five years ago. All participants identified with their Eritrean heritage no matter where they were born. Like the majority (58%) of Eritreans in New Zealand, our participants live in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. Our research focus on young women (ranging in age from 19 to 22 years) is appropriate given Eritreans in New Zealand are also

disproportionately young (median age 23.5 years) with a fairly even gender balance (52% women) (Statistics New Zealand, 2013).

In the following discussion, we draw upon the visual and verbal narratives of the five Eritrean women to explore the role of memory in settlement. Mannik (2013) notes that “knowledge is not stored in photographs but allotted to them through the various ways they are read and linked to ideas about memory” (p. 7). We thus took our cues from the verbal narratives of our participants, which linked the photographs to both memories of an ‘absent’ past and a recent, lived past. We acknowledge that, given the repressive regime in Eritrea and their ages, it is possible our participants self-censored their responses or provided simply what they thought the researchers wanted. Benhabib (2002) also notes that: “[t]he social observer ... is the one who imposes, together with local elites, unity and coherence on cultures as observed entities” (p. 5). While we represent participant comments accurately, ultimately *we* selected the photographs and narratives to discuss in this article. This includes our decision not to present individual narratives in their entirety but to thematically analyse the photographs, as presented in the following two sections, using participants’ accounts of their associated meanings and contexts.

### **Making an ‘absent’ past present**

In popular understanding, ‘memories’ recall past personal experiences. This ‘autobiographical memory’”, however, sits alongside ‘memories’ that draw on other peoples’ accounts that can be internalised and appropriated as one’s own (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013). “Post-memory” is Hirsch’s (1999) term for:

... the relationship of children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences that they ‘remember’ only as stories and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right. (p. 8)

The photographs analysed in this section illustrate how young people, who may have been ‘absent’ from these experiences, are nonetheless present in Eritrean community-building processes that ‘share’ collective memories with young people, encouraging a sense of ethnic and national identity (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013). The photos show how everyday practices and activities can encourage a sense of national identity. For

instance, our young participants discussed how their parents—with whom they were still living—provided visual ‘reminders’ of Eritrea that helped construct ‘memories’ of a place where these young participants had never lived or were too young to remember for themselves.

Participant A, who had lived in New Zealand for five years, took the photograph below (Photo 1), which depicts her mother crocheting in the colours of the Eritrean national flag: “This is handcraft my Mum made ... we have a bread that’s cool[ed] in the jar and then we use this to cover the jar. These are the colours of our flag.” In many countries, flags on public buildings are taken for granted and barely noticed as individuals go about their daily lives (Billig, 1995). But here the strong identification with the Eritrean national flag, noted by Hoyle (1999) as visually and symbolically articulating independence from Ethiopia, is reinforced daily through her mother’s handiwork.

**Photo 1**



National days and events can provide an opportunity for active, collective ‘remembering’ of historical events that are important to national identity (Billig, 1995). This may be particularly true for those of a refugee background, given they often originate from countries torn by conflict. The Eritrean wars for independence represent one of the longest struggles on the African continent, resulting in the deaths of more than 100,000 people

(Norwegian Refugee Council, 2014). Every year on 20 June, Eritreans mark Martyrs' Day as a national holiday to pay tribute to those who died during the conflict. Three of the five participants took photos of an event in Auckland that continued this tradition. Participant B stated:

This is Martyrs' Day. We're all originally from Eritrea, and we only got our independence like twenty-four years ago. So to get that independence we lost a lot of people. So this is to celebrate, we do it every year to celebrate their lives and stuff.

Participant B took the photograph below (Photo 2) to indicate how they commemorated martyrs' deaths by holding two minutes of silence to remember those lost. Participant C, who arrived in New Zealand three years ago, also took several photographs like the one below (Photo 3) to demonstrate how candles are used to represent the martyrs:

There is a meaning by the light 'cos we always say that the people died for us, because they were burning down ... That box [next to the candles] is for the money. You always put money over there and send it to our country for the people – for the parents who their daughters and sisters died in the struggle. So we always give them money... They give their daughters and sons to the country so that's our responsibility to help them ... It's like you have to be responsible for all those people...

This sense of responsibility ties the younger generation to those remaining in Eritrea. The same participant (C) had a further photograph

**Photo 2**



**Photo 3**



taken of herself (not featured) as she taught other young people the history behind Martyrs' Day, indicating the key role the younger generation are playing in 'remembering' an absent past. Noting that the children in other photos had been born in New Zealand she stated: "I came to New Zealand when I was 16 so I know too much, everything about Eritrea. They don't know anything."

Such findings echo Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's (2013) work with young Sahrawi refugees in Spain, where older children taught younger peers who "had not yet learnt to 'remember' the history of the conflict, the names of key places and characteristics of the [Sahrawi] homeland which come to be internalised, memorised and memorialised (and, indeed, contested) in adolescence and adulthood" (p. 637). Certainly, two other Eritrean participants (A and B), who took photos of the same candles, were a little less familiar with national history, even if they understood the candles' symbolic purpose. Participant B said: "We always light candles on Martyrs' Day. It's the 20th June and ... I don't know why we light it up but I think it's to remember them."

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2013) is critical of diaspora studies that assume such collective memories are transmitted to descendants with insufficient attention to "the diverse ways in which children and youth 'inherit', contest, negotiate, transmit and mobilise specific memories" (p. 632). There was certainly no indication that the young women in our study were being pressured by their parents to 'live in the past' and instead they demonstrated agency in negotiating an identity between two cultures. For instance, Participant D took photographs of relatives dressed in clothing in the colours of the Eritrean flag, noting how this 'reminded' them of their homeland, but also included a self-portrait of her window shopping for western clothes that are fashionable within mainstream New Zealand society (and indeed in many parts of Africa). There was no evidence, as found in Somerville's (2008) research, of children of migrants creating their own fashion styles reflecting both their connection to their parents' birthplace and their own country of citizenship, thus "building bridges across national boundaries" (p. 28). But this participant did not appear to consider the wearing of western clothes to be in tension with her desire to maintain Eritrean cultural practices or expectations.

National identity is, of course, not the only form of belonging important to the young women and, in many instances, this intersected with their religious identities. Participant C, who migrated only three years ago, highlighted the importance of her Christian identity being known. Referring to a photograph of her younger sisters, she said: "There have to be crosses

on the traditional clothes. These clothes are worn on special occasions”. This embroidery provides an explicit, daily reminder of her community’s religious faith. When asked if she would wear the ‘traditional’ dress with its crosses out every day, such as to the mall, Participant C replied: “Sometimes we wear ‘cos we feel like ‘let’s show our culture’”. Donning such clothing reflects an internal act of pride in her religious and ethnic background that she wishes to educate others about, highlighting that so-called ‘traditional’ clothes and practices have relevance in contemporary New Zealand. Triandafyllidou (1998) notes that national identity can be facilitated by national community members sharing a sense of familiarity and unity when compared to an outgroup. While there is no evidence to suggest this was the explicit purpose of the young women wearing such clothes, it is likely to also have had this effect.

Importantly, religion was not something imposed by parents or community elders but was at the centre of the young women’s own identities. Speaking about the photograph below (Photo 4), Participant C noted how important it was to have everyday reminders of the security their Christian faith offers today, as in past times of hardship such as when they and other Eritreans fled their country and lived in refugee camps:

That’s Jesus; I just want to show it. If you go to some of the homes they have little pictures of the angels or Jesus. That’s what we have to do in our house ‘cos we always think that they’re going to keep us safe, so we always put pictures.

**Photo 4**



She also noted that Christian symbolism is central to her understanding of Eritrean culture:

Yeah, we are Orthodox Christians ... and our culture goes with our religion ... You have to be baptised. You have to do this and we go to church every single Sunday, like so many stuff that we do. Our religion goes with our culture, so they go hand in hand.

For this young woman, her national and religious identities were intertwined and thus mutually reinforcing.

Our participants also highlighted the crucial role of food-related practices in cultural transmission. Two of the five young women (A and E) used photographs (see Photos 5, 6 and 7, below) to illustrate the practice of making coffee and associated ethnic foods with a considerable level of detail. For instance, the first photograph below (Photo 5) was used by participant A, who had lived in New Zealand for five years, to describe the coffee bean roasting process: “See, the beans are getting darker and darker... the coffee beans are getting darker. So you roast them until they are dark”, while the second (Photo 6) shows how the beans are taken off the heat and spread on a coconut tree leaf so they do not roast further. The third (Photo 7) indicates that the ground beans are then mixed with water and heated in a special pot. Later the coffee was served in small teacups with ‘Eritrea’ written on the side. As Humpage (2000), D’Sylva & Beagen (2011) and others have highlighted, such cultural transmission is often highly gendered, because girls are taught by their mothers not only how to cook traditional foods but also their importance in maintaining cultural boundaries and histories.

**Photo 5**



**Photo 6**



**Photo 7**



While coffee-making is also important in other cultures, the narratives of the participants C, D and E suggested that the photographs were intended to represent an explicitly Eritrean national identity. The image below (Photo 8) further highlights how food plays a role in connecting the young women with the older generations. Participant D stated:

That's my Mum ... She is doing the coffee now. She is roasting it, the coffee. It's fresh coffee. That's what I have to do ... she puts water on it and she just warm it. When it boils it pops up, the coffee and then she put it here three times and then she put it down for some minutes and we just drink it. We have to do it four times.

In the process of learning the coffee-making ritual, this three-year resident of New Zealand not only learned an important Eritrean tradition, but also gave her mother the opportunity to be an 'expert' and 'teacher', roles often challenged in a resettlement context where refugee parents may struggle with the host language and new ways of life more than their children (Berry et al., 2006; Humpage, 2009).

**Photo 8**



Another food that received much photographic attention was injera, the pancake-like bread that is central to Eritrean cuisine, although also eaten elsewhere. The first two photographs below (Photos 9 and 10) indicate that the focus was again on the ritualised process of making this food, which involved almost as many steps as the coffee-making! Partly this reflected a desire to help their audience—the researchers and what they more broadly anticipated might be ‘New Zealanders’—understand the importance of this food to their national culture.

