Australasian Review of African Studies

The African Studies Association
of Australasia and The Pacific

Promoting African Studies in the region since 1978

Volume 42 Number 1 JUNE 2021

CONTENTS

Editorial

Articles

Promoting and Monitoring Antimicrobial Stewardship using Veterinary Vocational Schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- *Diafuka Saila-Ngita, Victor Ndadi Nkuembe, Jérémie Kimbuku Mavata and Brigitte Bagnol*

Nigerian Colonial Investments, The Crown Agents and the Transfer of Capital to Britain and the Dominions
- *David Dorward*

Evwie (Kola Nut) and its Socio-Religious Values among Idjerhe people of Nigeria
- *Peter O. O. Uttuh*

Mental Health Data: A Case for the African Communities in New South Wales
- *Daniel Kwai Apat and Wellington Digwa*

Book Review

THE AUSTRALASIAN REVIEW OF AFRICAN STUDIES VOLUME 42 NUMBER 1 JUNE 2021

THE

Australasian Review of African Studies

VOLUME 42 NUMBER 1 JUNE 2021

AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALASIA AND THE PACIFIC

THE AUSTRALASIAN REVIEW OF AFRICAN STUDIES

Volume 42 Number 1 JUNE 2021

The Australasian Review of African Studies aims to contribute to a better understanding of Africa and the African Diaspora in Australasia and the Pacific. It is published twice a year in June and December by The African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific. ARAS is a multi-disciplinary journal that seeks to provide critical, authoritative and accessible material on a range of African affairs interesting and readable
to as broad an audience as possible, both academic and non-academic.
All articles are:

Double blind peer reviewed by two independent and qualified experts in their entirety prior to publication. Available electronically through Informit Databases, and the AFSAAP website www.afsaap.org.au open access. Indexed through:

- **SCOPUS**
- **ProOuest Social Science, Sociological Abstracts and PAIS Index**
- **European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH)**
- **Clarivate Analytics Web of Science Core Collection (ESCI) EmergingSources Citation Index**
- **Ranked within the Excellence in Research for Australia journals (ERA ID 18727).**

Full details and guidelines for authors are available from http://afsaap.org.au/publications/aras/

Editor: Geoffrey Hawker PhD, Macquarie University, editor@afsaap.org.au
Co-Editors: Mengistu Amberber PhD; Anne Bartlett PhD; Mariam Koslay; Peter Limb PhD; Tass Holmes PhD; Edson Ziso PhD
Book Reviews Editor: Nikola Pijovic PhD, bookreviews@afsaap.org.au

Cover Design by Earthling Delights Graphic Design, earthlingdelights.com.au
Printed by Macquarie University Printery

All correspondence should be sent to: editor@afsaap.org.au

ISSN No: 1447-8420
Online ISSN: 2203-5184
DOI: https/:/doi.org/10.22160/22035184/

AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Membership of the **African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific** includes subscription to ***The Australasian Review of African Studies,*** the AFSAAP monthly newsletter ***Habari kwa Ufupi,*** and invitations to AFSAAP's annual conference, and other opportunities.

The annual subscription fee is modest and enables AFSAAP to promote African Studies and research in this region.

AFSAAP encourages interested parties to subscribe to this journal to support AFSAAP's aims.

Annual Subscription Fees (2020)
$100 Regular Member in Australasia Pacific Region (outside the region $110)
$180 Organizational Membership (outside the region $200)
$70 Student Member/ Pensioner/ Concession

Please refer to the AFSAAP website for updated membership and payment information
www.afsaap.org.au

THE AUSTRALASIAN REVIEW OF AFRICAN STUDIES
VOLUME 42 NUMBER 1
JUNE 2021

CONTENTS

Editorial **2**

Articles

Promoting and Monitoring Antimicrobial Stewardship using Veterinary Vocational Schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo
Diafuka Saila-Ngita, Victor Ndadi Nkuembe, Jérémie Kimbuku Mavata and Brigitte Bagnol **4**

Nigerian Colonial Investments, The Crown Agents and the Transfer of Capital to Britain and the Dominions
David Dorward **23**

Evwie (Kola Nut) and its Socio-Religious Values among Idjerhe People of Nigeria
Peter O. O. Uttuh **51**

Mental Health Data: A Case for the African Communities in New South Wales
Daniel Kwai Apat and Wellington Digwa **64**

Book Review

Franklin Obeng-Odoom, *Property, Institutions, and Social Stratification in Africa*
Adam Sneyd **81**

EDITORIAL

Africa is a continent, not a country, as we are often reminded, it seems necessarily, in books, article, blogs, and whole websites. The corollary of that observation is the diversity of the continent across regions, nations, and cultures - and yet also the largely shared experiences of an imperialism that has left legacies aplenty for the peoples of Africa today. Whilst an entire library, let alone a single issue of a journal, cannot contain or explain that diversity within a shared experience, the current issue does nevertheless suggest some shades of it.

The socio-scientific study of veterinary education and practices in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by a team of researchers located in the United States, the DRC and South Africa contains policy lessons for the government and education authorities of that nation. But for some readers it may also raise questions about the responsibility of the nations of the North in the contemporary period for at least some of the problems that are documented in the paper. Strongly contrasting on the surface is the paper following, by an Australian historian of Africa who plumbs the archival records of the "Crown Agents" of Imperial Britain in an age now passed, or so it might seem, to show how capital was raised in Nigeria to finance developments in distant white colonies. The paper brings forward a number of parallels with the current practices of the international agencies of finance currently, and suggests disturbing continuity in the pattern of relationships between the North and the South.

The following paper by a Nigerian scholar of religion documents local cultural practices around the use of the kola nut in a specific region of his country and documents a number of practices that have not hitherto been well captured. There is a strong suggestion here of cultural practices surviving and indeed continuing to flourish despite the supposed universalising tendencies of language, communication and finance. The final paper by two African-Australian scholars examines the situation of African immigrants in one of the Australian states, which is generally representative of the whole nation, to show how mental health services are inadequate for that rapidly growing population. They suggest ways in which data gathering and record-keeping can be improved to sustain policy development that considers the needs not just of African Australians but of CALD communities generally.

The very diversity of the papers in this edition suggests something of the orientation of the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP), the parent body which auspices and generally supports this journal. Its cross disciplinary membership is diverse in every way, reflecting that continental origin. It also includes those from the Pacific region who engage with African issues from a further diversity of perspectives, as students and academics, public officials and diplomats, activists within non-government organisations and trade unions, and as independent scholars.

Notes on the current activities of the Association, including internet based meetings during this Covid period, can be found on its web page - https://afsaap.org.au/. Links from there also provide information to authors who wish to publish in the journal. Contributions that sustain the mission of the journal are always warmly invited.

Geoffrey Hawker
Editor-in-Chief
editor@afsaap.org.au

Australalasian Review of African Studies, 2021, 42(1), 4-22
http://afsaap.org.au/ARAS/2021-volume-42/
https://doi.org/10.22160/22035184/ARAS-2021-42-1/4-22
AFSAAP
2021

Promoting and monitoring antimicrobial stewardship using veterinary vocational schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Diafuka Saila-Ngita
Tufts University, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine
Department of Infectious Disease and Global Health, MA – USA
Diafuka.saila-ngita@tufts.edu
Victor Ndadi Nkuembe
Université de Kinshasa, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
Department of Zootechnics, Kinshasa, DRC
Jérémie Kimbuku Mavata
Université de Kinshasa, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
Department of Zootechnics, Kinshasa, DRC
Brigitte Bagnol
University of the Witwatersrand,
Department of Anthropology Johannesburg, South Africa

Abstract

We conducted a feasibility study of antibiotic stewardship promotion, monitoring and education through veterinary vocational schools using semi-structured interviews and Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats analysis. Seventeen of the 35 veterinary vocational schools of the Kongo Central Province were surveyed. We report four key results. First, all schools were government funded with personnel capable of promoting, monitoring and educating farmers and communities. Second, these schools were well distributed across the country which gives them access to a greater number of farmers. Third, faculty from these schools provided the bulk of veterinary services in their catchment areas. Fourth, vocational schools would benefit from support from universities. This support could focus on transfer of teaching skills and resources sharing.

Keywords: Antimicrobial resistance, Antibiotic resistance, Antibiotic surveillance, Antibiotic community surveillance, Vocational schools, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Introduction

The statistics of mortality related to antimicrobial resistance (AMR) show an increase over time. In the United States 2.8 million cases of antibiotic resistant infections were reported in 2019 of which 35,000 deaths were recorded (CDC, 2019). The World Health Organisation reported in 2020 close to half a million multi-drug resistant cases globally of Tuberculosis (World Health Organisation, 2020). AMR in human and veterinary medicine is an existing and growing threat to public and animal health and food security throughout the world. Increased contact between humans, animals and wildlife contributes to antibiotic resistance (Wall, Mateus, Marshall, & Pfeiffer, 2016). Several initiatives to address the issue are underway. In this global challenge, low-income countries, like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), face a higher burden because of increased exposure to infections, limited access to quality care, poor governance, shortage of technical personnel in the field and limited stewardship (Collignon, Beggs, Walsh, Gandra, & Laxminayan, 2018; Okeke, Lamikanra, & Eldeman, 1999; Rousham, Unicomb, & Islam, 2018). Thus, low-income countries facing resource constraints must create cost-effective and technically workable solutions to address the issue. This paper reports on a feasibility study that analysed an innovative approach for monitoring antibiotic stewardship through the mobilisation of veterinary vocational schools in DRC.

DRC has 520 veterinary vocational schools scattered across the country with the mission of serving as extension services to promote the animal health and production sector (Data provided by DRC Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education, Veterinary Education Division, 2019). The Province of Kongo Central is home to 35 of these schools. These schools are managed by principals and employ faculty holding various degrees: veterinary medical doctor - VMD, veterinary technician, animal production and others. Faculty teaching clinical and technical courses must hold a VMD degree or a graduate degree in a relevant field such as animal production. Faculty holding a veterinary technician degree are classified as “under-qualified” by government regulations governing veterinary vocational education. Faculty with a veterinary background (VMD or veterinary technician) are involved in private practice on farms located in the schools’ catchment areas (a walking distance from the school) where they take students for field practicum.

DRC public veterinary services work with limited human and financial resources. Veterinary Technicians provide all veterinary services, to the best of their abilities, in the absence of VMDs in rural and remote areas. They teach clinical and technical courses at veterinary vocational schools – a role reserved for VMDs and faculty holding a graduate degree. The DRC has about 1,500 VMDs and 5,000 veterinary technicians according to The Veterinary Council and the Veterinary Technician Association (2019 unpublished statistics). Most VMDs operate in urban areas. As a result, veterinary technicians provide most of the veterinary services where animal production takes place. We, therefore, understood that veterinary vocational schools, given their number and distribution, are suitable for documenting, monitoring and reporting antibiotic stewardship and educating farmers and the community at large. The aims of this study are: 1) to assess whether veterinary vocational schools could be used as hubs for antibiotics stewardship monitoring, and 2) to determine whether veterinary vocational schools could drive efforts to inform and educate communities, farmers, and future veterinary practitioner on the careful use of antibiotics. The findings of this study provide evidence to support government policies and actions to effectively address the complex and global issue of antimicrobial resistance in a resource constrained country.

Methodology

We conducted this study in Kongo Central Province located in Western DRC which holds 35 veterinary vocational schools, of which 17 were visited. We interviewed in total 17 school male principals and 66 veterinary faculty. Fifteen of the veterinary faculty were females. We used semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and direct observations to collect data and information on three elements: 1) School administration, 2) School veterinary faculty private and students' practicum and 3) procurement and use of antibiotics in the school catchment area. Faculty were interviewed individually and as focus groups of four people on average. School principals were interviewed separately from faculty to allow more freedom of expression. Personnel from one of the major DRC veterinary drug importers and two local distributors were also interviewed on pharmaceutical acquisition and distribution. The interviews were conducted in French, the official language of the DRC without translator. The research was approved by the Internal Review Board of the Université de Lubumbashi (UNILU) under the approval number

UNILU/CEM/047/2018. All participants signed an informed consent. Collected data were analysed and themes were identified and substantiated by quotations from participants. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was performed to assess the capacity of each school to link up with others to create an effective network to monitor antibiotics stewardship.

Results

We report the result of our study in three categories: 1) School administrative and academic characteristics, 2) Veterinary vocational schools SWOT analysis and 3) Antibiotic stewardship in school catchment areas.

Schools administrative and academic characteristics

All schools visited were government approved and funded. However, they did not have qualified faculty teaching clinical and technical courses per government standards. Faculty assigned to deliver these courses were not VMDs or did not have graduate degrees as recognised by government regulations. All of them were veterinary technicians and in most cases provided veterinary services to farmers in the school catchment areas. In their private practices, 45% worked on small ruminants, 30% on pigs, 28% on fish, 8% on poultry and 7% on cattle. Many of these farms were also sites for students' practicum. Each school had on average 2 to 3 veterinary faculty (males or females). All 35 schools of Kongo Central Province are administered by the Head of the Provincial Veterinary Vocational Education. However, participants reported no interaction between them and schools. These schools are located in 9 of the 10 provincial administrative territories. The Lukula Territory which does not have a veterinary vocational school is less than an hour driving distance from two schools in the neighboring Tshela Territory.