D’Sylva and Beagen (2011) further note the social and cultural lessons embedded within food practices. For instance, Participant B took a photo of her family eating injera, where her father gives a piece to her brother, which will then be passed to other family members starting on the right and moving anti-clockwise. This suggests that food practices can reinforce gendered power relations, but it is important to stress that other authors have found that food work can “disrupt ethnic invisibility” by situating women as key actors in cultural transmission and maintenance within communities (D’Sylva & Beagen, 2011, p. 281). Moreover, the young woman (Participant E) who took the photos demonstrating the making and presentation of injera also included the third picture below (Photo 11) of potato chips, stating: “This is just my favourite food.” This suggests a seemingly easy transition between Eritrean and New Zealand foods (and thus different representations of belonging and association) in her visual narrative.

**Photo 9**



**Photo 10**



**Photo 11**



Overall, the photographs presented in this section confirm Rosińska’s (2011) view that memory plays an important role in migration by encouraging a collective identity. In this case, it enables Eritrean peoples to

bear together the hardships associated with resettlement, and facilitates a sense of national and religious identity through the collective recollection of the past and the transmission of key cultural practices to create new ‘memories’ among the 1.5 and second generation.

### **Remembering a lived, recent past**

One of the main cultural functions of memory is to create social connections (Schacter & Welker, 2016). While the last section illustrated that this was possible, even when our young refugee participants were drawing on ‘post-memories’, this section focuses on photographs taken by participants that invoked ‘real’, autobiographical memories of resettling in their new homeland and which ultimately led them to articulate a strong sense of belonging—and of a future—in New Zealand.

Given the ages of the participants, it is not surprising that discussion of life in New Zealand frequently identified school as an important place of social interaction and integration. In contrast to previous research highlighting obstacles to educational achievement and a sense of belonging at school (Brough et al., 2003; Humpage, 2009), participants only referred obliquely to negative experiences and tended to use the Photovoice methodology to reflect on the more positive aspects of their school lives. Discussing the photograph below (Photo 12), Participant C stated: “That’s my school ... That’s the hall—students, we were doing assembly, that’s our last day of school”. She liked the school because, although at 19 she was old enough to study at university, like many young people from refugee backgrounds she needed a better understanding of the New Zealand curriculum and to improve her English before pursuing her dream of training to be a nurse: “No one at the [other] high school[s] accepted me ‘cos I’m old enough to go to university but [name of secondary school] they accepted me and they say if you are up to 20 we can accept you”. She acknowledged that other students were much younger and different from herself but: “They were so friendly and they were ask me, like last year of the academy and they say you should help us, you are the older ones. They are really supportive”. Recalling such memories focused her attention on these social connections in a way that she did not appear to have thought about before.

The data also highlighted that achievements at school are used by young people as a measure of improvement or success since arriving in New Zealand. Remembering their early struggles with the English language and adapting to school life provides an important contrast to their present lives. When Participant A, who resettled five years earlier, was asked to reflect on

**Photo 12**



whether taking photographs for the Photovoice project was a challenge for her, she replied “no”, but that it did remind her that:

... when you think of school and stuff, like we had a really hard time adjusting at school here. Because we are black we had that racial thing and then—I know English but my brothers and sisters didn’t know any English—coming here, so it was really hard for them. They’re finished elementary and they’re in high school now. It’s like we actually have achieved something now. So yeah, it wasn’t there weren’t any negative parts of this. It just highlights the stuff that you’ve achieved.

This taps into Brough et al.’s (2003) view that a distinction between “present” and “past” may be inappropriate for young people from refugee backgrounds because:

The past mingles with the present too in terms of the meanings and interpretations young people give to life events as they unfurl. Sense of success or failure, notions of freedom and independence, identity and physical and emotional security may be played out in the present, but contain salient meanings generated by the past. (p. 206)

Indeed, Schacter and Welker (2016) note that a recent trend in cognitive and neuroscientific approaches to memory is to recognise that “human memory evolved not only to allow us to remember but also to allow us to imagine what might happen in the future” (p. 2) by recalling previously experienced events, extracting details and recombining them to simulate what might happen in their personal futures. In this sense, remembering how far they had come encouraged the participants to see what achievements might be possible in their New Zealand lives.

The New Zealand-born Participant E took a photo of her sister at the library, noting it was important to pass on her knowledge to her sister. She was also determined to study hard herself:

... because, you know, you see the lifestyle that you want to have and, you know, not what I’ve left behind, but sort of what my family has left behind. You think “oh wow I’m so grateful, so I’ve got to take this opportunity”.

In this way, remembering past struggles and a previous lack of opportunities made this young woman appreciate her schooling in a way many young New Zealanders do not. Moreover, the quote indicates that educational investment made in young people from a refugee background benefits not just one individual but potentially the entire family or community. Participant A (who resettled five years ago) took photographs of her brothers in school uniform because:

Schools are a really big part in our family. My Mum and Dad wouldn’t be in New Zealand if it wasn’t for us and they came here because they wanted a better future for us and we have to do something so we always have to do good in school.

While this quote suggests a sense of responsibility to her parents, she also highlights significant parental expectations of educational success (see Humpage, 2009). Once again, invoking memories of the past led this participant to imagine a future that was grounded in New Zealand and, importantly, might be a means for overcoming collective past trauma and suffering.

While the photographs of the three newest migrants to New Zealand focused most heavily on the absent past, such as commemorating those sacrificed in Eritrea’s violent history as discussed in the last section, it is important to acknowledge that they also demonstrated agency in actively

participating in rituals common in New Zealand, such as the celebration of birthdays with a special cake. Referring to the photograph below (Photo 13), Participant A stated: “[b]irthdays are not that big in our country” but living in New Zealand meant:

... you can't always go with your culture so you have to improvise. Birthdays are really big in here so yeah, even though we don't do it, we don't have parties and stuff, we cut a cake ... You live in New Zealand so you kind of have to go with their culture too.

**Photo 13**



This visual and verbal narrative illustrates the argument that culture is a horizon negotiated within the contexts that people find themselves situated, enabling participants to create new, more positive memories than those associated with the refugee experience. Further evidence is found in photographs of everyday life in New Zealand, which highlight how engaging with ‘new’ practices in resettlement does not necessitate the exclusion of heritage. Thus, the photographs of the New Zealand-born Participant E saw her reflect on how the local shopping mall is one of her favourite places because she loves fast food and the mall provides a safe and convenient space for socialising with both family and friends. Overall, her photographs—which depicted her sisters and younger relatives eating at well-known fast food restaurants and utilising school holiday

programmes—demonstrated that she and her family are comfortable moving between not only Eritrean and New Zealand foods but also spaces. Indeed, the participants appeared to illustrate a strong understanding of their ‘boundary-crossing’ between two cultures. The oldest participant, D, who had lived in New Zealand for ten years, was asked if taking the photos had given her a different perspective on her identity in Auckland. She said:

I haven’t been taking anything cultural or anything like that but it made me realise who I am in New Zealand maybe. I’m not back home, I am here and I have to adapt to life in New Zealand and how things go. Back home I wouldn’t even have a camera or anything like that, so it just makes me realise a lot of how ... you just become more grateful, kind of like—even my father just says “oh, I’ve got a car, oh I’ve got a house”.

This woman did participate in an African cultural dance group, noting “I guess you’ve got to try and please both worlds” and live both in New Zealand and “in Africa”. Here she reveals a sophisticated understanding of the situational nature of cultural identity and highlights the incredible flexibility many young people embody as they move back and forth between their ‘home’ cultures.

As they grew older, our participants were experiencing greater freedoms than they had before. While this period of transition is often theorised as being challenging to identity among young migrants and refugees (Berry et al., 2006), Participant D, for whom this was most relevant, spoke only of the benefits gained as she transitioned to adulthood. Notably, she identified her car and her job as central to her sense of belonging. Indicating the photo below (Photo 14), she said:

I took this photo because my car means a lot to me and that’s because I hate public transport very much. My car is like my best friend. It’s everywhere with me basically, unless I’m at home then it’s outside but other than that me and my car are like buddies ... It’s not really the car itself but it’s what it does for me.

The car clearly represents a form of independence for this participant. She made a similar statement about work when discussing the photograph below (Photo 15), which is of the retirement village where she had been working part-time for 18 months: “I took this photo because my work is

like my second home as well. I'm always at work and it's where I eat ... I'm hardly home to have dinner and things so that's my home, second house". She enjoyed working there 20 to 30 hours per week, while also studying, because the residents: "[t]hey're like family to me basically. I don't treat them like residents and whatever. To me—when I'm not at work, they notice that I'm not at work. So it's quite cool". Here we see how this simple act of recognition—of her absence from work—can have a huge impact upon a young person, particularly one whose refugee experience has been marred by a lack of recognition and respect.

**Photo 14**



**Photo 15**



When reflecting on the experience of participating in the Photovoice project, Participant D further noted how she had learned that: “Photos are not just photos, there’s something behind photos”. Here she referred to how photographs can be used to stimulate old memories, but also how the act of photography itself creates new interpretations of the past, as Participant A also highlighted. For instance, she took the photo of the pedestrian crossing below (Photo 16) because: “Before we came to New Zealand we didn’t even know what that was, the pedestrian crossing and allowing the cars to stop for you to walk”.

This rather mundane image thus stimulated reflection on the now taken-for-granted life she has created in New Zealand, reminding her of the rapid learning curve young refugees experience upon arrival. Here the second role that memory plays in migration comes into play, offering a ‘before’ and ‘after’ comparison that helps overcome the hardships of being transplanted into a new cultural context (Rosińska, 2011).

**Photo 16**



**Conclusion: Remembering to belong**

The photographs and narratives of our five Eritrean participants illustrate the importance of memory in creating social connections of two differing kinds (Schacter & Welker, 2016). First, a collective sense of identity is created or enhanced through ‘post-memories’ that are not always actually remembered as lived experience by young people from a refugee background but are nonetheless constructed through cultural rituals and symbols centred on food, clothing and decorative homewares, as well as the commemoration of national events that link those born or raised in New Zealand with their Eritrean homeland. The fact that four of five participants chose to focus heavily on these events when taking photographs as part of the Photovoice project suggests that such remembering is an active part of their identity, not just something directed by their parents. This was the case whether participants were New Zealand-born or had migrated. The narrative of the fifth participant indicated that the ‘absent’ past informed

her participation in a cultural dance group but even here she placed a greater focus on memories of her own, lived experiences in New Zealand rather than those prior to resettlement. Yet each of the participants took some photographs reminding them of their own lived experiences in New Zealand. These memories highlighted how far they had come since childhood and allowed them to articulate a future in New Zealand—as New Zealanders—that may not have seemed possible earlier.