Regarding the curriculum, the veterinary technician education was a four-year program with half of the total course hours allocated to technical and clinical courses. This national curriculum was designed and implemented under the guidelines of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education. Based on their training, veterinary technicians did not have the same competencies in diagnostic and treatment like veterinary medical doctors. Thus, supervision from veterinary medical doctors is necessary as stipulated by regulations governing the veterinary practices in DRC.

Veterinary vocational school system SWOT analysis

In this section we present the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the capacity of veterinary vocational schools to serve as a network for monitoring antibiotic stewardship and educating the community, future and current veterinary technicians and farmers.

*Strengths***.** Veterinary vocational schools carry four strengths. The first is the schools' government-given mandate to train veterinary technicians as key contributors to the animal production sector. Second, school faculty deliver the bulk of veterinary services in their catchment areas. Their services include all aspects of veterinary care although performed without VMD supervision. They prescribe antibiotics and other antimicrobials. Although this in not the recommended norm, it is the reality on the ground. A couple of schools have visiting VMD faculty. Most of the practitioners in the schools' catchment areas are faculty from veterinary vocational schools. Third, teachers are well regarded and are community opinion leaders. Fourth, all faculty surveyed expressed interest to participate in an antibiotic stewardship monitoring network. Some expressed the need for financial support to cover the cost of training they need to participate effectively. "*We want to participate even in the training workshops but that may require transportation*". Another faculty said, "*We want to have therapeutic guides as we are missing a lot; it is difficult to teach our veterinary students, especially with regard to infectious diseases: diagnostics and treatment*". It should also be noted that vocational schools are well distributed across the province and the country (Table 1).

*Weaknesses***.** Three weakness should be highlighted. In all schools, faculty in charge of clinical and technical courses were under qualified because they did not hold VMDs or graduate degrees. This under-qualification reflected in their performance, especially in their use of antibiotics. Further, these vocational schools lacked educational resources. Furthermore, school principals lacked the leadership skills necessary to initiate a stewardship monitoring system on their own and many of them did not have a background in animal health and production.

Table 1. Distribution of vocational veterinary schools in Kongo Central Province

District/City	Territory	Number of Schools by Territory
	Tshela	2
Bas Fleuve	Lukula	0
	Seke-Banza	4
Boma/District	Moanda	1
Boma/City	-	1
Matadi/City	-	1
	Songololo	5
Cataractes	Luozi	5
	Mbanza-Ngungu	6
	Kasangulu	1
Lukaya	Madimba	4
	Kimvula	5
Total	-	35

*Opportunitie*s. Two opportunities were found available to veterinary vocational schools. First, antibiotic resistance (AMR) and antibiotic stewardship were at the forefront of actions carried out in the context of prevention and response to emerging diseases by the government and international donors. Second, the animal health sector was recognised as an important sector to address control of the AMR phenomenon. Therefore, veterinary vocational schools did have an opportunity to positioning themselves as hubs within a network of schools for antibiotic stewardship monitoring and education.

Threats. The important threat facing vocational veterinary school was non-participation in the process of developing a national plan to combat AMR which is yet to get underway. By not being involved in the development of the national AMR control plan, they risk losing a chance to play a key role in the AMR surveillance, given that animal health is a key contributor to antibiotic resistance.

Antibiotics stewardship in veterinary vocational school catchment areas

We report in this section results related to antibiotic stewardship in the catchment areas of veterinary vocational schools.

Knowledge and perceptions on antibiotic resistance

Most veterinary faculty did not have a clear understanding of the determinants of antibiotic resistance. One faculty said, *"I don't have specific knowledge; however, I know the number of resistance cases is increasing"*. The main causes of the emergence of antibiotic resistance identified through interviews were excessive and inappropriate prescription of antibiotics, including overdosing and under-dosing. Some faculty expressed the need to educate themselves and have access to treatment guidelines and continuing education. Faculty interviewed reported cases of resistance to antibiotics observed during their clinical practices, such as therapeutic failures related to penicillin prescribed to heal wounds and other pathologies. They reported that commercial brand of penicillin they use has become ineffective for treating certain pathologies.

The use of laboratories in the diagnosis of diseases

Veterinary faculty from vocational schools interviewed did not use laboratory diagnostic services to guide their practice. The reasons were limited access to the laboratory and clients' expectations for a quick recovery of their animals. Further, the cost of laboratory services was estimated to be too high such that farmers worried about their profit margins. A practitioner said, *"If we had a laboratory nearby, we could have been requesting laboratory confirmation for our diagnostics; instead, we only base our antibiotic choice decision on clinical signs"*.

In their approach to diagnosing illnesses through clinical examinations, veterinary faculty were puzzled by similarity of clinical signs. One faculty commented *"without paraclinical examinations, it is not easy to confirm exactly the cause of the disease"*. Another added that *"especially in poultry, the signs are often identical, but from experience, we always manage to determine the disease"*. They also use their knowledge of pathologies prevalent in their catchment areas as a reference. In most cases, they face pathologies such as Peste de petits ruminants, African swine fever, Anthrax, Rabies and Newcastle disease.

The choice of antibiotics

Our findings show that the choice of antibiotic was based on the availability of products on the markets according to faculty interviewed. The practitioner uses the antibiotic available on the market, not necessarily the one that is right according to the case on hand. One faculty said *"sometimes, we have no choice. No matter which antibiotic is available at the veterinary pharmacy, you buy it"*. Another faculty added *"especially in an emergency. I request from my supplier anything that is an antibiotic to Solve an animal health problem"*.

Beta-lactams followed by tetracyclines were the families of antibiotics most used by faculty interviewed. Within the beta-lactams, the penicillin molecule, whether combined with oxytetracycline (e.g. penistrepto), was used to deal with viral or bacterial diseases, they reported. One faculty said, *"I use penicillin and streptomycin for infectious diseases such as African swine fever and Peste de petits ruminants, for 5 to 7 days"*. Another faculty added: *"I use tetracycline to treat diarrhea in newborns"*. Faculty also reported the use of these antibiotics for post-operative treatment to prevent infections. One faculty said, *"for me, it's pretty much the same thing; but I increase the dose to treat wounds in animals after castration or other surgery"*. The combination of penicillin and streptomycin is preferred because of its broad spectrum of activity. A faculty said, *"it is an antibiotic that works very well with bacterial pathologies of the respiratory and digestive systems, skin as well as on genito-urinary diseases"*. Another added, *"I don't like being out of penicillin because it treats many bacterial diseases"*. .

Some faculty reported using antibiotics destined to humans. One faculty said, *"I use penicillin marketed for humans to treat animals because of the lack of reliable veterinary pharmacies nearby"*. Another faculty added, *"we have difficulties finding a nearby veterinary pharmacy with good quality products"*.

Antibiotics prescription, dosage, and treatment failures

All faculty interviewed recognised that VMDs are the only animal health providers authorised to prescribe antibiotics. Nevertheless, they argue that under the circumstance where VMDs' supervision is not available, they are taught to prescribe antibiotics. One faculty said that *"normally, it is the VMD who has the right to prescribe antibiotics, and veterinary technicians execute the recommended regimen"*. However, veterinary technicians are often the sole health providers on farms and have no choice but to prescribe antibiotics. Another said, *"I am the sole consultant to all the farms under my responsibility; I perform veterinary procedures such as the diagnosis, drug prescription and administration"*.

One faculty said: *"the small number of VMDs that operate in our province does not even reach the remote areas where we work"*.

To determine the dose to administer, veterinary faculty refer to the drug notice. The challenge, however, was to determine the quantity to administer when the animal weight was not well known. They reported using their experience or the weight tape if available. One faculty also said: *"it is the experience that counts; you can look at an animal and directly determine its weight"*. Another said, *"…it's not easy to find a scale. It is really easy for us to determine the weight by the Quetelet[1] formula or visually."*

In their career as veterinary service providers, faculty interviewed have experienced therapeutic failures. One faculty said, *"I usually treat all kinds of wounds with a combination of penicillin-streptomycin. However, the last time, I had the same type of case of ear wounds in a pig at the same farm, I used the same product, but it didn't work"*. Another added, *"I had a case like this involving a calf. I used the combined penicillin-streptomycin and oxytetracycline to fight the diarrhea of the newborns as I usually do. To my surprise it did not work. There was no effect on the animal which ended up dying"*. Faculty interviewed, although surprised by treatment failure they observed, they did not link it to possible antibiotic resistance. Some said that because of these failures, they have shifted to using newer antibiotics available on the market as older products have become ineffective.

The use of antibiotics as vaccine

The limited access to vaccines in term of availability or affordability coupled with poor disease management skills led to the inappropriate use of antibiotics as a preventive measure. One faculty reported that *"there is a problem with the supply of vaccines to prevent*

[1] Quetelet formula is used to assess animal live weight (LW) in Kg. LW = 87.5 x T^2 x L, where L is the length of the animal, T the thorax measure both in meter (Delage, Poly & Vissac, 1955, p.225).

animals from all contagious diseases; I use antibiotics instead as a vaccine". The lack of cold-chain infrastructures and electricity were reasons why vaccines were not used. They also indicated that they used antibiotics as a preventive measure in case of unusual mortalities, or when they received epidemiological information related to the prevalence of diseases in their catchment area from colleagues. One faculty said, *"in medicine, prevention is better than treatment. If, for example, my colleagues tell me that there is an epidemic killing animals, I will recommend that the farm owner administer antibiotics to all animals, even to those without signs"*. Another added, *"I prevent diarrhea in piglets with antibiotics at the age of three weeks"*. One more said*, "to prevent illnesses, I use antibiotics for two days and three to five days as a treatment"* while another said, *"to prevent the disease, you only need one or two injections of the antibiotic to avoid the spread of a contagious disease on the farm"*.

The use of antibiotics for animal growth

Most faculty interviewed did not have a clear understanding of the use of antibiotics for animal growth. However, some reported that they have used antibiotics for growth. One faculty said, *"yes, I also use antibiotics to speed up growth in animals"* and another added, *"especially in sick newborns, it is necessary to use antibiotics to increase weight gain"*. They also added that often they administer multivitamins and penicillin-streptomycin or oxytetracycline to improve animal growth.

Antibiotics in the environment and animal products

Animal manure is managed on farms or dumped into the rivers. One faculty said that *"at the farms I manage, manure is kept in the bags and made available to people who need it as fertiliser"*. Another faculty declared that they throw manure from pig farms into the river. Other faculty claim to use a waiting period of about two weeks before using manure as a fertiliser. Regarding the presence of antibiotic residues in meat, the waiting period is seldom respected particularly after the failure of antibiotic therapy. This non-compliance is linked to the decision of farm owners who want to reduce their losses. One faculty said*, "normally one waits 30 days before consuming an animal that has been treated with an antibiotic; unfortunately, farmers do not respect this time frame"*. Another faculty added, *"you can tell farmers to wait before consuming or selling the meat of an animal that has just been treated with the antibiotics, but as soon as you leave the farm, they act otherwise"*.

Veterinary technicians' source of technical information

With regards to sources of information on antibiotics, faculty interviewed reported using several sources, including course notes, drug notices, colleagues, and distributors of pharmaceuticals. *"If I buy a product, I first refer to the packaging leaflet; in the case of difficulties, I ask the person who sold me the drug"* said one faculty. Other faculty said they talk to their colleagues or the provincial veterinarian to get information on the use of antibiotics and on tropical diseases. One faculty said, *"for me, the type of information I seek from well-regarded colleagues often relates to the synergy of antibiotics".*

Internet searches for information are performed by some faculty. As one of them said, *"I usually use Google when I am in doubt about antibiotic use and infectious diseases"*. Further, information related to livestock production is also disseminated via rural radios. A couple of faculty are presenters on television and radio programs on livestock. As one faculty noted, *"I broadcast in the local language every Wednesday on a local radio and television, a program about good animal husbandry"*.

Antibiotic procurement sources

Through interviews, we identified various actors involved in the supply and distribution of antibiotics. Most antibiotics were imported from Europe, China and India and distributed by private formal and informal retailers and wholesalers. Small retailers sometimes sold antibiotics by the dose to meet the demand of farmers who could not afford to buy a full package given the size of their herds. This practice led to the use of sub-standard antibiotic doses.

Access to quality veterinary pharmaceuticals is a challenge in Kongo Central Province. A faculty said, *"I send money to Kinshasa* [the capital city] *to buy antibiotics"*. There were about three major veterinary pharmaceutical importers and distributors in Kinshasa. Other respondents said they procure veterinary drugs from Matadi, the provincial capital city. In the absence of a veterinary pharmacy, veterinarians reported using antibiotics bought at local pharmacies serving the human population.

Discussion

Our research central question was to assess whether veterinary vocational school as hubs can be organised into a network to monitor and report on antibiotic stewardship in the animal health and production sector.

Further, we wanted to identify the practices and the status of the use of antibiotics in the catchment areas of veterinary vocational schools. The study has shown that veterinary vocational schools in DRC could be organised to monitor antibiotic stewardship. The study results showed that the 17 vocational schools visited, and all the others in DRC, are government approved and funded. The school personnel (principals and faculty) are paid by the government. In each school, at least one faculty holds a veterinary technician degree. Most of veterinary faculty engage in private practice serving farms which also provide field practicum opportunities for their students. A couple of schools have veterinary medical doctors as visiting faculty which is a requirement to fully qualify as faculty for clinical and technical courses. Thus, most veterinary faculty are under-qualified.