Second, the data indicated how people's various social locations (gender, age, ethnicity, etc.) intersect with multiple actors, cultural traditions, religious practices and other histories to inform belonging. This is likely true whether a person is a forced or voluntary migrant, but the 'memories' of the nation, may be particularly poignant for individuals from a refugee background, since persecution and dislocation disrupt national and personal histories, even when not *personally* experienced as in the case of some of our young participants. While caution must be exercised when looking at such a small group of participants, it is clear that living a cross-national and cross-cultural existence led these young women to draw upon *both* autobiographical and post-memories to develop narratives about who they are.

We recognise that the photographs were taken by participants during a particular life-phase and likely do not represent the multiple ways in which they belong or the ways in which memory is comprehensively conceptualised. The limited time that participants engaged with the researchers also meant that it was impossible to obtain detailed family histories and forced migration experiences to contextualise the accounts of our young participants. The narratives associated with the photographs we selected present, at best, a partial account of their meaning. Nonetheless, the chosen photographs demonstrate the important interplay between past and present in the lives of young refugees. The participants were not 'stuck in the past' or being 'held back' by tradition, but instead demonstrated agency in the ways they negotiated the past and present and the values and traditions important in Eritrea and New Zealand. Photovoice was a useful tool in provoking their stories, largely because of the power of the visual images taken by the young women and their articulate explanations of what they meant to them. We do not deny the challenges the participants have faced and will continue to face in their resettlement journeys, but believe these findings bode well for this generation of young people, who live 'in between' two cultures and two temporal periods.

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## African Mothers' Experiences of Raising 'Afro-Kiwi Kids' in Aotearoa / New Zealand

Helene Connor

[h.connor@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:h.connor@auckland.ac.nz)

*Te Puna Wananga - School of Maori and Indigenous Education, Faculty of  
Education and Social Work, The University of Auckland*

Irene Ayallo

[iayallo@unitec.ac.nz](mailto:iayallo@unitec.ac.nz)

*Department of Social Practice  
Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland*

Susan Elliott

[sjelliott@xtra.co.nz](mailto:sjelliott@xtra.co.nz)

*Independent consultant, Auckland*

### Abstract

This article presents findings from qualitative research data gathered from a group of ten refugee-background and immigrant African mothers living in Auckland, *Aotearoa*/New Zealand. The research study—*From Mama Africa to Papatūānuku: The experiences of a group of African Mothers living in Auckland*—focused on the mothers' narratives and their perceptions of their experiences of mothering within the cultural and social contexts of *Aotearoa*/New Zealand, and how they set about raising their 'Afro-Kiwi kids' (a term used by several of the women to describe their children's dual identity) in their adopted country. Findings are specific to the cohort's experiences and the Auckland community in which they have made new homes for themselves and their families. The role and place of African women migrants in resettlement and research into their mothering is limited, and this research was cognisant of addressing this gap in the literature. The study acknowledged the strong role women have within their families as guardians of culture and language, and an underlying rationale was to increase understanding of the ways mothers contribute to new migrant and refugee-background communities and to uncover some of the

challenges they face. Identifying central themes from the narratives was a significant aspect of this research. Identifying and reporting on the themes provided an inherently flexible approach and enabled the researchers to work collaboratively with the women to make sense of and interpret the data. Themes identified included: integration, language, connections with Māori culture, cultural reproduction and mothering practices.

*He aroha whaerere, he potiki piri poho*  
A mother's love is the greatest treasure<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

Migrant mothering extends borders, both ideologically and materially. Migrant mothers are often torn between mothering in ways that resemble how they were mothered or conceiving of other ways of mothering to 'adapt' and settle in to their new country (Kuroczycka Schultes, & Valliantos, 2016). The African migrant and refugee-background<sup>2</sup> mothers' narratives, from which this article draws, often expressed how they adapted their mothering practices to the bicultural context of Aotearoa/New Zealand: a context that acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi<sup>3</sup> as the foundation document of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Māori as tangata whenua (first peoples of the land). Connection to Māori was a major theme and is discussed in some detail.

Kačkutė (2016, p.61) argues that mothering in a foreign land is a site of "intense negotiations" pertaining to everyday occurrences, such as how to style your child's hair, what clothing they should wear and what schools they should attend. Feeding the family, prenatal care, birth, infant care, managing financial challenges, employment and unemployment, social isolation and lack of health care are common issues faced by mothers who settle in a new country. The mothers in this article mentioned many of these challenges and how the 'intense negotiation' required to address such challenges often placed them in precarious positions of marginalisation and stigmatisation.

Themes from this research are similar to those of several other recent research projects on African women in New Zealand. In the work of Adelowo (2012), for example, she discusses themes which fit within the stages of an African motif-rites of passage where themes such as 'loss of family support', 'ethnic food', 'maintaining cultural identity' and racism

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<sup>1</sup> This proverb or *whakatauki* is a well-known saying in Māoridom and is often used to discuss the importance of mothering.

occur. These themes were also evident in the interviews with the mothers in this research (Connor, Elliott, & Ayallo, 2016).

### **Context of the Study**

The findings presented in this article are from a study with a group of ten migrant and refugee-background African mothers living in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand. The study was interested in exploring how the mothers perceived the New Zealand cultural and social context of motherhood, and the challenges and issues they faced as they ‘settled’ into their new homes. To contextualise the study, a brief description of Aotearoa/New Zealand is provided, along with a brief background of African migration and the demographic background of the women in the study. A brief overview of the study methods is also provided.

### **Brief description of Aotearoa/New Zealand**

*Aotearoa*, meaning ‘The Land of the Long White Cloud’, is the *Māori* name for New Zealand, which is situated in the South Pacific Ocean and made up of two main and one small island: the North Island, the South Island and Stewart Island. Its total land mass of around 268,680 square kilometres makes it slightly larger than the United Kingdom. The first people to arrive in *Aotearoa*/New Zealand may have originated from Eastern Polynesia, and arrived in a series of migrations sometime between 700 and 2000 years ago. Over time, these settlers developed into a distinct culture divided into *iwi* (tribes) and *hapu* (sub-tribes), now known as *Māori* (King, 2003).

*Aotearoa*/New Zealand has a population of just over 4.6 million people. Most of the country’s population is of European descent, with approximately 74 percent identifying as European. The indigenous *Māori*

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<sup>2</sup> The term ‘refugee background’ is used because refugees coming to New Zealand under the government humanitarian programme are given permanent residence on arrival and are therefore no longer refugees and have the same rights and responsibilities as other New Zealanders.

<sup>3</sup> *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, the Treaty of Waitangi, was signed between the British Crown, Queen Victoria’s representative, Lieutenant Governor Hobson, and 48 Northland *Māori* chiefs on 6 February 1840. It is regarded as the foundation document of *Aotearoa*/New Zealand and the formalised bicultural partnership between the indigenous *Māori* and colonial English. The articles of the treaty address powers of sovereignty, governance and protection of *Aotearoa*/New Zealand and its peoples. Two versions were signed, one in English and one in *Māori*. The differences between the two versions have been a long-standing site of misunderstanding and contention (King, 2003).

are the largest non-European ethnic group, accounting for 15.5 percent of the population. Asian ethnic groups make up 11.8 percent of the population and 7.4 percent of people are of Pacific Island decent<sup>4</sup> (Statistics NZ, 2015). Africans make up less than 1 percent of the population (Statistics NZ, 2015). Before the late 1990s, immigrants from Africa tended to be white South Africans. In the 2013 census, approximately 18,000 people identified as African, although the majority of African migrants continue to be white South Africans (Lucas, 2008).

### **African Settlement in Aotearoa/New Zealand—Skilled Migrants and Refugees**

In its guide to understanding how migrants and refugees enter New Zealand, Immigration New Zealand (2017) notes several distinctions between the two groups which are in line with international understandings. In summary, the key difference is that migrants choose to leave their homeland and settle in a country of their choice, whereas refugees do not choose to leave their homeland. They flee in response to a crisis.

Refugees come to New Zealand in three ways. New Zealand currently accepts 750 refugees as part of an annual quota system referred to Immigration New Zealand by UNHCR. Included in this number are up to 75 places for women at risk. All refugee arrivals complete a six-week orientation programme at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre before being resettled. The orientation programme includes information about New Zealand life, laws and expectations, and access to English language classes. All new arrivals are also screened for any special needs they might have in relation to education, social support, physical and mental healthcare and the like (Marlow & Elliott, 2014).

In addition to its quota of refugees, New Zealand also considers applications from asylum seekers who claim refugee status on arrival or after a length of time in the country. Up to 300 people from a refugee background or refugee-like situations are accepted each year under the Refugee Family Support Category, the main vehicle for refugee family reunification (Immigration NZ, 2017). These groups do not receive the same entitlements as those arriving as part of the annual quota.

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<sup>4</sup> These percentages amount to more than 100 percent because people can identify with more than one ethnic group (Statistics NZ, 2015).

The majority of African refugees in New Zealand are from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Congo Brazzaville (Yusuf, 2015).

### **Study Aims**

The aim of the study *From Mama Africa to Papatūānuku: the experiences of a group of African mothers living in Auckland* was to explore African migrant and refugee-background women's experiences of motherhood in New Zealand. The study acknowledged the strong role women have within their families as guardians of culture and language, and an underlying rationale for the study was to increase understanding of the ways mothers contribute to new migrant and refugee-background communities and to uncover some of the challenges they face.

### **Method**

The study was given ethics approval<sup>5</sup> to utilise the in-depth interview as its central qualitative mode of investigation. The interview contexts were informal and sociable, with each of the interviews being conducted at a place convenient to the women, often at the participant's home. It can be beneficial for interviews to take place in the natural context of the activities that are going to be discussed (in this case mothering), as the interview discussion is likely to be more realistic and enriched by information about the context (Drever, 1995). All interviews were audiotaped with the participants' permission and the transcripts returned to each interviewee to check for accuracy.

The research was underpinned by a feminist theoretical perspective where gender and gender relations were conceptualised as key concerns.

### **Participants**

Informed consent was gained prior to conducting the interviews. The consent forms included information about the interviews being audiotaped and transcribed. The participants were assured of confidentiality and that they would be identified anonymously as 'Participant A', 'Participant B' etc. Therefore, no names are used in this article as the African community is relatively small and even pseudonyms could be used to identify the women. Recruitment was made via the researchers' extensive networks and through snow-balling.

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<sup>5</sup> This study was approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (3.6.2015) to (3.6.2016). UREC Registration Number: (2015-1021)

## **Demographic Background of the Mothers**

There is a relatively small population (approximately 100,000) of people from Africa living in *Aotearoa*/New Zealand and the majority live in Auckland, the largest urban area in the country (Statistics NZ, 2015). The women in the study emigrated to *Aotearoa*/New Zealand as either refugees, asylum seekers, skilled migrants or partners of skilled migrants. Their countries of origin include: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The women were all aged between 20 and 45 years and had at least one biological child. Some also had adopted or fostered children or step-children and a few of the women were carers for their nieces and/or nephews. The children ranged in age from two to eighteen. Most of the women were in either full-time or part-time employment and worked in a range of occupations including: social work, community development, nursing, caregiving and early childhood work. Several of the women were also studying towards a tertiary qualification. There was a mix of married women, women living with partners, and separated, divorced or widowed women raising children on their own.

## **Integration: Connections and Challenges**

Integration from Africa into *Aotearoa*/New Zealand involved several opportunities, as well as challenges, for the mothers interviewed. Increasingly, there is an expectation that new migrants will integrate with the culture(s) of the country they settle in. In New Zealand, this context is complex. *Aotearoa*/New Zealand is a multicultural country which takes a moral position of having a bicultural foundation, acknowledging the Treaty of Waitangi and the partnership that was established during the colonial period between Māori and the British Crown (King, 2003). For new migrants, the bicultural context can be perplexing. However, as the process of acculturation unfolds and there is more direct contact between Māori and *tauiwi* (non-Māori), many migrants learn about the Treaty of Waitangi in the work place and via education and training, and begin to understand the importance of honouring a treaty that purports to acknowledge the rights of the indigenous people.

For the African mothers in this study, the emphasis placed on the importance of Māori culture within the sociocultural context of New Zealand was viewed as a positive and valuable part of the host society they were adapting to. Generally, migrants prefer an integration style of migration, where there is some maintenance of their culture of origin but also some adaption to the culture(s) of the host country. Within New

Zealand, where the notion of ‘host culture’ is erroneous as the population is so multicultural, newly formed relationships are multidimensional. Building new relationships and adopting a multifaceted identity that corresponds with the mother’s own values can be theorised as ‘selective acculturation’ (Sampson, Marlowe, de Haan, & Bartley, 2016). This approach to integration enabled the mothers to maintain ties with their own ethnic communities while learning to integrate into Auckland’s multicultural society.

Cultural similarities and social interactions between Māori and migrant mothers, knowledge about the Māori culture and language, and knowledge about the Treaty of Waitangi were all important factors in successful settlement. The women were also keen to learn about New Zealand European culture and the English and Celtic origins of the country’s settler population.

This research identified three central themes relating to integration as expressed by the women: language, connections with Māori culture, and mothering Afro-Kiwi kids. Each of these themes are explored here with reference to both the literature and the mothers’ own words.

### **Integration and Language—Nurturing the Mother Tongue and Fostering English**

Civic and social integration is paramount for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers as they settle into their new homes. For many there is an immediate need to learn or improve their English language skills. Indeed, language skills are a primary factor in immigrants’ and refugees’ career development and job success (Hebbani & Preece, 2015).

New knowledge and skills are needed to negotiate new communities and to network with other migrants and organisations that can assist with settlement (Nash, Wong, & Trlin, 2006). All of the mothers talked about language difficulties and the emotional adjustments and struggles they experienced adapting to a new identity for both themselves and their children. Several of the mothers perceived English language acquisition and proficiency as being vital to finding jobs, but were also conflicted about needing to retain their ‘mother tongue’ and for their children to maintain fluency or, if born in New Zealand, to learn the language of their home country. Similarly, Barkhuizen (2006), in a study of language-related experiences of Afrikaans-speaking South African immigrants living in *Aotearoa*/New Zealand, found that there was a competing need to maintain both linguistic and cultural roots versus the need to integrate. Kačkutė (2016) argues that mothering in the mother’s native tongue, as opposed to

the language of the host country, can be read as a source of maternal power and agency. She argues that speaking in one's native language and engaging in culturally familiar practices will safeguard a sense of identity and will also nurture a migrant identity.

All the mothers in this study spoke English, yet several mothers commented that their 'African English' accents sometimes limited their interactions with non-Africans and also that their accents could be barriers to employment. Adelowo (2012) found similarly in her research, and noted that the most common response to 'African English' was that, when Africans spoke, they were ignored and/or corrected rather than being listened to and listeners responding to the context of their words.

Fluency in one's own language is essential for cultural identity, and loss of language has been identified as a stressor that can affect immigrants' mental health (Adelowo, 2012). Certainly, many of the mothers were concerned about maintaining their mother tongue, not only for themselves but also for their children:

Language is one thing that I think, as a mother, I'm failing my children a bit because I'm not talking to them in my mother tongue or making an effort for them to learn and that would have been different if I was back home because it's the language that would be around, they will immersed in it. When I talk to my friends, other mothers, who are able to teach their children their mother tongue, I feel a bit guilty that I'm not doing that as much. (Participant H, personal communication, August 12, 2015)

In addition to their diverse indigenous languages, all of the women in this study were able to converse in the English language and read written English. Women from the Democratic Republic of the Congo also spoke French. However, for the Congolese mothers, their children were often more confident within the medium of English and would often interpret for their families. Mitchell and Ouko (2012), in their research into Congolese refugee families living in *Aotearoa*/New Zealand, also found that children were sometimes asked to act as interpreters, a role shift that parents said changed the power dynamics in their relationships with their children. Similarly, Deng and Marlowe (2013), in their research with South Sudanese refugees, reported that the children would often interpret for their parents who, on occasion, had to pull their children out of school to interpret for them at medical appointments and the like.

Several of the women in this study commented on how much they valued the New Zealand system where responsibility for education is shared between the family and the school:

It's great here because children are taught to think for themselves, critical thinking happened right at the beginning and parents have a greater relationship with school, so you feel like you are part of that community, you can go and talk to teacher. Where back home the teaching happens just at school. (Participant H, personal communication, August 15, 2015)

However, when mothers have limited English, the communication between school and home is hindered, marginalising the women.

Communication with the school and teachers is hard if you cannot speak English. There is no interpreter. The teachers just talk, and all you do is say yes, yes to everything because you do not understand. In most cases my husband would go because he could speak English. (Participant A personal communication, August 15, 2015)

Gebremariam (2015) argues that schools can play a significant role in supporting refugee families by facilitating connections between them and the wider community. In her study on Ethiopian former refugee families, Gebremariam found that the parents sought out support within the community to help select schools and to find ways to participate in their children's education. Despite best intentions though, the parents often faced several barriers, including, English proficiency, limited educational background, financial hardship and availability of time, especially for single mothers.

The role of language as a tool for acquiring cultural competencies and interpreting 'cultural codes' enabled the 'Afro-Kiwi kids' to build a sense of belonging in their new home. Nevertheless, as many of the mothers perceived, being bilingual or multilingual was advantageous not only for personal development and self-esteem but also in terms of developing 'intercultural awareness'. Strzelecka-Misonne (2016) argues that children with an awareness of the language and culture of both their country of origin and their host country are in a unique position to become interculturally aware, enabling them to enjoy the benefits of living in a culturally diverse environment such as Auckland.

## Integration and Connections with Māori Culture

The indigenous Māori population of approximately 723,500 makes up 15.5 percent of the total population of New Zealand (Statistics NZ, 2016). Since the Māori Renaissance, a social movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s, there have been significant efforts to revive *te reo Māori* (Māori language) and *tikanga Māori* (Māori culture). The Māori language became an official language in 1987, and there are now Māori radio stations and television channels, and Māori cultural events that showcase traditional Māori performing arts (Keegan, 2017). In the 1980s an important early childhood education innovation known as *kōhanga reo* (language nests) was set up to teach children the Māori language. Māori-medium and Māori and English bilingual classrooms were also introduced at primary and secondary schools, though less than 15 percent of all Māori students are enrolled in Māori-medium education (Keegan, 2017). In the 1990s the use of the Māori language increased in mainstream education and most schools teach some Māori language and culture.

Several mothers mentioned that their ‘Afro-Kiwi kids’ would help them with not only their English but would also teach them Māori *waiata* (songs) and other aspects of Māori culture they learnt at school. One woman spoke of her daughter teaching her the Māori words for colours and with a palpable sense of pride sang a short song which is often taught in New Zealand pre-schools:

*Ma* is white, *whero* is red, *kakariki* green. *Pango* is black, *mangu* is too, AEIOU. *Kowhai* is yellow, *pakara* brown, *kikorangi* blue... AEIOU. (Participant A, personal communication, August 15, 2015)

Another woman spoke about her son learning his *pepeha*, a Māori device for introducing the self in *te reo Māori* (Māori language).

When my boy had to learn his *pepeha* I was happy as he had to find out where he came from. He didn’t want to know before. (Participant D, personal communication, August 15, 2015)

Learning about Māori culture and the cultural similarities between the indigenous Māori and African migrants was highlighted as one way of enhancing integration into New Zealand society by acting as a ‘social bridge’. Yusuf (2015), in his research into the Somali migrant community in New Zealand, found that those with a relatively in-depth knowledge of

the cultural and social structure of the Māori people felt it helped them with their integration and resettlement. The participants in Yusuf's (2015) study talked about several similarities between Māori and Somali culture that they could readily relate to. These similarities included: respect for elders, the importance of *whānau* (family), having knowledge of *whakapapa* (genealogy) and offering *manaakitanga* (hospitality).