This short coming, however, can be easily addressed through political will because of the high number of unemployed or under-employed VMDs in DRC that can be deployed in veterinary vocational schools across the country. It should also be noted that veterinary vocational schools are well distributed across nine of the ten Territories of Kongo Central Province. These schools are centrally managed by the Provincial Head of Veterinary Vocational Education. However, the schools have no interactions with each other. The study has also shown that faculty from vocational schools, although under-qualified, provide most of veterinary services in their catchment areas; thus, they are a crucial force for animal health and production.

Cox (2006) argued that radical solutions to the AMR problems, for instance the complete removal of under-qualified faculty or practitioners, would lead to more issues because such an approach would create a vacuum that would jeopardise human and animal health. Thus, we argue for a stewardship monitoring system that builds upon the status of veterinary vocational schools. Faculty, particularly those with useful technical skills, carry a lot of influence in the community. Therefore, we expect them to be at the forefront of educating farmers, future veterinary technicians, and the population at large. The positive role of schools in driving development has been proven in several countries and well documented in the literature (Appiah & McMahon, 2002). Teachers, especially in rural areas, are opinion leaders, respected and a source of knowledge. Although veterinary faculty represent a small number at each school, if organised into a network and provided with relevant training and information, their influence on antimicrobial medicine use could be extremely valuable in the control of AMR.

Building a network of veterinary schools will require collaboration among them. Established relationships between these schools will facilitate faculty exchange and experience sharing which will result into a network of schools capable of monitoring antibiotic stewardship and providing education. This collaboration could also involve academic institutions and government veterinary services. Whent (1994) and Stephenson, Warnick, & Tarpley (2008) argued that collaboration between academic and vocational schools is important and could be centered on sharing equipment, supplies, information, services, and facilities. However, Whent (1994) noted that barriers such as lack of knowledge on what could be or is available to be shared, physical distance, finding time to devote to collaboration, and lack of institutional support should be taken into consideration. Further, Dormody (1993) indicated that the need for collaboration between vocational and other academic institutions is dictated by the rapid progress observed in sciences and technology. Therefore, he advocated the merger between the theoretical (academic teaching) and the practical (vocational teaching). We argue that given the complexity of antibiotic resistance and stewardship problem, collaboration between academic and vocational faculty will be highly effective in addressing the AMR issues. Furthermore, the proposed collaboration would enhance the quality of vocational education which could also be improved through the allocation of more time to courses related to antibiotic resistance and stewardship.

The second focus of this study was about documenting antibiotic stewardship in the school's catchment areas. In this regard, the study identified critical gaps in knowledge, stewardship of antibiotics and several challenges facing practitioners. These gaps and challenges are like those reported worldwide and are driven by the lack of knowledge and awareness, inadequate training, pharmaceutical promotions, lack of or access to tests, use of leftover drugs stemming from over prescriptions, socio-economic conditions and fear of complications following a treatment (Machowska & Lundborg, 2018). However, these shortcomings could be mediated through capacity building initiatives and supervision or collaboration as mentioned above.

Our findings reinforce the need to set up mechanisms for monitoring antimicrobial stewardship and educating future practitioners and farmers using veterinary vocational schools. Treatment failures reported by respondents are suggestive of cases of antibiotic resistance in their schools' catchment areas. The presence of resistance to antibiotics has been corroborated by a study conducted in DRC by Laboratoire Vétérinaire de Kinshasa – DRC (unpublished report, 2016) which reported resistance of *Staphylococcus spp*., *Streptococcus spp*. and *Escherichia coli* to penicillin and tetracyclines from many farms in Kinshasa and Kongo Central Province. Thus, antibiotic resistance is a real and significant problem that needs to be addressed. Capacity building of practitioners is, therefore, essential. Asante et al. (2017) noted that lower cadre, such as veterinary technicians and nurses, tend to have poor knowledge of antibiotics resistance. They advocated the provision of formal sources of information to practitioners to address knowledge deficiency. Proper information and treatment guidelines would be useful to build capacity of veterinary practitioners. Our study has shown that pharmacists, well-regarded veterinary technicians, and government veterinarians are sources of information veterinary practitioners consult when in doubt. A mechanism to capitalise on these channels should be designed.

From the interviews of faculty and pharmaceutical distributors, we learned that there are drug vendors who work outside the oversight of government services. As a result, substandard products are widely available leading to the emergence of antimicrobial resistance (Corpet, 1999; Faroult & Alno, 1999). Tracking antibiotic sales will help detect any signal emerging from veterinary practitioner stewardship practices as quickly as possible. The monitoring of practices would make possible the development and implementation of right policies and measures (Chardon & Brugere, 2018). Veterinary faculty from vocational schools, once properly supervised as part of a monitoring network, could notify the authorities of wrongdoing in the antibiotic distribution channels.

Our surveys indicated that penicillin often combined with tetracycline is more often prescribed by veterinarians than other antibiotics. Marie, Martel, Kobisch, Sanders, & Resapath, (2001) reported a similar result saying that penicillin is more prescribed than quinolones and macrolides. This is true for veterinary vocational faculty who are limited by the availability of antibiotics on the market. Given the challenges facing veterinary practitioners in accessing quality antibiotics, chances are that even restricted products, such as those in the class of cephalosporine reserved to humans, could be used in animal health. A limited number of cephalosporins are approved for veterinary usage. A detailed review of cephalosporins approved for veterinary usage are presented in Hornish and Kotarski (2002). The Access to Medicine Foundation published the 2020 Antimicrobials Resistance Benchmark and indicated that in low-income countries, the problem of access to antibiotics is more important than over consumption. Although this is true, antibiotic selection pressure on bacteria is exerted through small doses over time. Thus, even if low antibiotic consumption is reported, one should still be aware of potential antibiotic resistance in the presence of poor stewardship over time. Therefore, monitoring proper use of antibiotics is still essential in the fight against antibiotic resistance.

The presence of antibiotics in the environment is a subject not well understood by many faculty interviewed. The waters and soils are extensively contaminated with drug residues, bacteria and antibiotic resistant genes from farm waste-waters, urban water treatment plants and other sources (Decante, 1999). Faculty interviewed were not able to link manure and farm waste potential role in the emergence and spread of antibiotic resistance. We noticed that environmental aspects of antimicrobial resistance are not properly covered during veterinary technicians' training.

Food products contaminated with microorganisms resistant to antimicrobials or containing antibiotic residues can increase the burden of AMR in humans. Faculty interviewed did not have a good understanding of the presence of resistant bacteria in the environment. However, they know the need for a waiting period before the consumption of products from animals recently treated with antibiotic. Drug packagings clearly label this warning message. Non-compliance with the waiting period is the origin of antibiotic residues found in meat intended for human consumption. Okombe, Luboya, Nzuzi, & Pongombo (2016) reported in a study carried out in the DRC the presence of penicillin and tetracycline residues in liver, gizzard, beef, and chicken samples. The faculty interviewed indicated that they had a good understanding of the importance of respecting the waiting period. However, farmers do not respect the waiting time. Thus, veterinary technicians will have a vital role to play in raising awareness among farmers, particularly if they are part of an antibiotic stewardship monitoring network.

Conclusion

This study suggests that veterinary vocational schools have the potential to promote and monitor antibiotics stewardship in their catchment areas. This is possible because of their mandate as training institutions for key veterinary personnel and as the driving force for the development of the livestock sector. Veterinary faculty from these schools, despite their technical limitations, can be trained, supervised, and supported to collect data and information related to antibiotic stewardship, deliver effective veterinary services, and educate all people involved in the use of antibiotics.

To implement this innovative approach, leadership from outside the veterinary vocational educational system is needed to promote the role these institutions can play in the monitoring of antibiotic stewardship. Financial investments are necessary to bring them up to standards, particularly in terms of infrastructure and equipment. This investment and proposed monitoring role will impact their catchment areas development as well as the livestock sector. The vital role played by schools in educating people, hence driving development, is paramount. The SWOT analysis identified the strengths and opportunities available to implement the proposed innovative approach. If well-trained and educated, faculty from veterinary vocational schools can become providers of information on the proper use of antibiotics. They are also capable of playing a key role in raising awareness among the population and farmers in their catchment areas. By improving their knowledge on antibiotics stewardship, they can collect monitoring data on the use of antibiotics and deliver needed veterinary services even in the absence of VMDs. Further, well trained faculty from veterinary vocational schools will lead to better future workforce. To prevent them from providing veterinary services will create a vacuum that might generate more infections and economic loss.

We, therefore, recommend the following:

1) Develop and implement in-service training for faculty of veterinary vocational school in pharmacology and infectious diseases, with a focus on antibiotics and diseases present in their catchment areas;
2) Mandate the use of treatment registers to better monitor antibiotic use at farms;
3) Recruit and deploy VMDs to vocational veterinary schools to provide the necessary supervision and support;
4) Invest in veterinary vocational school infrastructures and equipment;
5) Develop a network of vocational veterinary schools and develop collaboration with veterinary departments in universities to increase sharing of knowledge, practice and improve student training;
6) Develop treatment guidelines and promote the use of alternative methods to antibiotics;
7) Improve the number of distribution channels and their quality.

Acknowledgement. The authors sincerely thank all participants for their participation.

Competing interests. No conflict of interest.

Funding. This study was funded under USAID Project "One Health Workforce". Grant Number AID-OAA-A-15-00014 made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

References

Access to Medicine Foundation. (2020). Antimicrobials Resistance Benchmark. https://accesstomedicinefoundation.org (accessed 26 April 26, 2021).

Appiah E and McMahon WW. (2002). The social outcomes of education and feedback on growth in Africa. *Journal of Development Studies*, 38(4):27-68. DOI: 10.1080/00220380412331322411.

Asante KP, Boamah EA, Abdulai MA, Buabeng KO, Mahama E, Dzabeng F, Gavor E, Annan EA, Owusu-Agyei, Gyansa-Lutterodt M. (2017). Knowledge of antibiotic resistance and antibiotic prescription practices among prescribers in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana: a cross-sectional study. *BMC Health Serv Res*, 17: 422. DOI: 10.1186/s12913-017-2365-2.

CDC. (2019). Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2019. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC. Available at www.cdc.gov/DrugResistance/Biggest-Threats.html. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc:82532.

Chardon H, Brugere H. (2018). Usages des antibiotiques en élevage et filières viande. Available at : http://www.civ-viande.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/CIV-ABBD.Pdf. (Accessed 2 April 2018).Collignon P, Beggs JJ, Walsh TR, Gandra s and Laxminayan R. (2018). Anthropological and socioeconomic factors contributing to global antimicrobial resistance: a univariate and multivariable analysis. *Lancet Planetary Health*, 2 (9): 398–405. DOI:https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(18)30186-4.

Corpet DE. (1999). Antibiotiques en élevage et résistances bactériennes : vers une interdiction ?. *Revue Méd Vét*, 150 (2): 165-170.

Cox LA. (2006). Quantitative health risk analysis methods: Modeling the human health impacts of antibiotics used in food animals. Cox Associates and University of Colorado, Denver, CO, USA. Springer's International Series.

Decante F. (1999). L'agriculture biologique, une alternative à l'antibiothérapie ? In Journées Nationales GTV-INRA 26-28 Mai 1999, Nantes: 167-174.

Delage J, Poly J and Vissac B. (1955). Etude de l'efficacite relative des diverses formules de barymetrie applicables aqux bovins. *Annales de Zootecnie*, INRA/EDP Sciences 1955, (3), pp. 219-231.

Dormody TJ. (1993). Predicting modeling of resource sharing between secondary school agriculture teachers and science departments, Journal of Agricultural Education 34(1):51-59.

Faroult B, Alno JP. (1999). Réflexions pour de meilleures pratiques de l'antibiothérapie vétérinaire. In Journées Nationales GTV-INRA. Nantes, 26-28 Mai 1999, Groupements Techniques Vétérinaires : 163-164.

Hornish RE and Kotarski SF. (2002). Cephalosporins in veterinary medicine - ceftiofur use in food animals. *Curr Top Med Chem*, Vol. 2(7). DOI: 10.2174/1568026023393679.

Machowska A and Lundborg C. (2018). Drivers of irrational use of antibiotics in Europe. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 16 (1): 27 DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16010027.

Marie J, Martel JL, Kobisch M, Sanders P, Resapath. (2001). Réseau de surveillance de la résistance aux antibiotiques chez les principales bactéries pathogènes des bovins, des porcs et des volailles. *Epidemiol. et santé anim*. 40 : 51-55.

Okeke I, Lamikanra A, Eldeman R. (1999). Socioeconomic and behavioral factors leading to acquired bacterial resistance to antibiotics in developing countries. *Emerg Infect Dis*, 5 (1): 18–27. DOI: 10.3201/eid0501.990103.

Okombe EV, Luboya LB, Nzuzi MG, Pongombo SC. (2016). Détection des résidus d'antibiotiques dans les denrées alimentaires d'origine bovine et aviaire commercialisées à Lubumbashi RD Congo. *J Appl Biosci*, 2 : 9763–9770.

Rousham EK, Unicomb L, Islam MA. (2018). Human, animal and environmental contributors to antibiotic resistance in low-resource settings: integrating behavioral, epidemiological and One Health approaches. *Proc Biol Sci*, 285: 20180332. DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2018.0332.

Stephenson LG, Warnick BK and Tarpley RS. (2008). Collaboration between science and agriculture teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 49 (4):106-119.

Wall BA, Mateus A, Marshall L and Pfeiffer DU. (2016). Drivers, dynamics and epidemiology of antimicrobial resistance in animal production. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy.

Whent L. (1994). Factors influencing resource sharing between agriculture and science teachers participation in the AgriScience program. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 35 (3): 11-17. DOI: 10.5032/jae.1994.03011.

World Health Organisation. (2020). Antimicrobial resistance (13 October). https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antimicrobial-resistance; Accessed 22 October 2020.

Australasian Review of African Studies, 2021, 42(1), 23-50 *AFSAAP 2021*
http://afsaap.org.au/ARAS/2021-volume-42/
https://doi.org/10.22160/22035184/ARAS-2021-42-1/23-50

Nigerian Colonial Investments, The Crown Agents and the Transfer of Capital to Britain and the Dominions

David Dorward
History, LaTrobe University
d.dorward@latrobe.edu.au

The literature on British colonial exploitation has tended to focus on the more obvious aspects of wealth transfer: the ways in which physical infrastructure, such as railways, were constructed to the benefit of the colonisers but paid for by the colonised through taxation, the exploitation of natural resources to the advantage of British industry and commerce, or the unequal exchange of Nigerian commodities and labour for British manufactures.[2] The focus has been on Land and Labour, but rarely Capital. When capital transfer is assessed, it is invariably in terms of British investments in the Empire, often portrayed as at the expense of British taxpayers and investment in British domestic development. David Sunderland's monumental study of the Crown Agents focuses on the funding of development within the colonies and presents the Crown Agents as a benign, if at times rather amateurish institution, operating within a complex British bureaucratic structure dominated by the interests of the Bank of England and the British Treasury.[3] This article examines the little-known "investment accounts" of colonial Nigeria, the transfer of wealth from an underdeveloped African colony to the White Dominions and British instrumentalities, and the role of the Crown Agents, from the late nineteenth century to Nigerian independence.

---

[2] The literature is enormous. For an excellent example of Nigerian scholarship, see: Britain and Nigeria: Exploitation or Development?, Toyin Falola, ed (London, 1987).

[3] David Sunderland, Managing British Colonial and Post-Colonial Development: The Crown Agents, 1914-1974 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).

Successive Nigerian colonial governments, as well as the relatively impoverished and underdeveloped Northern Nigerian Native Administrations,[4] served as a source of investment capital for the Empire. Nigerians helped to finance railways, harbours and irrigation projects in Australia, Canada and South Africa. Yet almost nothing has been written on the millions of pounds in a plethora of Nigerian investment accounts managed by the Crown Agents, albeit there are tantalising references. In 1947, Bower noted,

> Nigeria's balance of transfers of investment income is typical of an economically backward debtor country. The calculable inward transfers of investment income are limited to the small amount of interest on government investments, which is credited to revenue, and to the interest on foreign investments of banks operating in Nigeria. These payments are heavily outweighed by the outward transfers of interest on the national debt and by transfers of profits on the external capital invested in Nigeria's industries.[5]

In Bower, as in most economics of empire,[6], Nigeria and other African colonies are portrayed as recipients of British capital, rather than sources of capital.

---

[4] For information relating to Nigerian Native Administration investment accounts, see, Jim Boyd, "Nigerian 'Native Authority' Investment Accounts: Capital for Whom?: The economies of Colonial Investment: Selected Nigerian Native Treasury Accounts, 1920-1940', BA Honours thesis, History, LaTrobe University, 2001.

[5] P.A. Bower, 'The Balance of Payments in 1936',Mining, Commerce and Finance in Nigeria: Being the second part of a study of The Economics of a Tropical Dependency Margery Perham, ed (London, 1947), 301.

[6] Ian M. Drummond, British Economic Policy and the Empire, 1919-1930 (London, 1972); Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960: The Economics of Colonialism, vol. 4, Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann, eds. (London, 1975); Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, Mammon and the pursuit of Empire: The political economy of British imperialism, 1860-1912 (Cambridge, 1986); Matthew Simon. "The pattern of New British Portfolio Foreign Investment, 1865-1914" Capital Movements and Economic Development, J.H. Adler, ed (London, 1967); A.G. Ford, "Overseas Lending and Internal Fluctuations: 1870-1914", The Export of Capital from Britain, 1870-1914, A.R. Hall, ed. (London, 1968).

The Crown Agents have been de-constructed, but almost exclusively in terms of their role as suppliers of material, particularly colonial railways,[7] and mainly prior to 1914.[8] However, as Kesner noted:

> Second in importance to the management of public works projects in the colonies was the part played by the [Crown] Agents in the control and investment of colonial funds...In addition to management of colonial stock issues, the [Crown] Agents invested or watched over colonial insurance funds, officers pension funds, post office and savings bank funds, notes (i.e. currency) security funds, and so on. These investments were in fact as diverse as the colonies from whom they emanated; all were held and managed in London by the Crown Agents. Unfortunately there is no truly comprehensive record of these holding.[9]

While Kesner was able to compile a list of loans issued by the Crown Agents on behalf of various colonies between 1860 and 1914, he was unable to detail the investment accounts.[10] Investment accounts are conspicuously absent from Helleiner's otherwise detailed exposition of Nigerian colonial statistics, [11] and are aggregated in Sunderland.

---

[7] Raymond E. Dumett, 'Joseph Chamberlain, Imperial Finance and Railway Policy in British West Africa in the late Nineteenth Century', English Historical Review 90, 355 (1975), 287-321. Vincent Ponko, Jr, 'Economic Management in a Free-Trade Empire: The work of the Crown Agents for the Colonies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', Journal of Economic History 26, 3 (1966), 363-376.

[8] David Sunderland, 'Principals and agents: the activities of the Crown Agents for the colonies, 1880-1914',Economic History Review, 52, 2 (1999) 284-306; David Sunderland, '"Objectionable Parasites"; The Crown Agents and the purchase of Crown Colony government stores, 1880-1914', Business History, 41, 4 (Oct. 1999), 21-47.

[9] Richard M. Kesner, "Builders of Empire: The Role of the Crown Agents in Imperial Development, 1880-1914", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History 5, 3 (May 1977), 314.

[10] The archives of the Crown Agents contain no records of the Nigerian colonial investment accounts. Personal communications, 5 February 2002.

[11] Gerald Helleiner, Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria (Homewood, 1966).

That Britain's African colonies were expected to be self-supporting is well documented. In effect, that usually meant a budget surplus. The question arises, what happened to that surplus?

Early Investment by the Crown Agents

During the late nineteenth century, surplus revenue from the Niger Coast Protectorate (formerly the Oil Rivers Protectorate) was remitted to the Bank of England, where it came under the joint control of the Crown Agents and the Treasury:

> That proportion of the revenue which is remitted to the Bank of England cannot be withdrawn without the combined signature of the Agent-General [i.e. the Crown Agent] and Treasurer. Only such amounts are withdrawn as will keep the balance of the current drawing account at about 3,000*l*.[12]

Remittance from the Niger Coast Protectorate[13] (amounting to £104,338/1/10 in 1895-96) and the Crown Colony of Lagos[14] were invested in Bank of England 3per cent consols,[15] gilt-edged British

---

[12] Report on the Administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate, August 1891 to August 1894 [C.7596] 18. The earlier Trade Reports for the Oil Rivers Protectorate, which form part of the annual series of Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance Reports, Africa, contain very little information on finance and no details on the remittance accounts.

[13] Report for the Year 1895-96 of the Administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate [C. 8277-52],8.

[14] Gov. Sir Samuel Rowe to the Earl of Kimberley, 27 February 1882, Report on the Blue Book for Lagos Settlement for the Year 1880 By 1881, Lagos Colony had £20,000 invested in 3% consols. Alfred Molony to Earl of Kimberley, 28 Sept. 1882, Report on the Blue Book for 1881.

[15] The term consols derive from a contraction of consolidated annuities and consolidated stock. They were gilt-edged British government bonds, first issued by the Bank of England in 1752. Initially they had no date of maturity, but paying a quarterly dividend. In 1903 the rate was reduced to $2^1/_2$%, redeemable at par in or after 1923, at the option of the British Government. Derrick G. Hanson, Dictionary of Banking and Finance (London: Pitman, 1985), 155.

government bonds purchased through the Crown Agents.[16] In addition, the Niger Coast Protectorate had £10,000 in unspecified 'investments'. In 1886, Lagos Colony earned £1,426/19/110 in interest on investments, a not insignificant part of the £6,507/5/10 in non-Customs revenue, albeit dwarfed by Customs revenue.[17] By 1887, interest had leapt to £35,373/2/11 and had diversified into colonial securities, the largest being New South Wales 3 1/2per cent inscribed stock, followed by Canadian debentures, Victoria 4per cent inscribed stock and Ceylon debentures.[18] The Victoria, 4 per cent (1920) Inscribed Stock, issued under the Railway Loan Act of 1885, funded not only the construction of much of the early Victorian railway system but a wide variety of government projects, including the Melbourne Water Supply, the Loddon River dam, and the Goulburn weir and irrigation system. [19] While the Crown Agents were barred after 1880 from representing the self-governing Colonies, i.e. what became the White Dominions[20], that did not prevent them investing Nigerian funds in inscribe stock and debentures of the self-governing colonies.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the scale of Australian and New Zealand public-works stock caused consternation amongst British politicians and officials. As Davis and Huttenback noted,

> Despite these concerns, the colonies with responsible government borrowed on terms that, although perhaps not quite as favourable as those received by India and the dependent colonies, were still far below the rates charged even the most advanced nations. The ability of these colonies to raise large blocks of capital at very low rates

[16] The Crown Agents acted for the colonies under Treasury Instructions for the Guidance of the Agent-General for the Crown Colonies, 5 March, 1860 (London: W. Mitchener, 1860).
[17] Lagos, Report on the Blue Book for 1886.
[18] Lagos, Report on the Blue Book for 1887 [C-56202], 22. The Gold Coast investments with the crown Agents were on a more modest scale in 1895 but the pattern was similar: £1,560/13/2 in New South Wales 3 1/2percent Inscribed Stock, £1.065/4/5 in Victoria 3 1/2percent inscribed, and £1,431/18/9 in New Zealand 3 1/2percent. Gold Coast, Treasury Department Report, 1896.
[19] Victoria, Legislative Assembly, 17 Nov. 1885, "Railway Loan Act, 1885" ; Authorisation of Loan Funds, 2, Nov, 1887; Loans for Irrigation Works and Water Supply in Country Districts, 24 Oct 1888.
[20] Colonial Office to Treasury, 26 November 1880, Papers Explanatory of the Functions of the Crown Agents for the Colonies, August 1881, No. 6 [C.3073].

> came as something of a surprise to the British government...when most officials were making dire predictions about the long-run outcome of this massive violation of fiscal orthodoxy. ...Nor does the distance of a century make the explanation of the British investor's willingness to underwrite these activities any more apparent.[21]

The apparent willingness of British investors to accept very low rates rested not in any mysterious strain of economic irrationality but with the Crown Agents, who helped maintain the market by pumping the funds of the various non-responsible colonies into such investments.

The pattern of investment in the White Empire, captured in the 1887 Lagos accounts, was to be sustained throughout the colonial era.[22] Moreover, within a few years, the Crown Agents were managing an array of other Nigerian accounts, such as the Government Savings Bank and the depreciation fund for government vessels, often referred to as the "Government Yacht *Ivy* account". However, it was with the influx of railway loans that the 'investment accounts' truly mushroomed.

Construction of the Nigerian railways and port facilities was funded by a combination of Imperial Treasury Loans and British-government guaranteed loans through the Crown Agents. The difference between the two was that the Imperial Treasury Loans under the Crown Colonies Loan Act of 1899 were subject to scrutiny by the British Treasury, while British-government guaranteed loans under the Colonial Stock Acts of 1877 and 1900, managed through the Crown Agents, were not.[23] However the relatively small 1899, 1908 and 1911 railway loans from the Imperial Treasury were the exceptions. In general, Nigerian colonial borrowing were based on Inscribed Stock issued through the Crown Agents, who were in the enviable position of acting as both buyers and sellers, brokers and agents, for the Colonies. In return for their services, the Crown Agents

---

21 Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, Mammon and the pursuit of Empire: The political economy of British imperialism, 1860-1912 (Cambridge, 1986), 170.

22 The 1897 investments of the Gold Coast show a similar pattern of investment in the Australian colonies, New Zealand and Canada. Gold Coast, Treasurer’s Report, 1898, 56.

23 For an analysis of the politics and bureaucratic infighting behind the loan legislation, see Richard M. Kesner, Economic Control and Colonial Development: Crown Colony Financial Management in the Age of Joseph Chamberlain (Westport, 1981), 70-88.

charged 0.5 per cent commission on the issue and repayment of loans, as well as 0.25 per cent fee on interest payments.

The money raised for Nigeria through colonial stock was used for major works projects and to redeem earlier loans. Moreover, in the period between floating the loan and actual expenditure, the unspent balance was held by the Crown Agents in London and put out at interest.[24] There were thus three major groups of investment accounts before 1908, the 'Surplus Funds', a growing profusion of special accounts and the unallocated portion of the loan accounts put out at interest.