I know common greetings and also you see Māori names in the hospitals, words like 'whānau room' where relatives of the sick patient sit, or when filling forms you see 'iwi' which means what is your tribe which is the same for Somalis being very tribal, this is something we share with the Māori. We also have similarity in the family structure, especially with respect to the elders and family hierarchy so these are the similarities we have seen. (Participant cited in Yusuf, 2015, p. 74)

The value of respecting elders was expressed by several of the mothers. Elders were revered as storytellers and imparters of wisdom. Discussing the importance of elders within an African context, Adelowo (2012) noted that family issues were dealt with by community elders and spiritual leaders in the community. Elders also told stories of the ancestors. Respect for one's elders is also a fundamental aspect of Māori culture because the *kaumātua* (male elders) and *kuia* (female elders) provide leadership and preserve traditions and knowledge.

The area of health care was another potential area of connection between the migrant mothers and Māori communities. Many of the women in this study reflected traditional African perspectives on health, which include mental, physical, spiritual and emotional stability for one's self, family and community (Tuwe, 2012). This perspective is very similar to Māori perspectives on health, which include: *taha tinana* - the physical dimension; *taha hinengaro* - the mind; *taha wairua* - the spiritual dimension; and *taha whānau* - family (Ministry of Health NZ, 2015).

Similarly, there are areas of connection between attitudes towards mothering within traditional Māori society and African culture. The responses of the women in this study echoed an *Igbo* and *Yoruba* (Nigeria) proverb which states that "it takes a whole village to raise a child". The basic meaning of this proverb, which exists in different forms in many African languages, is that child upbringing is a communal effort. Everyone in the family participates, especially the older children, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and even cousins (Healey, 1996). This perspective is similar

to child-rearing in Māori society, which is carried out within the context of the wider *whānau* (family), with children being raised by multiple ‘parents’, including biological parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and siblings (Connor, 2015).

Integration is a process by which migrant and refugee-background people are accepted into and become part of the host society, both as individuals and groups. This process is effective when newcomers can see connections between their worldviews and those of some (if not all) communities in the host society. This is opposed to them always being regarded as the ‘others’ who do not belong. For the mothers in this study, similarities between their perceptions of parenting of those of Māori society contributed significantly to their effective integration into New Zealand society.

### **Integration and Mothering ‘Afro-Kiwi Kids’**

Gedalof (2009) argues that a feminist concept of reproduction which includes not only childbirth and motherhood, but also the work of reproducing heritage, culture and structures of belonging, enables feminist migration scholars to tell more complicated narratives about the place of reproduction in migration. The work of reproducing culture and structures of belonging, such as the passing on of culturally specific histories and traditions regarding food, dress and family, were paramount to the mothers in this study.

Many of the migrant mothers discussed cultural differences and attitudes towards postnatal care and support. One seemingly benign example where cultural differences and misunderstandings occurred was around the practice of New Zealand mothers gifting pre-used baby clothes to their new African neighbours or fellow parishioners:

I found it strange they were giving me second-hand clothes for the baby. In Africa, it's completely different; it's taboo. What are they thinking? I can't put my child in second-hand clothes. So, I said, “No I don't want second-hand clothes.” I think some felt offended but to me it was a big thing. It has to be very close family who can give clothes; not someone you don't know. But now I say, “Oh that's okay”. (Participant G, personal communication, August 15, 2015)

For Gedalof (2009) an embodied practice such as the choice of clothing for babies and children reflects on the migrant mother and her children's

place within both the collective migrant community identity and the 'host' country identity. Several mothers mentioned that their 'Afro-Kiwi kids' were adapting to cultural differences via their clothing as another way of integrating and finding acceptance amongst their peers.

Our African kids are copying too much Kiwi kids - I mean Kiwi culture. Even our African churches the boys they don't dress formal and even the girls; you know back home you can't dress in jeans and sandals to go into church. If it's the pants, you put on loose pants; that formal, like going to the Court, if it's church [it's the same]. (Participant G, personal communication, August 12, 2015)

Adelowo (2012) also found that 'Afro-Kiwi kids' and teenagers were choosing to be 'casual' in their dress to fit in with New Zealand standards and to avoid the embarrassment of wearing African patterned fabrics, which often provoked comment and, in some cases, ridicule.

While adaptation to 'Kiwi' apparel such as jeans and hoodies could help youth fit in to New Zealand culture, it could also be problematic as there have been reports of African youth being stopped by the police because their clothing was that typically worn by gang members (Nakhid, et al., 2016).

Several mothers mentioned that they and their 'Afro-Kiwi kids' experienced racism and discrimination when they wore their traditional garments. In addition, Yusuf (2015), for example, found that many of the Somali women in his research experienced racism because of their Islamic traditional clothing, which includes items such as hijabs and head scarves. Indeed, Muslim women who wear any sort of head-covering have been at the forefront of discrimination and the manifestation of Islamophobia. Consequently, Muslim women in the West may fear the loss of their freedom to wear hijab in order to avoid discrimination and, in extreme cases, physical abuse (Carland, 2011). The hijab and head scarves, though bounded within the framework of religious expression, have in recent years been re-contextualised within discourses on migration and integration. The religious framework highlights individual and collective rights while any reference to 'culture' is value-laden, stressing the politics of identity and producing demarcation lines between 'them' and 'us' (Gresch & Sauer, 2012).

Clothing and hair styles are important performative sites in which culturally specific identities are re-constituted (Gedalof, 2009). For the

mothers and ‘Afro-Kiwi kids’ who chose to wear Western fashions, a new way of embodying cultural identities was enabled where they actively negotiated the complexity of difference. Conversely, where they chose to wear authentic traditional clothing, this was viewed as one way of affirming cultural identity and maintaining ties with the past.

Creating a home was an important aspect of cultural reproduction in the personal narratives of the mothers. A home anchors and embodies identity and creates continuity between the past and the present. Within the home and domestic space, the creation of meals was essential to mothering ‘Afro-Kiwi kids’. Several mothers in this study spoke about the cultural meaning of food. The majority talked about having the ‘pot’ ready for guests and welcoming visitors with food and drink. This aspect of African culture is very similar to Māori culture, where providing food and hospitality for guests is known as *manaakitanga* and is a cultural practice through which respect and generosity is shown for others.

Cooking food for their ‘Afro-Kiwi kids’ was not only a means of providing nutritious meals, but also a way of connecting to African values and identity:

I have to give my children cooked food. I can’t finish the whole day without cooking. I have to stand at the pot. I mean at the stove and cook for the kids. That’s part of being a mother. Sometimes it’s hard like maybe you are so tired and have a headache. Because they are yours they are still going to wait for a cooked dinner. (Participant G, personal communication, August 12, 2015)

Some also spoke of ‘ethnic’ food as one way of holding on to cultural traditions. As Valliantos (2016) argues:

Food is a highly salient tool used to signify identity. It is a social object, laden with social values that are consumed; in turn, through digestion, people incorporate a food’s meanings and morals. (p. 123)

While food symbolised cultural values for the mothers in this study, it was also seen as a way of integrating into New Zealand society. The mothers would sometimes experiment with ‘Kiwi’ style food and would try to follow the advice of midwives and Plunket (childcare and parenting) nurses. However, many found the advice they received conflicted with their

own cultural values around which food was best for their children and families.

When they were little, none of my kids got bottle fed, I breast fed and that's what I would have done. In terms of food, I've got this (how do you call it?) sorghum flour, use that as porridge. That is what children are fed when they are little. Import that or sometimes you have that in the South African shops. I fed that to the children. I was able to get that here. I've seen what my Aunties and my Mum did, so, yeah, it is something familiar. I looked for it here and fed it to my kids. (Participant I, personal communication, August 15, 2015)

The food practices of the migrant mothers in this study revealed not only the gendered social norms of their home countries but also cultural guidelines around food for pregnant women and their infants. In their own ways, the mothers, while desirous of integration into New Zealand culture, contested hegemonic paediatric discourses to feed their babies and children at set times with prescriptive food choices. Resisting the pressure to conform to expectations around food consumption for their children was often stressful for the women and a potential source of tension between them and their midwives.

When it came to feeding my children, I followed my customs; values and cultures. Thank God I didn't listen to the midwives, because ten years ago they advised you the bottle is more important. Bonding, whatever, all that stuff wasn't existed but I followed my custom and breast fed my babies. (Participant B, personal communication, August 15, 2015)

Vallianatos (2016) argues that migrant mothers negotiate personal, familial and ethnocultural beliefs in their everyday food practices and that it is important that they impart what it means to be a member of their respective communities through food practices. This was evident in the narratives of the mothers in this study. Their food practices were embedded within their own ethnocultural beliefs and practices, and they all spoke of the need to have access to traditional foods and to reproduce traditional methods of food preparation.

A significant challenge for many of the migrant mothers resettling in *Aotearoa*/New Zealand is the lack of support of an extended family.

Discussing this with regard to Somalian refugees, Yusuf (2015) found that many are widowed women who face the burden of caring for a large family without the support of the traditional extended family. In other cases, families may face adjustment issues associated with changing gender and intergenerational roles. Limited extended family support also impacted many of the women in this study:

Having my daughter was really hard. I had to stay in the hospital for a month. I was so scared I'm going to lose my daughter and then when I had her, I couldn't trust anyone even to take care of her. Back then the hospital system wasn't as good as today. They were unfriendly, the midwife and everyone. Back home you go back to your mum's home even if you're married then your mother will look after you for 40 days. At home, everyone's responsible. The fathers have a role to be responsible and the mum is there, the neighbours there, aunt and uncles, grandparent; you're not on your own. (Participant F, personal communication, August 15, 2015)

Similarly, another refugee mother also commented on the challenges of not having extended family support:

In Africa, the kids belong to everybody – anyone can look after the child. But in New Zealand the child is only yours. It is challenging when you are new to New Zealand and do not know much about this culture. (Participant B, personal communication, August 15, 2015)

In her discussion of the lack of the support of an extended family for African mothers in New Zealand, Adelowo (2012) notes the importance of a child being raised in a village, meaning that care and nurturing is administered by every family member. She argues that, as there are no isolated parents or families in Africa, it is very stressful for most African women in New Zealand, especially if they are first-generation migrants, to learn how to juggle domestic and paid work, career and family commitments without the support they are used to.