In 1905, Southern Nigeria had £608,000 in advances from loan funds with the Crown Agents. In the heydays before the First World War, the Crown Agents were able to shift considerable sums between colonies with little accountability:

> ... suppose a Colony had borrowed half a million [pounds sterling] and that they did not want to spend the whole of that at once, the [Crown] Agents would make advances from that to other Colonies in anticipation of loans, but they did not tell the Colony whose money they were actually advancing, what they had done with the money. They merely returned it in their statements, "Lent out at interest", without saying to whom they had lent it.[25]

The 1906 Southern Nigerian investments accounts (Chart 1) clearly reflected the Australasian[26] demand for capital, though the portfolio had diversified with growth, including £2,000 in Cardiff Corporation 3 per cent bonds.

---

[24] Colony of Southern Nigeria, Blue Book for 1906, Appendix F1-5, Statement of Assets and Liabilities on 31 December 1905 and on 31 Dec. 1906.

[25] F.R.Round, CMG, testimony before the Seely Committee, 6 July 1908, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Committee of Enquiry into the Organization of the Crown Agents' Office [Cd. 4474] (London: HMSO, 1909), para. 1739.

[26] Australasia comprised the Commonwealth of Australia and its constituent states, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia, plus New Zealand.

Table 1 Southern Nigeria: 'Statement of Investments', Financial Report for 1906

Investment*	Amount of Stock	Purchase Price	Mean Market Value, 1906§
Lagos General Surplus Funds			
Canada 4% Debentures	800/ 0/ 0	824/ 0/ 0	800/ 0/ 0
Ceylon 4% Debentures	2,500/ 0/ 0	2,900/ 0/ 0	2,550/ 0/ 0
Ceylon 3% I.S.	985/ 3/ 5	1,000/ 0/ 0	916/ 4/ 2
New South Wales 31/2% I.S.	5,925/ 9/ 1	5,055/14/ 5	5,895/16/ 6
Victoria 4% I.S.	5,687/ 4/ 1	5,914/13/10	5,744/ 1/ 6
Victoria 31/2% I.S.	1,296/ 4/11	500/ 0/ 0	1,276/16/ 1
Hong Kong 31/2% I.S.	3,500/ 3/ 3	3,500/ 0/ 0	3,500/ 3/ 3
Western Australia 4% I.S.	2,977/12/ 4	3,000/ 0/ 0	3,037/ 3/ 5
South Australia 31/2% I.S.	1,761/12/ 1	1,700/ 0/ 0	1,752/15/11
South Australia 31/2% I.S.	2,433/ 0/11	2,500/ 0/ 0	2,420/17/ 6
New Zealand 31/2% I.S.	3,824/19/ 8	3,500/ 0/ 0	3,824/19/ 8
Queensland 31/2% I.S.	1,617/ 7/ 6	1,500/ 0/ 0	1,585/ 0/ 6
Consols, 23/4%	3,629/ 5/ 4	3,500/ 0/ 0	3,338/18/ 8
Consols, 23/4%	973/ 3/ 9	1,000/ 0/ 0	895/ 6/ 7
Bengal Nagpur, 4%	900/ 0/ 0	1,091/ 1/6	936/ 0/ 0
Barbados Loan, 31/2%	5,400/ 0/ 0	5,522/ 0/ 0	5,400/ 0/ 0
Indian 21/2% I.S.	700/ 0/ 0	546/ 0/ 0	544/ 5/ 0
Natal 3% I.S.	700/ 0/ 0	595/ 0/ 0	591/10/ 0
New Zealand 4% I.S.	647/ 5/ 5	695/16/ 3	673/ 3/ 1
Queensland 3% I.S.	200/ 0/ 0	175/ 0/ 0	173/ 0/ 0
Trinidad 3% I.S.	2,167/14/ 3	1,885/18/ 2	1,864/ 4/ 8
Victoria 31/2% I.S.	200/ 0/ 0	201/ 0/ 0	197/ 0/ 0
Victoria 4% I.S	477/ 6/ 6	482/ 1/11	484/ 9/ 9
Victoria 4% I.S	1,600/ 0/ 0	1,680/ 0/ 0	1,648/ 0/ 0
Hong Kong 31/2%	2,000/ 0/ 0	1,990/ 0/ 0	2,000/ 0/ 0
Trinidad Govt. Script interest at bank rate, varying	613/ 5/10	613/ 5/10	613/ 5/10
Savings Bank			
New Zealand 31/2% I.S.	1,500/ 0/ 0	1,571/10/5	1,500/ 0/ 0
New South Wales 31/2% I.S.	1,800/ 0/ 0	1,844/5/11	1,800/ 0/ 0
Ceylon 3% I.S.	1,395/12/6	1,306/16/7	1,297/18/ 7
Grenada 4% I.S.	483/ 1/ 4	500/ 0/ 0	487/17/11
Victoria 31/2% I.S.	2,955/13/ 3	3,000/ 0/ 0	2,911/ 6/ 6
Victoria 31/2% I.S.	1,944/ 6/ 9	2,066/ 3/ 1	1,905/ 9/ 1
Queensland 31/2% I.S.	1,000/ 0/ 0	1,056/ 6/ 5	980/ 0/ 0

Investment*	Amount of Stock	Purchase Price	Mean Market Value, 1906§
Queensland 3% I.S.	2,075/12/ 8	2,026/ 0/ 7	1,795/ 8/ 5
Queensland 3% I.S.	24/07/2004	22/09/2000	21/01/2006
Transvaal Guaranteed 3%	5,000/ 0/ 0	4,928/17/ 0	4,850/ 0/ 0
Ceylon 4% Debentures	904/19/ 1	1,000/ 0/ 0	914/ 0/ 0
Zanzibar 3% debentures	3,000/ 0/ 0	2,977/11/ 0	3,000/ 0/ 0
Yacht 'Ivy' Depreciation Fund			
Western Australia, 1915/35, 3%	1,200/ 0/ 0	1,145/17/ 1	1,050/ 0/ 0
Western Australia 1927, 3% I.S.	100/ 0/ 0	89/ 7/ 2	87/10/ 0
Queensland, 3%	2,200/ 0/ 0	2,066/13/ 6	1,903/ 0/ 0
Queensland, 1945, 31/2%	1,000/ 0/ 0	1,082/13/ 5	990/ 0/ 0
New South Wales, 1918, 31/2%	1,200/ 0/ 0	1,263/ 9/ 7	1,200/ 0/ 0
New Zealand, 31/2%	100/ 0/ 0	104/14/ 8	100/ 0/ 0
Natal, 1914, 39, 31/2%	2,000/ 0/ 0	2,073/17/ 7	1,960/ 0/ 0
Transvaal Guaranteed 3%	4,000/ 0/ 0	3,945/ 1/ 0	3,880/ 0/ 0
Trinidad, 3%	4,567/ 7/ 7	4,109/ 9/ 1	3,927/18/11
Hong Kong, 31/2%	4,000/ 0/ 0	3,940/ 1/ 0	4,000/ 0/ 0
Trinidad Govt Script, interest at bank rate, varying	173/17/ 0	173/17/ 0	173/17/ 0
Surplus Funds, Eastern and Central Provinces (former Niger Coast Protectorate)			
Zanzibar Debentures	20,000/ 0/ 0	20,000/ 0/ 0	20,000/ 0/ 0
Trinidad 3%	21,000/ 0/ 0	19,568/11/ 2	18,060/ 0/ 0
Ceylon, 3%	20,000/ 0/ 0	18,646/15/ 8	18,600/ 0/ 0
New Zealand, 3%	2,831/8/ 0	2,684/13/ 2	2,519/18/11
Cardiff Corporation, 3%	2,000/ 0/ 0	1,740/ 0/ 0	1,720/ 0/ 0
Transvaal Guaranteed, 3%	2,000/ 0/ 0	1,950/ 0/ 0	1,940/ 0/ 0
Trinidad Govt Script, interest at bank rate, varying	4,045/11/ 7	4,045/11/ 7	4,045/11/ 7
Public Officers' Guarantee Fund			
Transvaal Guaranteed, 3%	3,000/ 0/ 0	2,929/ 4/ 5	2,910/ 0/ 0
Hong Kong, 31/2% I.S.	275/11/ 0	270/15/ 7	275/11/ 0

* I.S.- Inscribed Stock, unless otherwise labelled. § The mean market values were calculated on the middle market price prevailing on 31 March each year and fluctuated with market conditions.

One could argue that a diversified portfolio was simply prudent management, but most were capital guaranteed investments backed by the Imperial Government under the Colonial Stock Acts. They were all gilt-edged securities. However, a striking feature of the 1906 investment portfolios is that the purchase price often exceeded both the face value of the stock and mean market value. If the role of the Crown Agents was to maximise return on investments for Nigeria, they do not appear to have been very astute investment managers.

By 1912, the 'Surplus Funds' of Southern Nigeria had a face value of £526,918/7/3, with aggregate investments from all accounts totalling £ 1,239,186/4/1,[27] still heavily weighted toward Australia and New Zealand, albeit the largest issues were £100,800 in Canadian (1930-50) $3^1/_2$ per cent Inscribed Stock, followed by £160,161 in New Zealand (1940) $3^1/_2$ per cent Inscribed Stock (1940), and £70,000 in Canadian Northern Ontario Railway First Mortgage.

The Agents and the Banks

Though the Crown Agents had ceased to act on behalf of the self-governing colonies in 1880, they enjoyed a close relationship with the London and Westminster Bank, which served as agent for many of the self-governing colonies- including Victoria.[28] As Sir Ernest Blake, KCMG, Sr. Crown Agent, explained at a Parliamentary Enquiry in 1908; "We lend a great deal of money that come into our hands in the business itself, that is to say, to our other Colonies, who are wanting moneys, but we always see our way to replace it. The other moneys we do not want we lend to the London and Westminster Bank. The Bank of England will not allow interest on deposits."[29] The informal but multi-strand web of relationships enjoyed by the Crown Agents was central to their operations. Moreover, the Crown Agents were rarely called upon to explain their decisions.

Officials in the colonies normally deferred to the Crown Agents assumed financial and technical expertise. On the rare occasions when one was rash enough to do otherwise, he was made short work of. Sir Frank

27 Southern Nigeria, Financial Report for the Year 1912, Appendix VI.

28 Victoria, Legislative Assembly, Bill to authorize the issue of Treasury Bonds, 1890.

29 Sir Ernest Blake, KCMG, testimony before the Seely Committee, 29 June 1908, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Committee of Enquiry into the Organization of the Crown Agents' Office [Cd. 4474] (London: HMSO, 1909), para. 1193.

Swettenham, former governor of the Straits Settlement, tried to query the investments of the Crown Agents at the 1908 Parliamentary Enquiry, testifying that Sir George Murray, head of the Mercantile Bank of Singapore and member of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, had asserted that Crown Agents investments were often 'in securities that a wise man would not have chosen'.[30] However ex-governors and heads of provincial banks were no match for the well-connected Crown Agents. Sir Ernest Blake was cavalier in his rebuttal:

> The Secretary of State first of all snubbed him [Gov. Swettenham] and told him that it was very improper of him to have allowed such an expression to be made by the Legislative Council as that these securities were not proper... Sir Frank Swettenham's evidence is worth nothing- there is nothing in it.[31]

When Sir Frank Swettenham criticised the incompetence of a Crown Agent appointed railway engineer[32] Sir Ernest's rebuttal in telling,

> An immense deal of this business is settled by word of mouth with the consulting engineers; they come and consult us, and we have had to write to the Colonial Office a great many letters on questions of principle.'[33]

The 'question of principle' was the audacity of a governor in challenge the expertise of the Crown Agents, not the competence or otherwise of their engineers.[34]

---

[30] Sir Frank Athelstane Swettenham, testimony, 24 June 1908, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Committee of Enquiry into the Organization of the Crown Agents' Office [Cd. 4474] (London: HMSO, 1909), 45, para 918.

[31] Sir Ernest Blake, testimony, 31 July 1908, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Committee of Enquiry into the Organization of the Crown Agents' Office [Cd. 4474] (London: HMSO, 1909), p. 166, para 3940-3943.

[32] Sir Frank Athelstane Swettenham, testimony, 24 June 1908, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Committee of Enquiry into the Organization of the Crown Agents' Office [Cd. 4474] (London: HMSO, 1909), 44, para 882.

[33] Sir Ernest Blake, Sn Crown Agent, testimony, 29 June 1908, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Committee of Enquiry into the Organization of the Crown Agents' Office [Cd. 4474] (London: HMSO, 1909), 54, para 1124.

[34] The parallels with the Bretton Woods institutions are striking.

Sir Ernest's tone and the conclusions of the Parliamentary Committee were a clear indication of where real power lay. The Crown Agents were a uniquely British institution, an amalgam of upper-class arrogance, patronage and muddling incompetence that brooked no criticism from lesser mortals. As A.W. Abbott, a former Secretary to the Crown Agents (1948-1958), noted in his quasi-official history,

> The Crown agents have no formal constitution and are not part of the United Kingdom Civil Service or of the United Kingdom Government machine. The Crown Agents are simply two individuals (two at present; there have sometimes been three and occasionally four) who have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to be Crown Agents ... on terms to be decided by him. There functions are not anywhere laid down, except inferentially by reference to them in certain Colonial Regulations....[35]

It was a relationship built on trust[36] central to the operations of the Crown Agents and resulted in decisions without recourse to written explanations or justifications, hence the paucity of records noted by Kesner. J.A. Mullens, a long-time broker for the Crown Agents, explained:

> Our usual business with the Crown Agents simply consists of purchasing and selling Consols or other Government securities; but in the event of a Crown Agents' new loan coming out we are consulted as the details jointly with Messrs Scrimgeour, the other broker... There [at the Crown Agents] we discuss the price with the other brokers and different formalities are settled between us, when

---

[35] Abbott, A.W., A Short History of the Crown Agents and their Office (London, 1959) 2. See also, Vincent Ponko, Jr., 'History and the Methodology of Public Administration: The Case of the Crown Agents for the Colonies', Public Administration Review 27, 1 (March 1967), 42-7.

[36] The bounds between the Crown Agents and Colonial Office were often blurred: Sir Montagu Ommannery, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., I.S.O., was private secretary to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Carnarvon, before serving as Crown Agent from 1877 to 1900 and subsequently Permanent Undersecretary of the Colonial Office from 1900 to 1907. Sir Reginald Antrobus, K.C.M.G., C.B, a clerk and Assistant Under Secretary at the Colonial Office, became Crown Agent from 1909 to 1918.

> the stock is to be issue at what price and so on....There is no committee appointed exactly, but all the details are gone into....[37]

The role of the Crown Agents in financing of the Nigerian railway, and the bureaucratic tensions between the Colonial Office and Treasury, has been well documented by Carland.[38] It was the relationship of mutual self-interest that enabled the Crown Agents to wield such power:

> ...the Agency's quasi-independent status allowed the Colonial Office to push forward development projects without scrutiny and interference from the Treasury or from Parliament; reduce their (the Colonial Office's) responsibility for the services provided; and enable officials to exercise patronage through the recommendation of candidates for Crown Agent clerical posts.[39]

However, while one might accord with Jan Hogendorn's contention that the Northern Nigerian railway was funded at public expense in the interest of private capital, his assertion that "private bondholders provided the bulk of the financing" is less clear-cut.[40]

Brokers Mullens and Scrimgeour arranged with the banks and financial houses to underwrite or guarantee such loans, for which the underwriters normally received a one-percent commission and the brokers one-quarter percent. Mullens cited as an example the 1908 Southern Nigerian Loan for three million pounds, which failed to attract buyers. The underwriters had to take up ninety-five percent of the loan. However, for all practical purposes, the loan was guaranteed by the British government and, by agreeing to take up the balance of the issue, the threat of heavy discounting was overcome.

---

[37] J.A. Mullens, testimony, 27 July, 1908, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Committee of Enquiry into the Organization of the Crown Agents' Office [Cd. 4474] (London: HMSO, 1909), 54, paras 3705- 3712.

[38] John Carland, The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914 (London, 1985).

[39] David Sunderland, 'Principals and Agents: the activities of the Crown Agents for the colonies, 1880-1914', Economic History Review 52, 2 (1999), 288.

[40] Jan S. Hogendorn, 'The Cotton Campaign in Northern Nigeria, 1902-1914: An Early example of a public/private planning failure in Agriculture', Cotton, Colonialism, and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa, Isaacman, Allen and Roberts, Richard eds (London, 1995), 55.

The Crown Agents eased the exposure of the banks and financial houses under the 1908 Southern Nigerian loan by issuing most of what was ostensibly a $3^1/_2$ per cent loan in 4 per cent four-year convertible bonds, discounted at £99, initially discounted to £96.5. In other words, for a loan with a face value of £3,142,461 at $3^1/_2$ per cent, the colonial government received £3,000.000 at 4 per cent, convertible in four years. The 4 per cent convertible bonds fell due in 1912, necessitating the $3^1/_2$ per cent 1911 loan. Of the £4,875,033 realised from the 1911 loan, £1,899,249 was used to redeem the 1908 convertible bonds at 4 per cent, plus most of the 1911 Imperial Treasury Loan used for the Bauchi Light Railway, thus removing Treasury scrutiny. When the 1911 loan failed to be adequately taken up, a new issue of 4 per cent four-year convertible bonds were discounted at £99/10s. In 1916, faced with a revenue deficit and the 1911 bonds of 4 per cent falling due, the colonial government borrowed £4,425,000 in 5 per cent debentures issued at £97.5, redeemable at par on 15 June 1920, thereby paying out most of the £ 4,222,000 due on the 1911 loan.[41]. The use of short-term debentures at higher interest reflected the wartime investment climate. The 1919 loan at 6 per cent, which realised just under £ 6,200,000, was used to redeem most of the 1916 four-year 5 per cent debentures and repay £2,000,000 in revenue advances on the Eastern Nigerian railway.[42] Colonial loans under the Crown Agents bore striking similarities to contemporary IMF rollover lending to Third World countries.

Servicing such borrowing led to the creation in 1905 of mandatory 'Sinking Fund', with a modest initial £10,000. By 1917, the Sinking Funds had overtaken the 'Surplus Funds', having investments with a face value of £580,000, albeit some of the initial Sinking Funds appear to have been generated by the transfer of stock from the Surplus Funds, ie. holdings in New Zealand (1940) $3^1/_2$ per cent , Trinidad (1922-44) 3 per cent, Western Australia (1935-55) $3^1/_2$ per cent and £ 33,542 of the Canadian (1930-50) $3^1/_2$ per cent.[43]

---

[41] Nigeria, Financial Returns for 1916, 2.

[42] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report for 1920, 5.

[43] 'Statement of Investments on 31 December 1917", Nigeria, Financial Returns for 1917, 82.

Table 2: Nigerian pre-War borrowing

Loan	C.A. costs as per cent of total raised.	Net Realised	Comments
1899 Imperial Treasury Loan, of £792,500 at $3^1/_2$%	n/a	792,500	Paid out under the 1905 loan
1905 Southern Nigerian (Lagos) Inscribed Stock of £2,000,000 at $3^1/_2$% (1930-55) *	5.86424	1,889,212	Paid out under 1935 loan
1908 Southern Nigerian Inscribed Stock of £3,142,461 at $3^1/_2$% (1930-55)	4.78487	3,000,000	£1,893,246 paid out under 1911 loan. Balance paid out under 1935 loan
1911 Imperial Treasury Loan of £200,000 at $3^1/_2$%	n/a	2,000,000	Paid out under the 1911 loan..
1911 Southern Nigeria Inscribed Stock of £5,034,932 at $3^1/_2$% (1930-55)	3.27996	4,222,000	£4,142,105 paid from 1916 loan. Balance paid out under 1935 loan
1916 Nigerian debentures of £4,425,000 at 5% redeemable at par on 15 June 1920,	not stated	4,425,000	paid out under 1919 loan
1919 Nigerian Inscribed Stock of £ 6,363,226 at 6% (1949-79);	2.70803	6,195,451	
1921 Nigerian Inscribed Stock £3,200,390 at 6% (1936-46);	6.78567	2,997,022	Redeemed in 1936.
1923 Nigerian Inscribed Stock of £5,700,000 at 4% (1963) - 1st instalment	17.389	4,855,667	
1927 Nigeria Inscribed Stock of £ 5,700,000 at 5% (1947-57) 2nd instalment	2.375345	4,130,389	
1930 Nigerian Inscribed Stock of £4,791,373 at 5% (1950-60);	2.534903	4,650,000	£528,000 redeemed in 1934 under 1935 loan
1935 Nigerian Inscribed Stock for £4,188,000 at 3% (1955).	0.93208	4,045,593	

* This meant the loan was repayable on or before 15 March 1955, with a government option to redeem at par from 15 March 1930 on six month's notice.

The ‘Surplus Funds’ were effectively 'on-call' to meet revenue shortfalls or extraordinary expenditures. The First World War, the campaigns in the German Kamerun and East Africa, along with construction of the Eastern Nigerian railway, put pressure on the Nigerian budget. In 1916, the 'Surplus Funds" were reduced by £ 23,463, through the sale of Exchequer Bonds (£ 3,790/0/9) and the balance in Straits Settlements Inscribed Stock, '...involving a loss of £ 8,464 on realisation'.[44] By their very nature the Surplus Funds fluctuated, often dramatically with changes in revenue and unallocated loan funds. New Zealand, New South Wales and Queensland stock comprised the core medium-term investments, with short-term liquidity invested in British war bonds.

Unlike the Surplus Funds, which were short-term, the Sinking Funds were long-term investments, restricted to gilt-edged government and municipal stocks, bonds and debentures. Sinking Funds were far more diversified, with strong holdings during the 1920s in Ceylon and Straits Settlement, Jamaica, and Trinidad, as well as Australasian inscribed stock. The portfolio grew but the structure was slow to change through disinvestment before maturity. It would appear the Crown Agents were reluctant to put pressure on the Dominions or British municipalities by selling off low-return investments, despite the availability of more remunerative securities.

Through the 1920s, the investments increased markedly, especially in Ceylon, the Straits Settlement, Australasia, South Africa and the Gold Coast, as well as British local government issues, such as Newcastle Corporation and Ayr County Council.[45]

---

44 Nigeria, Financial Returns for the Year 1916.

45 'Statement of Investments on 31 March 1927, Nigeria, Treasurer's Report for 1926-27, 98.

Table 3: Aggregated Sinking Funds, 1920s

Regional Distribution	1920 £	1924 £	1928 £
Australia/New Zealand	85,729	138,507	149,350
British Municipalities			118,038
Canada	170,800	170,800	45,630
South Africa	29,693	25,600	142,217
Straits Settlement	180,910	265,636	341,061
Ceylon	70,897	155,081	222,475
India		16,218	64,611
Gold Coast		21,335	311241*
Sierra Leone		5,020	39,025
Kenya		65,360	154,363
Caribbean	134,475	193,659	251,232
Treasury & War Bonds	29,880	46,740	
Nigerian stock			76,409
Other	10,120	10,451	34,672
Total	712,504	1,114,407	1,950,324

* Including £244,992 in Gold Coast 41/2% (1956) Inscribed Stock purchased in 1925

The Gold Coast investments are particularly interesting. The Gold Coast floated a succession of loans for railway, harbour and other major works. In terms of Nigerian investments, the principal Gold Coast holdings were the 1909 (1927-52) at 3 per cent, the 1914 (1939-59) at 4 per cent, the 1920 (1945-70) at 6 per cent, the 1926 (1956) at 4.5 per cent and the 1931 (1960-70) at 4.5 per cent.[46] The issue of the 1926 Gold Coast inscribed stock at 4.5 per cent, in the midst of a rising market, would appear to fly in the face of investors, another of those apparent conundrums of British investors noted by Davis and Huttenback. [47] In fact, the Crown Agents

---

[46] Gold Coast, Annual Reports, 1919-1939.

[47] Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, Mammon and the pursuit of Empire: The political economy of British imperialism, 1860-1912 (Cambridge, 1986), 170.

were able to underwrite the Gold Coast issue with a major injection of over £200,000 from the Nigerian 3.5 per cent (1930-55) Sinking Fund, plus smaller sums from various Native Administration investment accounts. While the Nigerian central government sinking funds amounted to less than 5 per cent of the total 1926 Gold Coast loan, such a stake was not insubstantial. Nigeria was but one colony, and the 1926 Gold Coast loan illustrates how the Crown Agents were able to use their dual role of broker and agent to underwrite otherwise unattractive investments.

By March 1922, the Nigerian 'Sinking Funds' had a Face Value of £853,859/17/4,[48] while public debts had risen to £13,609,210, with the issue of the 1921 Loan.[49] Further borrowing increased the public debt to £23,559,209 in 1927, following a two-part stock issue in 1923 and 1927. The initial 1923 issue at 4 per cent (1963) had to be discounted by 88 per cent owing to lack of public investment; only £4,855,325 was realised on the face value of £5,700,000, after Crown Agent commission and discounting.[50] The second issue in 1927 of £4350,000 at 5 per cent (1947-57) was at par, being over-subscribed in the bullish 'boom' of the late 1920s.[51] The 1930 issue of £4,791,373 at 5 per cent (1950-60), brought the public debt to £28,350,582,.[52] with a combined annual interest by 1930-31 financial year of £1,395,482, paid from annual revenue.[53]

As new loans were floated, new sinking funds were created, while special investment accounts proliferated. In March 1928, Face Value in the various Nigerian colonial accounts were as follows.[54]

---

[48] 'Statement of Investments on 31 March 1922", Nigeria, Treasurer's Report for 1921-22, 96.
[49] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report, 1921-22.
[50] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report for 1923-24.
[51] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report for 1926-27.
[52] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report for 1929-30.
[53] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report for 1930-31.
[54] "Statement of Investments on 31 March 1928", Nigeria, Treasurer's Report for 1927-28, 100.

Table 4: Investment Accounts, March 1928

Investment Accounts	Face Value £
Surplus Funds	3,804,803
Sinking Fund (31/2%)	1,251,013
Sinking Fund (6%, 1949-79)	446,223
Sinking Fund (6%, 1936-46)	102,006
Sinking Fund (4% Stock 1963)	69,001
Supplementary Sinking Fund	43,696
Reserve for Stamp Duty- 1927 Loan	38,375
Post Office Savings Bank	32,879
Sir Alfred Jones' Bequest *	15,342
Disabled Soldiers Fund	7,811
S.Y. "Ivy" Depreciation Fund §	44,333
Public Officers' Guarantee Fund	28,878
Securities held on account of Ex-Lands Nigeria, Ltd	3,150
Deceased Officers' Children Education Fund	6,668
Royal W.A.F.F. Reward Fund	2,300
Railway Renewals Fund	462,575
Railway Provident Fund	199,218
Total	6,558,271

* The bequest, made in 1915 for the promotion of technical education in Nigeria, was drawn upon for buildings and equipment for Yaba Higher College in the mid-1930s and then remained dormant until after the Second World War. § The Ivy Depreciation Fund was converted into the Marine Renewal Fund in 1928. By March 1940 it had an investment portfolio with a face value of £ 565,315 with a stock distribution similar to the Sinking Funds.