For us when we grow up, everyone is a parent, you know your neighbour is a parent, your aunt and your uncles is a parent; you're not the only one who's responsible, the whole

community's environment support there existed, like if they see anyone on the street, they are disciplining you, so you know you worry [as a] parent. Also you're worried of your neighbours, you know! You don't want to do things that is not accepted by the environment, by the community but here, all on your own. (Participant F, personal communication, August 15, 2015)

## **Conclusion**

The role and place of women migrants and scholarly accounts of their roles in the migration process are relatively under-theorised. As Gedalof (2009) argues, feminist migration scholars can draw on a theoretical concept of reproduction to tell more complicated stories about the place of reproduction in migration. Migrant women's subjective positions as 'mothers' can be helpful in creating a new sense of belonging in their host country. Migrant mothers have distinctive experiences within the specific sociocultural contexts they inhabit, and their experiences can provide understanding and insight into the gendered roles of migrants. For the women in this study, 'motherhood' was a dominant element of their identity and social reproduction was identified as being entrenched in their mothering, through which they transmitted ethno-cultural practices and language.

While the mothers spoke about some of the challenges of being migrant mothers, including the loss of support from the extended family, they all also spoke about how much they valued being a mother and raising their 'Afro-Kiwi kids' in *Aotearoa*/New Zealand.

I enjoy the fact that I gave birth to another human being, whom I love unconditionally. I enjoy passing on the experience of life to my children. I love being a mother and also having a meaningful career. (Participant E, personal communication, August 12, 2015)

For many women, migration means a loss of autonomy and freedom, even though they may have been escaping situations of political upheaval in which their lives were endangered. For others, migration initiates possibilities of self-improvement despite the difficulties faced in the new country (Bailey, 2012). Migration from Africa to *Aotearoa*/New Zealand involved a number of opportunities as well as challenges for the mothers interviewed for this research project. Overall, African mothers' experiences of raising their 'Afro-Kiwi kids' reflected successful settlement into their

New Zealand society, particularly when intercultural communication and connections were strong, when opportunities were available for relationships with indigenous groups and social and educational groups that were open to inclusiveness, and when there was no attempt to enforce the cultural norms and values of New Zealand *Pākehā* (European) culture. However, research on relationships between African refugees and migrants and indigenous people/communities is underdeveloped in both *Aotearoa* /New Zealand and Australia.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### Capitalism's Continuing Disguises

Marcelle C Dawson and Luke Sinwell eds. *Contesting Transformation Popular Resistance in Twenty-First-Century South Africa* London: Pluto Press, 2012 pp. 300, ISBN 97807453 35025.

John S Saul *A Flawed Freedom Rethinking Southern African Liberation* London: Pluto Press and Toronto: Between the Lines, 2014, pp. 199, ISBN 9780745334790, Between the Lines 978 1771131506.

In December 2016, Standard and Poor's downgraded South Africa's credit rating as one notch above junk, reducing the country's financial outlook from stable to negative, with annual economic growth at 0.5% and unemployment at a 13-year high. In May 2017, with inequality in South Africa reaching 'world's best/worst' levels, the leader of the opposition Democratic Alliance in South Africa's parliament asserted that the 'ANC has changed from liberator of the people to the enemy of the people' (Maimane 2017). After decades of struggles, sometimes open warfare (as in the Cuban military's defeat of the South African army in Angola), how have things come to such a condition?

These two books deal primarily with the period since the end of colonialism in Tanzania and Mozambique and of the National Party government in South Africa. All the authors agree that something better should have resulted and major changes should have occurred even if there is no great clarity on what the change(s) might comprise. (As will be shown below, the current confusion stems in considerable part from a continuing distorted vision about the nature of the anti-apartheid struggle.) Whether viewed from the perspective of South Africans who still engage domestically in post-apartheid tussles or Canadian academic John Saul with an impeccable anti-colonial, anti-apartheid pedigree, it is the sense of an opportunity lost and the need for continuing tussles which unites all the writers. Paradoxically, however, it is also the difference of vision which derives from active participation in unfolding events in South Africa, on the one hand, and viewing "southern African liberation" from afar that makes reviewing both books together worthwhile. While Saul, for example, employs such grandiose terms as "taming a revolution" to describe post-apartheid politics in South Africa, those closer to the scene more

realistically see the moment as a period of contested reforms, mainly along international social democratic versus neo-liberal lines.

*Contested Transformation* is a collection of 12 essays plus an introduction and conclusion by the editors. At the time of writing the contributors were participants in as well as researchers/writers about the events which followed the 1994 election that brought to power the Nelson Mandela-led African National Congress (ANC) government in South Africa. While the major political differences between the contributors are on display so too are their combined disappointments that the end of apartheid has not brought major beneficial changes to the bulk of the population, particularly the black citizens previously repressed by an especially brutal regime. As much as the ascension of successive ANC governments has been associated with a sense of failure, nevertheless the courage and determination of those who continue to struggle is an encouraging message which permeates the Dawson and Sinwell collection. If the end of apartheid meant one form of transformation, near-continuous strikes, protests, “insurgent citizenship” social movements, victories at local government and national elections show the extent of the popular dissatisfaction with that regime change. Opposition to ANC rule has been met with a mix of incorporation and repression. The latter has sometimes been as brutal as that meted out by the National Party-headed apartheid regime.

The essays also show informed activists in South Africa struggling to come to grips with what the opposition represents and how it can be best described. Labourism, as in the strikes and opposition to industrial repression? Social movements mobilised to contest local government elections? Community protests, deliberately constructed outside the governing framework of the ANC – Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) administration to increase their popular appeal?

Class formation is occasionally employed to describe the unity of actions which oppose wage reductions and job insecurity, unemployment, impoverishment and reductions in the availability of public facilities. However, what the “class” is remains unclear, especially when the essays also acknowledge the disparate membership and objectives of the various organisations. Wage workers, intermediate strata of lower level management, the unemployed, the precariously employed in occasional wage work, and petty traders may comprise a class in formation, but how needed to be explained not just asserted.

That there is nothing on the character of the ruling class, despite the extensive literature devoted to the formation of a dominant class, and the

place of an African bourgeoisie within that class, is one major deficiency of all the essays in the collection. Consequently, and despite the differences of political focus among the two editors and the 13 other activist contributors, the character of class power and its role in accumulation by a capitalist class is rarely present. Resistance appears as primarily an issue of welfare, rather than accumulation as a social process which constantly mystifies and disguises itself as one of race, ethnicity, tribe, and nationality. Even Dale T McKinley, a prodigious writer and activist concerned with the political economy of South and southern Africa, does not attempt to identify “the left’s” class opponents in a process of accumulation, rather than in party and other organisational terms (the ANC, COSATU and the South African Communist Party [SACP]. All have become (p.24) ‘sub-agents of ...class rule’ rather than forms of representation, political expressions of the process itself. As shown below, for example, the ANC has been a representative organisation of the black African bourgeoisie “in formation” since at least the 1920s.

Saul’s book is a collection of essays written over some years, with parts having appeared elsewhere. Although ostensibly directed at “rethinking Southern African Liberation” there is little new from a person who has been actively involved in some of the notable events which have occurred in the region. The first chapter in Saul’s collection sets the tone for his subsequent examinations of South Africa, Tanzania and Mozambique; countries and peoples with which he has had lengthy and deep connections. He was present in the early 1970s when the Tanzanian TANU government led by Julius Nyerere began to show its repressive character. In 1982, Saul was nearby when a parcel bomb sent by South African government agents killed Ruth First in her office at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, Mozambique.

The collection is largely an autobiographical display of how one person has tried to update and adjust the lens he employed to understand conditions before the fall of apartheid and end of colonial rule in the region, rather than purchasing a superior camera to capture what has occurred subsequently. Saul’s admiration for Frantz Fanon (1963, 2001), especially his best-selling, highly influential *Les damnés de la terre/ The Wretched of the Earth*, remains with a minor tweak. So too (pp.132-134) his respect for Amilcar Cabral, leader and ideologue for the anti-colonial struggle in Bissau-Guinea and Cape Verde, and other countries. White minority/colonial regimes, Saul’s favoured descriptions for the previous forms of rule in southern Africa, have been displaced by ‘the Empire of

Capital' superintended by a comprador class or classes.<sup>1</sup> Recolonization, rather than Fanon's neo-colonialism, represents for Saul (p.7) '(S)poils for the global centres [of the Empire] and for their local intermediaries. For the rest: a singularly limited decolonization indeed'. Saul explains (ibid.) that '...this latter form of imperialism is being enacted by capital itself rather than primarily – as in the past – by some specific national (western) centre of empire or another'.

While the description 'Empire of Capital' is commonly associated with another York University academic Ellen Meiksens Wood (2003), Saul does not appear to have read more deeply into her work. Meiksens Wood (1991, 1995, 1998) was a leading scholar of the class structure of western Europe, especially in the early days of industrial capitalism, concerned with the "renewal of historical materialism". Instead Saul attempts to combine Wood's over-arching description of capitalism's global advance with the 1960s and 1970s categorisations which examined conditions in terms provided mainly by Fanon and Cabral.

In his introductory essay "Globalization Made Me Do It" vs "The Struggle Continues" Saul tries to update this intellectual tradition. Now (pp.7-8) the 'Empire of Capital' provides more space for: local states to manoeuvre 'on behalf of their own domestic ruling classes' interests', for 'national bourgeois classes in various settings to find some "national capitalist"/entrepreneurial space within which to grow and prosper', and even room for some states, 'working in conjunction with capital' to 'guide certain "sub-imperialisms" of their own devising'. All this occurs within the dependency framework, which (p.9) secures an 'extremely limited brand of development that may offer some wealth and power to the fortunate local few but does not do so to the vast majority of the impoverished population'. Hence recolonization and a 'flawed freedom'.

Trapped in his white minority/settler colonial characterisation, Saul has been unable to deal with the origins of the ANC and of the National Party in South Africa. In the early 1970s, simultaneous with a parallel debate about capital in Kenya, there began an extended argument about capitalism in South Africa. Research which fuelled this debate proposed that

...between 1924 and 1948 ...an Afrikaner bourgeoisie developed through a politically driven economic movement, first to represent the nationality of capital against an

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<sup>1</sup> Saul is not consistent on how to describe 'the compradors' but he is certain in framing their subservience to 'the Empire'.

“imperialist interest” and later, after 1960, to serve towards the “interpenetrations” of different fractions of capital in South Africa (Cowen and MacWilliam 1996, 83).<sup>2</sup>

As occurred in Kenya, a counter-argument following the lines of the fashionable dependency thesis soon appeared. So too did a major study by Dan O’Meara of the formation of Afrikaner capital which made the ‘challenge against imperialism emphatic’ (Cowen and MacWilliam 1996, 86). ‘Nationalism or imperialism’ became the catch-cry of this challenge. L.J.Du Plessis, senior official of an important *Broederbond* faction, explicitly rejected any form of ‘economic collaboration’ with ‘cooperative Imperialism’ (Ibid.). Anglophone capital was equated with imperialism. So much for the simple and simplistic ‘white settler colonialism’s accommodation with English capital as imperialism’ formulation espoused by Saul and others.

The consequences of this accommodationist depiction were, and continue to be substantial. When long-time ANC official and later second post-apartheid president Thabo Mbeki oversaw policies which in the 1990s and early 2000s were dressed up by critics, including Saul, as empowering a new black middle class a longer view of South Africa’s history would have helped anticipate what was to come in the development of national capital . More importantly, seeing the ANC for what it was rather than what opponents of apartheid wanted it to be might have at least tempered the enthusiasm for joining forces under the ANC-SACP umbrella. This dilemma still haunts activists in South Africa, as most of the essays in *Contesting Transformation* attest.

From the 1912 founding of the South African Native National Congress, precursor to the first ANC, to the 1927 actions of the latter organisation, the ambitions and aims of black African business were foremost. As Alan Cobley (1990, 156-158) noted, in the 1920s the ANC put forward a commercial and industrial programme for the advance of this business. While over subsequent years the political power of Afrikaner business became dominant, the commercial ambitions and activities of some Africans did not disappear. In short, the ascendancy of Afrikaner capital was not only aimed at English capital’s prior dominance, but also against the possibility of African capital taking the lead in the formation of a layer of national capital. From the late 1960s onwards, the legitimacy of the claim for national commercial leadership began to be contested more

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<sup>2</sup> See also Davies, Kaplan, Morris and O’Meara 1976, 4-30, and O’Meara 1983.

openly, including through the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce (Cowen and MacWilliam 1996, 95-102).

What apartheid rule made certain was that the racial mask would remain over this intra-bourgeois battle, and cement the alliance between African capital, would-be bourgeois, African workers and intermediate strata. The ANC leadership, spear-carriers for the African bourgeoisie, had even before apartheid officially ended in the 1990s made clear that their objective was not socialism, nor even social democracy, but more room for their advance within a capitalist South Africa.<sup>3</sup> The importance of keeping a broad, popular front together, with domestic and international wings bearing anti-colonial and anti-racial banners was stressed by ANC activists and their supporters. Revolts, such as that in 1976 at Soweto, threatened the front as ANC leaders strived to present their campaign as respectable and acceptable in the major capitalist countries (Mandela 1995, 575-580).

Despite the particularities of post-apartheid and post-colonial circumstances in the countries examined in both books, what strikes this reviewer is how similar conditions are to those in much of the rest of the world. Corruption, inequality, unemployment and impoverishment of many countries' populations, as well as accusations of "bad" governance and repression of dissent: what's new? Rulers wallowing in obscene wealth: Jacob Zuma is hardly alone in his so-called lifestyle.<sup>4</sup> And the same proposals for reform appear almost universally, along the lines echoed by those who fight for improvements in South and southern Africa. There is even some clinging to an idea of socialism as it could be rather than how it was. Others aim for more modest improvements – safety from fires in public housing and factories, striking workers not shot at by the police and military. And still, in a world of affluence unimaginable to previous generations, the sources of human misery remain obscured in southern Africa and beyond. Penetrating the various disguises detailed here –

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<sup>3</sup> Saul A *Flawed Freedom* p.83 cites Mbeki as pronouncing in 1984 that the ANC 'is not a socialist party' and wouldn't become one 'for the purpose of pleasing its "left" critics'. As Saul further notes (p.93), in June 1996, when launching the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy, Mbeki pronounced 'just call me a Thatcherite'.

<sup>4</sup> See here for photos of President Zuma's South African house <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/southafrica/1175514/5/Jacob-Zumas-lavish-Nkandla-estate-inspected-by-MPs.html>; for his Dubai 'palace' next door to that of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe - <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2017-06-04-inside-zumas-dubai-palace-and-mugabe-lives-next-door/>; and the official denial <http://www.iol.co.za/news/special-features/zuma/zumas-palace-in-dubai-story-is-a-fabrication-9536151>

including race, ethnicity and nationality – remains to be done in politically effective forms everywhere.

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Scott MacWilliam

Australian National University  
[scottmac69@grapevine.com.au](mailto:scottmac69@grapevine.com.au)

Melanie Baak, *Negotiated Belongings: Stories of Forced Migration of Dinka Women from South Sudan*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2016, 231pp, ISBN 9789463005869.

Do you believe that you belong – in your family, your workplace, your birthplace, community, country? What makes you feel included or excluded? How do we negotiate or strengthen belonging and how do people adapt when persistent and violent exclusion forces them to seek refuge in neighbouring and far-flung countries?

In this book, Melanie Baak explores the ways in which people negotiate belongings by presenting stories from six women in Australia who have a deep connection with Mading Aweil, an area in South Sudan that is home to the Jieng (often known as Dinka) people. Four of the women were born in or near Mading Aweil to local families, while the fifth was born nearby and married a local. The five lived there until war propelled them on long and winding journeys to new homes in South Australia. Using an interpreter, they tell their stories in their mother tongue, Dinka, as well as in constrained English. The sixth woman was born in Australia to white Australian parents and married a man from Mading Aweil who had resettled in Australia. That sixth woman is the author, Melanie Baak – she is a student of Dinka language, but her story unfolds in English.

Baak's involvement with the Jieng began in Adelaide as a volunteer working with new arrivals. At a Jieng home, she met her future husband, a valued member of the local community. As their relationship deepened, instead of drawing Baak into the group, the Mading Aweil community reacted by excluding both Baak and her partner (p.107). The phone stopped ringing, the community had sent a message: you do not belong.

For the Mading Aweil women, not belonging had been status quo for decades. In their village homes, they were strong, well-centred family and community members, performing their roles according to the Jieng concept of *cieng*, an ideal state of living to which Jieng aspire. However, according to the politics of their birth nation (then Sudan, now South Sudan), these women were outsiders, racially vilified and persecuted for perceived differences to the northern majority. When they sought refuge in neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Uganda and Egypt, they continued to face suspicion and vilification. In Australia, they may achieve full rights as citizens, but continue to negotiate belongings as they raise their families and establish new lives and networks.

Jieng situate themselves first and foremost through their relationships with others (p.167), achieving belonging by adopting true *cieng* practices. If

you are living in good *cieng*, then you will meet all your traditional family and societal obligations, in terms of how you assist others, how you conduct your daily business, in short, how you live your life. Hospitality is a part of *cieng* (p.71-72), and marriage and procreation are embedded in it (p.88). However, the practice of *cieng* is shifting and changing as community members adapt to different lifestyles and pressures far from their villages (p.107).

In transnational families, immigrants may build new social fields that link country of origin (p.150) with relationships constructed through social need more than an immediate biological connection (p.140). Thus, a distant cousin may act as brother when relatives are needed for marriage negotiations.

In Australia, the societal touchpoints that helped the women practice good *cieng* have evaporated. They come from an agricultural background which values large families, where infant mortality is high and there is little access to contraception (p.102). Here, they can no longer demonstrate their worth by providing for their families through traditional duties such as grinding grain and collecting water, and this can damage self-esteem (p.98). There are frustrations with bringing up children (p.175), they say the Western focus on individualism and independence (p.176) clashes with Jieng family life. The women believe the roles and respect they had as mothers is undermined by Australian service providers and government agencies (p.103-106). *Cieng* requires respect for parents and elders and encourages particular ways of living together, so they are affronted that youth can claim benefits that assist them to leave home before marriage (p.103). The women say “it hurts our hearts to see them living that way” (p.104). They have to negotiate new ways of belonging.

There is pressure from the other side of the planet as well, from relatives in villages and refugee camps. Good *cieng* and warm hearts mean they must help those left behind – not to do so results in shame (p.151) regardless of their own financial situation. There are emotionally-charged international phone calls (p.155), and a deep desire for reunification (p.157).

Add to the mix another concept, mixed-race marriage. Once it would have been scary enough for someone from Aweil to marry someone from nearby Wau – foreigners were seen as less desirable, inferior, bad and dangerous, constructed as the permanent Other (p.120). Now marriage across ethnic lines is “pushing, challenging and shifting the borders of what it means to be and become a Jieng,” a shift that is ultimately uncomfortable for all involved, Baak says. She is keen to explore *cieng*, to understand what the community expects of her as a Jieng wife. Jieng women become a

true member of their husband's family after delivering the first child, before that, they are observed and judged on ability to perform other wifely duties (p.99). On visits to South Sudan, Baak grinds grain and carries water to show willing – she wants full acceptance by the community, not to live forever on the “edge of becoming” (p.93.) She also discusses the problem of her family's exclusion with women in South Australia, who cite jealousy in the community as the cause (p.111).

This is an interesting book. By exploring the ways in which we negotiate belonging, it also throws light on an emerging Australian community and the way in which they inform and extend our societal fabric. A range of Australian professionals will garner useful knowledge of the Jieng world from this book, in particular about why certain issues are of concern to these women. If Baak plans further research along these lines, she might note that, at least for this reader, the women's voices are strongest when they speak in their mother tongue with translations provided. Using multiple quotes in limited English may unintentionally put the women and their voices at a disadvantage on the printed page, just as they have so often been disadvantaged in the wider world.