The Supplementary Sinking Fund, created in 1927, was intended for early redemption of the 1921 6 per cent loan, redeemable from October 1936; £260,000 per annum was to be added for the first ten years, until 1936-37, then £484,000 each year for the next ten years. The investment program was scuttled by the Depression, annual contributions were suspended and interest often diverted to general revenue.

Table 5: Supplementary Sinking Fund deposits

Financial Year	Additional Deposit	Financial Year	Additional Deposit
1927-28	£ 47,500	1938-39	£ 260,000
1928-29	472,500	1939-40	100
1929-30	260,000	1940-41	100
1930-31	260,000	1941-42	100
1931-32	130,000	1942-43	260,000
1932-33	0	1943-44	500,000
1933-34	0	1944-45	100
1934-35	0	1945-46	0
1935-36	0	1946-47	1,000,000
1936-37	200,000	1947-48	450,000
1937-38	360.000		

The other innovation on the eve of the Depression was the creation by the Crown Agents of the Joint Colonial (later Joint Consolidated) Fund in 1929, whereby remittance from the various colonies to the Crown Agents were managed as a common fund, to be drawn upon at interest of 2 per cent.[55] Like other short-term accounts, the Joint Consolidated Fund fluctuated dramatically. In 1938-39 the Nigerian colonial government entered the financial year with a credit of £395,000, transformed into a deficit of £355,152 by the end.[56] Throughout the Depression, the Crown Agents put out Nigerian surplus in the Joint Colonial Fund to colonies in crises - Sierra Leone, Jamaica, and Fiji. In terms of the total Joint Consolidated Fund, the Nigerian investments were but a fraction of the total, but its raises questions of aggregate transfer of capital within the underdeveloped British colonies.

---

[55] Detailed in A.W. Abbott, Short History of the Crown Agents (London, 1959). In 1945, interest on Joint Consolidated Loans was reduced to 1 $^1/_2$%, 1% in 1947 and restored to 1 $^1/_2$% in 1948. See also, Nigeria, Report of the Accountant-General with Financial Statements for the Year ending 31st March, 1948, 9.

[56] Nigeria, Report on Accounts and Finance, 1938-39, 9.

The Great Depression

The Nigerian colonial government issued two additional loans during the 1930s, the 1930 Inscribed Stock at 5 per cent (1950-60) and the 1935 Inscribed Stock at 3 per cent (1955). However, they were conceived under radically different circumstances and utilised to quite different ends.

The 1930 loan had its genesis in the heady days immediately before the Wall Street Crash and was intended to fund a range of major infrastructure programs: the Eastern Nigerian Railway and Benue Bridge at Makurdi, construction of the Carter Bridge in Lagos, and electrification and harbour facilities. The loan realised £4,791,373, [57] but was released onto a depressed market and £4,650,000 had to be discounted at 99 per cent, presumably to the Westminster Bank. Only £141,373 was passed onto the market at 104.75 per cent. In 1933, the colonial government abandoned the Lagos sewage scheme, thus cancelling £528,000 of the 1930 loan, albeit at a loss of £21,120.[58]

The mid-30s upturn in the global economy evoked an uncharacteristic flourish from the pen of the Nigerian Chief Secretary:

> The turning point appears to have been reached at about the 1st of April, 1935, and it seems clear that Nigeria has now made a great stride out of the gloom of the depression, in the shadow of which the 1935-36 Estimates were perforce compiled, into a brightening sunshine of prosperity. The country has displayed a welcome and heartening economic resilience, and the financial barometer now appears to be "Set Fair".[59]

By the end of financial year 1934-35, the combined Sinking and Supplementary Funds had a value of £ 5,209.280.[60] An additional 'Reserve Fund" was created with £500,000 from revenue. The intent was to create a permanent fund of £3,000,000 or the equivalent of half-annual revenue, to be drawn upon only in instances of dire emergency.[61] It was to be the first and only payment until 1942, as the economy slid back into recession along with falling commodity prices.

---

[57] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report on the Year 1930-31,7.

[58] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report on the Year 1933-34, 5.

[59] Nigeria, Report on the Accounts and Finance for the Year 1935-36, 3.

[60] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report for the Year 1934-35, 10.

[61] Ibid, p. 7, Heading 41 b (i).

The 1935 loan of £4,188,00 at 3 per cent reflected the momentary ebullience of the colonial officials. The face value of £4,188,00 included conversion of £2,551,000 of the Southern Nigeria (Lagos) 3 1/2 per cent Inscribed Stock, 1930-55. The balance, £1,637,000, was discounted at 97.5 per cent and used to pay out the balance of the 1905, 1908 and 1911 loans.[62] In effect, the government paid off the earlier, higher interest loans at a date earlier than required in order to convert to a lower 3 per cent interest, the date of maturity for the 1935 loan being the same as the upper date on the earlier loans. The cash subscribers bought at a discount in anticipation of eventual upward movement of the market value, rather than for the return on investment at only 8s per £100 interest in 1935.[63]

As usual, sinking funds of not less than 1 per cent per annum were established for both of the 1930s' loans, while the Sinking Funds from the 1911 Southern Nigerian loan was partially sold out and partially rolled over into the new accounts. The Supplementary Sinking Fund was thereby increased from £932,224 (as of 1 April 1935) to £3,072,239 (on 31 March 1936) by incorporation of the sinking funds associated with the older loans paid out. However, there was no simple correlation between the portfolios of older funds and the increased Supplementary Sinking Fund. Stocks were not simply transferred. Moreover, there was a major restructuring of the Sinking Funds with the early redemption of the 6 per cent loan of 1921, in October 1936, at a cost of £3,200,390 or 12.4 per cent of the colonial debt, as follows; £513,209/ 1/ 9 from the 1921 loan Sinking Fund, £2,199,985/ 3/ 1 from Supplementary Sinking Fund No. 2, and £490,396/10/ 7 from Supplementary Sinking Fund No. 1.[64]

One striking feature of the changing pattern of investments over the late 1930s is the growth of investments in British municipal bonds and the decline in investments east of Suez, with the exceptions of Australia and New Zealand. The once-prominent holdings in the Straits Settlements and Malay States disappeared, while India and Ceylon were systematically reduced.

As the recession deepened in 1937, the administration tightened its belt. True to British neo-classical economics, retrenchments and economies were instituted to bring expenses in line with revenues. The Joint Colonial Fund went from surplus to deficit, while investments of 'Surplus Funds' were

[62] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report on the Year 1934-35, 10-11.
[63] Nigeria, Treasurer's Report on the Year 1934-35, 6.
[64] Nigeria, Report on the Accounts and Finance for the Year 1936-37, 16.

sold off at a loss, with a reduction of £909,329 in the account. However, as the Colonial Secretary remarked,

> The short notice at which renewed depression came upon us, and the impossibility of contracting expenditure as fast as a really rapid decline in revenue, meant that there was an inevitable gap between the revenue shortfall and the reductions in expenditure.[65]

Yet despite the economic hardships, with a few exceptions the overall pattern of investment accounts was one of constant growth. The statutory sinking funds grew by £355,152 in 1939-39, while an additional £260,000 was added to the Supplementary Sinking Fund. But it wasn't simply the statutory accounts. The Marine Renewal Fund grew, from an initial £44,333 in the Ivy Depreciation Fund in 1928, to assets of £565,315 by March 1940, again with a strong bias toward investment in the White Dominions.

Table 6: Marine Renewal Fund, 1939-40

Region of Investment	Amount £	Region of Investment	Amount £
Australia/New Zealand	98,832	Gold Coast	41,214
British Municipalities	74,615	Kenya	35,863
Canada	54,830	Fiji	27,805
South Africa	51,523	Nigerian stock and related funds	94,381
Ceylon	6,418	Other *	37,214
India	42,620	* inc. £10,000 in Southern Rhodesia (1961-66)	

In 1939, on the eve of the Second World War, the Supplementary Sinking Fund had holdings with a face value of £ 1,178,653/17/8, of which over £273,254 or 23.9 per cent was invested in British municipalities, 16.7 per cent in Australia/New Zealand stock, with another 7.3 per cent in other Imperial territories of White settlement and 8.6 per cent in India, albeit the largest single block, £310,812/ 5/ 8 or 27.2 per cent was in Nigerian inscribed stock. The remaining 16.3 per cent was scattered across a range of other colonial accounts - with over one-third in Fiji Inter-Colonial Loans.[66]

World War II

Though only a token £100 was contribution to the Supplementary Sinking Fund in 1939-40, some £360,967 was added to the statutory

[65] Nigeria, Report on the Accounts and Finances for the Year 1938-39, 1.
[66] Nigeria, Report on Accounts and Finance for the Year 1938-39, 123-124.

sinking funds. Monthly sales of investments from the “Surplus Funds" account, totalled some £950,000, were used to pay off borrowing from the Joint Colonial Fund and cover expenditures.[67] Only the Australia / New Zealand investments weathered the sell-off relatively unscathed. The Australia / New Zealand holdings were reduced from over £706,413 to £558,538, but the relative weighting rose from 42.5 per cent to 78.1 per cent of the accounts. British municipal bonds fell, in relative terms from 13 per cent to 11.9 per cent, while most other holdings were liquidated. Investments in South African stock fell from £192,201 to £48,637, while investments in Kenya and India disappeared.

The Nigerian administration was able to financially weather 1940-41 by (a) selling off investments in the 'Surplus Funds’, (b) reducing deposits in the Joint Colonial Fund and (c) so-called 'voluntary' contributions from the Native Administrations.[68] At the same time, £100,000 from the Reserve Fund was donated to the Imperial government as an interest-free contribution toward the war effort.

Among other wartime economies was the cessation of publication of detailed stock holdings between 1941 to 1945, though the total value of investments in the various accounts were recorded. The interest on investments was systematically re-invested. At the same time, accounts were subject to annual assessment, resulting in periodic though relatively minor depreciations.[69]

Post-war investment accounts

In 1946, the 1927 Sinking Fund and part of the Supplementary Sinking Fund were used to pay out £1,232,796 on the 1927 loan. A local loan of £300,000 at $3^1/_4$ per cent repayable in 1956-61 was also gazetted, £294,000 being used for local development projects.[70]

The following year, in March 1947, a conversion loan of £1,250,000 was floated at $2^1/_2$ per cent payable in 1966-71. The balance of £1,232,796, after expenses in raising the loan, was used to retire part of the 1927 loan at 5 per cent. There were also two 'unfunded' interest-free loans to Nigeria under the Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme, £100,000 used to purchase a steam dredge, and £10,000 to fund the Gaskiya Corporation's

---

[67] Nigeria, Report on the Accounts and Finance for the Year 1939-40, 2.
[68] Nigeria, Report on the Accounts and Finances for the Year 1940-41, 4.
[69] Nigeria, Report on the Accounts and Finances for the Year 1941-42, 10.
[70] Nigeria, Report of the Accountant-General with Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 1946.

Hausa-language newspaper and literature bureau.[71] At the same time, the Nigerian colonial administration had loaned His Majesty's Government £602,091, interest-free, in addition to various investments in War Bonds.

Setting aside the massive wartime investment in Savings and War Bonds, details of investment in 1946 look otherwise very much like those of the late 1930s, with Australia/New Zealand investments sharing prominence with the more numerous smaller British municipal bonds. While one can understand British patriotism driving Crown Agent investments in relatively low interest Savings Bonds and War Loans, the growth in low-interest British municipal securities highlight the odd distortions in investment. Why put additional money into Birkenhead at 3 per cent in 1947 when Australia was offering 4 per cent, or Hull at 3.5 per cent when New Zealand 5 per cent was available at a lower mean market price, repayable over roughly the same period?

In 1949, a new Nigerian loan of £3,000,000 at 3 per cent was used to partially redeem [£2,989,136] the 1919 loan of 6 per cent (redeemable in 1949-79). However, the colonial administration was under increasing pressure from Nigerian nationalists for development. There was a proliferation of loans in the 1950s by the various regional marketing boards and governments, which joined the profusion of older special purpose funds. Many of these institutions and their finances have been dealt with elsewhere, but British colonial administrators were increasingly concerned about their impacts on future revenue.

In August 1948, accumulated Reserve Funds were transferred to a new fund, The Revenue Equalisation Fund.[72] In addition to the mandatory sinking and supplementary sink funds, the Revenue Equalisation Fund was

> to be built up by annual charges to expenditure over a number of years with the intention of cushioning the budget against the time when the full effects of the increasing recurrent costs arising from the development programme become a heavy charge on the revenue, and to provide a reserve.[73]

It soon surpassed the older sinking funds, but like the earlier funds was heavily weighted toward British Savings and War Bonds, investments in Australian and New Zealand equities and, from 1953, investments in British

---

[71] Nigeria, Report of the Accountant-General with Financial Statements for the Year ending 31 March 1948, Statement 13.

[72] Nigeria, Report of the Accountant-General with Financial Statement for the Year ending 31 March 1949, 12.

[73] Nigeria, Report of the Accountant-General with Financial Statement for the Year 31 March 1954, vi.

East Africa and British national industries - British Electricity, British Gas and British Transport.