Wendy Levy  
[wendylevy4@gmail.com](mailto:wendylevy4@gmail.com)

**Susan Booyesen (ed). *Fees Must Fall: Student Revolt, Decolonisation and Governance in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016, 350 + ix pp, ISBN 9781868149858.**

A recent exhibition on South Africa at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum began with San rock art, continued chronologically to colonial maps and sketches, propaganda from the South African war, then from the anti-apartheid movement, and finished with hand-written placards on the backs of fruit boxes from the 2016 Fees Must Fall protests. Or, to identify the movement by its ubiquitous Twitter hashtag, which at one point attracted 300 tweets per second (p. 247), #FeesMustFall. It remains to be seen whether 'Fallism', as the campaign for fully-subsidized and 'decolonised' tertiary education has labelled itself, proves to be the significant event the exhibition suggests it is. Booyesen's collection argues that it might be, noting that the government's unexpectedly rapid response to the protests

underlines the status of university students as a group the government cannot afford to antagonise. Even those sceptical, hostile, or simply baffled by 'Fallism' will find this collection reveals a great deal about ongoing racial, ideological, and generational tensions in South Africa. There is much to be learned about university governance in the context of intersectional inequality, in particular, and about the young and aspiring black middle class.

Consisting of fourteen chapters, a long introduction, a short conclusion, and protest-related appendices, the contributions address a particular moment in a complimentary way. Chapters 2 to 5 are written or co-written by Fallist scholar-activists, complimented by later chapters written in a less urgent tone. The early chapters offer insights into the Fallist movement, including its collective social media addiction, as well as its blind spots, such as the idea the movement speaks for all black students, and the issues Fallists are uncomfortable discussing, notably violence. Several of the latter chapters stand out, such as Lynn Hewlett, et al.'s history of student protests in sub-Saharan Africa, warning that the fully-subsidized, radical education Fallists demand proved incompatible with the mass enrolments they desire.

The chapters by David Everatt, on South African student politics, and Patrick FitzGerald and Oliver Seale, on university management during the protests, are the most challenging dialogue partners for the scholar-activists' chapters. They address similar issues, such as the outsourcing of support staff and the rhetoric of white privilege, but from different angles. FitzGerald and Seale's chapter offers fascinating insights into the challenges Fallism poses to university administration. Sizwe Mpofo-Walsh's activist chapter on Fallist theory and practice explains that students reject responsibility for developing policies to implement their demands, that is for politicians and administrators, and yet 'Fallism implies immediacy – it means abandoning the politics of gradualism' (p. 84). While university administrators have been generally sympathetic to Fallism, although not what is described as its 'often undirected militancy', FitzGerald and Seale describe the 'egg dance' of administrators wanting to endorse Fallist demands while avoiding short term policies, such as fee freezes, with long term consequences (pp. 243-4).

While Everatt's chapter offers a brief analysis of past South African student movements, the collection reveals two major differences between Fallism and earlier struggles. Firstly, the presence of radical feminist and queer politics, as analysed by Darlene Miller, who notes that older feminist activists are 'bewildered' by the importance of personal style for feminist Fallists (pp. 272-4). Secondly, the emphasis on subjective experiences of

alienation in historically white universities. As Gillian Godsell and Rekgotsofetse Chikane's chapter notes, Fallism has placed 'the experience and consciousness of young black adults within a white institution' at the centre of debate about higher education (p. 58). It is this aspect of the movement that demands to be unpacked, theorized, and contextualized, for it requires more explanation and careful listening than debate over black students' financial problems, which are simple enough to fit on a placard: 'My mother earns R2 000 a month, where must she get R10 000 for my registration?' (p. 117). The collection really only gestures towards the importance of these experiences of alienation for the Fallist movement, such as the brief discussion on the politics of 'shame' in a chapter by Gillian Godsell and three student activists. Invoking the image of Adam and Eve, made aware of their nakedness, they argue the sudden realisation of financial fragility and inferior prior schooling shames black students who have been accepted into historically white universities on a nominally equal footing with their wealthier white peers (pp. 116-8).

Because of this emphasis on emotional pain and expressive individualism, I think Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh overemphasises Fallism's 'unmistakable Southern bent' and inversion of the 'global system of knowledge production' (pp. 82-3). Fallism is comprehensible to student activists in the global north (pp. 79-82), because it speaks the language of American politics of recognition. Often pilloried as 'identity politics', the questions Fallism addresses, how one's cultural identity and the weight of history impacts one's ability to move with ease in certain societies and spaces, engaged some of North America's leading political thinkers in the 1990s, from Judith Butler to Charles Taylor. It is disappointing that the collection does not substantially address this aspect of Fallism, which is obvious to any scholar engaging with its modality. Another way of saying this, is that Fallism is a complex political movement; it is likely to survive on and off campus for some time to come, and there will be much more written on the topic.

Ibrahim Abraham  
University of Helsinki  
[ibrahim.abraham@helsinki.fi](mailto:ibrahim.abraham@helsinki.fi)

**Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes. Native Colonialism: Education and the Economy of Violence Against Traditions in Ethiopia.** The Red Sea Press, New Jersey, 2017, pp. 236, ISBN 9781569025093.

Woldeyes' conceptualisation of 'native colonialism' with reference to Ethiopia – the only African state not subject to colonisation by foreign powers – provides a fitting frame through which to appraise Africa's regional governance architecture. Ethiopia is home to the African Union's (AU) headquarters. In the language of regionalisation, it is Africa's capital city. Its enduring legacy as an uncolonised African country has granted it this privilege. However, Woldeyes "use[s] the term *native colonialism* to explain the development of a colonial consciousness that alters the traditional and historical processes through epistemic and physical violence" (p. 10, emphasis in original). He argues that in contrast to countries that experienced direct (settler) colonial rule and administration, the impact and processes of colonialism in Ethiopia have been driven by "native factors" as national elites have imitated external forms of governance.

A shortcoming of Woldeyes' book is its failure to apply the concept of native colonialism beyond the national context to Africa's continental governance architecture. Whilst this is due to the book's particular focus on Ethiopia, a cursory assessment of the regional implications of the concept would have greatly enriched Woldeyes' arguments. The concept of native colonialism, when applied beyond the national context, allows us to explore the extent to which the AU governance architecture has similarly been a result of native colonialist processes.

Given Ethiopia's identity as Africa's capital city, the absence of epistemic independence in that country – as identified by Woldeyes – is significant as it supports this very same absence at the level of the continent's Pan-African governance institutions. This is because, as Woldeyes himself highlights, "[t]he bitter antagonism among various political groups irrespective of power differences show that achieving epistemic dominance is the hidden goal of political struggle" (p. 19). Moreover, for Woldeyes, epistemic violence "involves the deployment of knowledge which gives rise to a new vision of the world" (p. 11).

Colonialism and the colonisation of African peoples and nations resulted in the institutionalisation of not only arbitrary borders, but new sets of political systems and institutions. Whilst these processes and their enduring legacies are generally acknowledged, critical engagement with the continent's regional governance institutions is less common. This is

unfortunate, including in the context of Woldeyes' development of the concept of native colonialism because, as the world undergoes reinvention as part of varied historical processes, "[i]t invents norms, rituals, hierarchies and new interests both from the colonising and the colonised traditions, and brings them together to provide a new ideology that serves the colonial system" (pp. 10-11).

Indeed, colonialism and colonisation concentrated social, economic and political power in the hands of a few Euro-American Western states, the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It constituted a global order that stemmed from the particular and local traditions of these few states and their individualist ethos. The result was the universalisation of these particular values as superior to those of 'primitive Others' whose value and political systems had to be superseded by European models.

For Woldeyes, the peripheralisation of Africa despite the rest of the world's dependence on Africa's resources and labour for its continuing development and prosperity has had the undesirable outcome of "centeredness" in Ethiopia, the continent's capital. This is important given "[c]entre represents a place within a place, a location of prime significance, a source of moral power and ideals" (p. 40). Woldeyes argues that Ethiopia lost its *self*-imagination "as the centre of the world whose interest and values cannot be suppressed by the interest and values of other nations and entities" (p. 41).

However, if Africa's capital imagines itself as centre of the world, then so too is the continent which hosts that capital and services dependent 'core states'. Woldeyes' arguments would, therefore, have benefitted from acknowledging that the marginalisation of indigenous knowledge(s) and political institutions in Ethiopia – as in other parts of the continent – has drastic consequences for regional integration and Africa re-centering itself in world politics. Importantly, Woldeyes notes that "[t]he concept of *addis*, the new, is often considered as *zemenawi*, which means modern or western". Moreover, "[t]he first modern capital of [Ethiopia] was named 'Addis Ababa', which means 'New Flower'". This is significant given Addis Ababa is the home of AU's headquarters. These headquarters are, therefore, situated in a place that was conceived as "a break from the past, from tradition to modernisation, [and] led to the adoption of new laws that invalidated the old and traditional ones" (p.103).

Addis Ababa, Africa's 'New Flower' is, therefore, situated at the centre of the continent's greatest epistemic and moral dilemma today and raises the question: how can continental institutions designed to empower African

people build sustainable and resilient futures achieve this goal if they are based on external ideologies, and are imitations of external institutions? The fact that the AU's Constitutive Act 2000 (see [www.au.int/web/en/constitutive-act](http://www.au.int/web/en/constitutive-act)) notes the organisation's primary objective as being to "defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States" (p. 5), a clause that is often used to absolve governments and leaders of their responsibilities to their populaces, highlights the continent's ongoing attachment to external knowledge(s) and modes of governance.

Woldeyes' book and concept of "native colonialism" are thus useful and timely critical resources. The only shortcoming is that Woldeyes does not link this concept to regionalisation processes, but hopefully this review has demonstrated the concept's wider applicability and the need for critical appraisals of the continent's Pan-African governance institutions.

Tinashe Jakwa  
*The University of Western Australia*  
[tinashejakwa@gmail.com](mailto:tinashejakwa@gmail.com)