Table 7: Only Surplus Fund investments by Region in Sterling (percentage total in brackets)

Region of Investment	1947	1959
Nigeria	189,050 (04.47)	7,606,649 (25.43)
British Municipal Bonds	228,992 (05.42)	2,441,233 (08.16)
British National Industries	0 (00.00)	2,612,800 (08.74)
British Government Bonds	3,189,691 (75.44)	14,457,278 (48.34)
Australia/ New Zealand	544.328 (12.87)	2,084,971 (06.97)
South Africa/Southern Rhodesia (Kenya-1947)	17,835 (0.42)	110,374 (00.37)
Other Black African colonies (Kenya 1959)	24,375 (0.58)	2,265,580 (07.58)
India	14,018 (00.33)	0 (00)
East of Suez (excluding India)	13,474 (00.32)	599,292 (02.00)
Other	6,170 (00.15)	344,301 (01.15)

In 1956, the Revenue Equalisation Fund was abolished, ten million pounds being retained as a 'Reserve Fund' while the balance, along with a number of smaller 'renewal funds', were combined with 'surplus funds' into a new General Investment Fund with a face value of over twenty-five million pounds. These were in addition to the various sinking funds worth over four million pounds. Total investment, including numerous special purpose funds, had a face value of over sixty-five million pounds.

The Nigerian investment accounts need to be viewed within an imperial context. The Crown Agents operated across the empire. In the immediate post-war period the Crown Agents were managing investment accounts on behalf of the little Cayman Islands - £31,275,[74] Cyprus - £471,326,[75] Fiji - numerous sinking funds,[76] the Gambia - £657,000,[77] Gibraltar - £3,128,135,[78] the Gold Coast,[79] Jamaica - £382,403,[80] Kenya -

74 Colonial Office, Annual Report on the Cayman islands, 1948, 10.
75 Annual Report on Cyprus, 1951, 19.
76 Colonial office, Annual Report on Fiji, 1947, 16.
77 Colonial office, Annual Report on the Gambia, 1947, 12.
78 Colonial office, Annual Report on Gibraltar, 1948, 16.
79 Colonial Office, Annual Report for the Gold Coast, 1947, 24.
80 Colonial office, Annual Report on Jamaica, 1947, 19.

£12,804,058,[81] Sierra Leone,[82] Northern Rhodesia - £4,788,897,[83] Tanganyika - £10,234,723,[84] Uganda - £534,834,[85] Zanzibar - £485,070,[86] to name but a few.

Crown Agents investments had political overtones and appeared to reflect British conservative values. Indian investments disappeared in 1948 but investments in the Union of South Africa, albeit modest, persisted and grew twelve-fold in the 1950s, despite the increasing denunciation of apartheid.

On the eve of Nigerian independence, the central government's investment portfolio retained a striking similarity to the structure initiated in the early decades of colonial finance. The Crown Agents continued to invest new funds in areas of growth and security - predominantly Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. The most marked relative decline was in investments in the Rhodesias.

Conclusion

The transfer of capital under the British colonial administration in Nigeria and the actions of the Crown Agents were not part of any great conspiracy. What was at work was the rationale of investment, albeit distorted at times by the dual role played by the Crown Agents in acting on behalf of both buyers and sellers and the power of the Crown Agents to manipulate the market. The cosy relationship between the Crown Agents, a small clique of brokers, and the Westminster Bank, which was allowed to operate free of Parliamentary or ministerial oversight, meant that effectively there was no review.

The annual reports on investments sent to the colonies by the Crown Agents contain no explanations or justifications for their investments. Colonial officials carefully ticked off in blue pencil the stock values in the annual reports and added them up to insure that the books balanced. It was an accounting exercise. British colonial officials in Nigeria, and elsewhere in the empire, surrendered to the supposed expertise of the Crown Agents. The Crown Agents invested without reference to the colonial administrators.

[81] Colonial Office, Annual Report for Kenya, 1948, 26.
[82] Colonial Office, Annual Report for Sierra Leone, 1948.
[83] Colonial Office, Annual Report on Northern Rhodesia, 1949, 17.
[84] MH Government, Report to the General Assembly of the United Nations on Tanganyika, 1948, 313.
[85] Colonial Office, Annual Report on Uganda, 1947, 21.
[86] Colonial Office, Annual Report on Zanzibar for 1947, 11.

Borrowing necessitated the creation of sinking funds in order to pay out the stock when it eventually matured. The money had to be saved and invested somewhere at interest. The Crown Agents placed it where there was a demand for capital. Thus Nigeria capital found its way into developing Australia and New Zealand, underwriting local government expenditures in Britain and helping to build Britain's post-war national industries.

Australasian Review of African Studies, 2021, 42(1), 51-63 *AFSAAP 2021*
http://afsaap.org.au/ARAS/2021-volume-42/
https://doi.org/10.22160/22035184/ARAS-2021-42-1/51-63

EVWIE (KOLA NUT) AND ITS SOCIO-RELIGIOUS VALUES AMONG IDJERHE PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

Peter O. O. Ottuh
Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy
Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria
pottuh@delsu.edu.ng

Abstract

The popular edible fruit called kola nut that is found all over the Earth is native to the people of West Africa. In Idjerhe (Jesse) culture, the kola nut is part of the people's traditional religious activities and spirituality. The presentation, breaking, and eating of the kola nut signifies hospitality, friendship, love, mutual trust, manliness, peace, acceptance, happiness, fellowship, and communion with the gods and spirits. These socio-religious values of the kola nut among the Idjerhe people are not well documented,however, and this paper aims to fill the lacuna. It employs participatory observation and oral interviews, supported by a critical review of scholarly literature on the subject. The research posits that churches can use the kola nut as a Eucharistic element that would be meaningful and indigenous to the Idjerhe people.

Introduction

One thing that accounts for the beauty and purposefulness of the natural world is ecological and environmental variations and variables. Vegetation is one such variable that bring about the beauty of the world, and the usefulness and importance of plants in human society cannot be underestimated. Various plants in the world serve different useful purposes to human beings who live in an environment bedeviled with numerous existential problems that need solutions. Among Africans, the kola-nuts are fruits from tropical plants that serve cultural, medicinal, social and religious purposes, and they help to resolve some of those human problems. Kola nuts, which are mostly grown and produced in West Africa in commercial quantities, are edible seeds from kola nut trees. These seeds play important roles in African cultures, traditions and religions, particularly to people in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. In Africa, even Church pastors offer prayers over the seeds before a ceremony begins. For example, during wedding receptions and communal meetings (including age-grade, festivals, and family events), kola nuts are first presented and broken at the opening of the ceremony.

There are different cultural and religious heritages in Nigeria and African generally, and a thorough comparative religious and socio-cultural study of the kola nut would be a rich and intensive study - but that is not the intent of this paper. Here the focus is the social and religious salience of the kola nut in the Idjerhe clan, one of the clans in Urhoboland, and not on, say, the socio-political and judicial import of the kola nut. The paper exposes the reasons why kola-nuts are held by the Idjerhe people in very high esteem and why the kola-nut must be present in every ceremony in Idjerhe land. Data were collected through the phenomenological method of participatory observation and personal oral interviews, supported by a critical historical review of scholarly literature on the subject. In conclusion, some recommendations are presented to further enhance the place of the kola-nut in the entirety of Urhoboland.

Idjerhe People

Idjerhe (also known as 'Jesse') people are inhabitants of the Idjerhe clan (also known as the Idjerhe kingdom) located within the Urhobo traditional land in Delta State of Nigeria. Idjerhe is one of twenty-four autonomous clans of the Urhobo ethnic nationality in Nigeria, located rurally on the banks of the River Ethiope. According to oral tradition, as a result of political crisis revolving around kingship succession, Idjerhe people settled in their present location after migrating from Agbarho-Oto in the present Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State (Erivwo, 2003 cited in Ottuh & Erhabor, 2018). Idjerhe clan is divided into eight distinct traditional quarters: the Udurhie, Uduinte, Udu-Oloho, Udu-Olari, Uduregе (or Uduaka), Udu-Okietema, Udu-Ikoko, and Udu-Elakwe.Jesse-Town (Oto-orho Idjerhe) is the traditional administrative headquarters of the Idjerhe people. Its current population stands at about 70,000 (National Population Commission, 2006; Ottuh & Erhabor, 2018).

The traditional ruler of Idjerhe clan is called *Ovie* (King) and he is supported by several traditional chiefs (*inho-rogu or ekakurho*), traditional worriers (*inhotu*), village heads (*ekarho*), spokesman (*otota*) and chief priest (*Orhere*) (Ottuh & Erhabor, 2018). One of the remarkable events that put Idjerhe people on the global news in the 1990s was the "Jesse fire disaster" which occurred on the early hours of Saturday, October 17, 1998, when an old and unmaintained petroleum pipeline exploded and killed more than 1000 indigenes (Ola & Eighemhenrio, 1998). Over thirty-three communities in the clan were affected by the inferno. Though Idjerhe clan is rich in commercial crude oil deposits there is nothing to show for it. The vegetation is diverse in Idjerhe land, however, and economic plants like the palm, rubber and kola-nut trees thrive abundantly. While some few are petty traders, tailors, bicycle repairers and the like, most are farmers of crops, rubber tappers and fishermen and women. However, a handful of indigenes who have formal education work in the civil service as school teachers, office clerks, nurses, and hospital attendants. Some prominent sons and daughters of Idjerhe are also active politicians at the local, state and national levels.

General Perception of the Kola-Nut

Kola nuts, the fruits from kola trees (Cola), belong to the cocoa family (Sterculiaceae) with their main species classified as Kola acuminata and Kola nitida. The nut and its tree are native to the West Africa sub-region but can also be found in the West Indies and other parts of the world (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). Kola nut trees are slender trees with broad tops, attaining heights of about 20 metres. The pointed, leathery leaves are alternated and up to 30 centimetres long. The yellow flowers are about 2 centimetres across. Twice a year, the flowers develop into fruits, or nuts, 8 to 17 centimetres long.. Some kola species are grown as ornamentals in tropical and subtropical gardens. All kola tree species have male and female flowers, none of which have petals. The flowers grow in clusters called panicles, and arise from the axil, the point where the leaf stem connects to the branch (Burdock, Carabin & Crincoli, 2009).

The fruits consist of three or more pod-like segments, called follicles, each containing one or more seeds also called ‘lobes’. The seeds are rich in caffeine and manufacturers produce carbonated soft drinks from them, for instance, the Coca-Cola drinks (Burdock, Carabin & Crincoli, 2009). Commercially, the best species of kola are mostly planted in tropical areas because of their caffeine content. Two species, *nitida* and *colaacuminate,* which are quite similar in appearance, account for the bulk of nut productions (Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2012). The *Cola acuminate* is one of the best species of kola cultivated for commercial purposes and has a lucrative business history especially in Nigeria and Gabon (Tindall, 2018). In addition to their use in soft drink manufacturing, kola nuts are also used in tropical regions as nervous system stimulants to inhibit fatigue and hunger (Odebunmi, Oluwaniyi, Awolola & Adediji, 2009). They are also used in traditional African folk medicine to cure stomach ulcers, diarrhea, dysentery, and other ills. Certain religions including Islam and African traditional rreligions consider kola nuts to be sacred and incorporate them in ceremonial and social occasions. Kola nuts among West African people also perform semiotic functions (Ekundayo & Ugwu, 2015) as well as metaphysical functions (Ibeabuchi, 2013). Across the ethnic groups in Nigeria, kola nuts occupy a unique position in cultural life. The Igala people call the Kola nut *obi,* the Edo people *evbeie,* the Igbos *Oji,* andthe Hausa *goro*. In Nigeria like other African countries, kola nuts are used during marriage, funeral, child naming, and coronation ceremonies. Umeogu (2019) sees the symbolism of kola nut as universal.

The production of kola nuts flourishes among the Yoruba people, while in the north (Hausas) it is frequently eaten as "fast food". For the Igbo in the east, the kola nut remains part and parcel of their tradition and culture. It is presumed among the Igbo people that the first tree to be planted by *Chukwu* (God) on the mother-earth was the kola tree, and hence its fruit is the first fruit on earth (Ibeabuchi, 2013). Re-examining the symbolism of kola nut in Igbo traditional thought, Chidume , Osisioma, and Echem (2015) explained how the fruit assists the Igbo people to think philosophically, especially in relation to their religious and sociocultural worldviews. These authors posit that the kola nut is a wheel that propels "socialization, education and transmission of cultural values from the preceding to succeeding generations" (p. 51). Although the emergence of religions such as Christianity and Islam and Western civilization has led youth to devalue the values of the kola nut in Igbo land, social customs are still incorporated in the kola nut, including the language that is used in presenting and blessing it prior to its consumption. According to Chinua Achebe, this is to show the value and civility of the kola nut in Igbo culture (Kammampoal & Suuk, 2019). Thus writing on the values of the kola nut may reawaken consciousness on the part of the in-coming generations.

Kola-nut in the Context of the Idjerhe People

Among the Idjerhe people, the kola nut is called *evwie* and it is further classified into two types: *evwie-Urhobo* (native kola nut) and *evwie-igbajia* or *evwie-Hausa* (non-native kola nut or Hausa kola nut). The native kola nut (*evwie-Urhobo*) is considered by the people as the most authentic and traditional kola nut and it is the more expensive.The native nut has four or more lobes (cotyledons) unlike the *evwie-igbajia* (Hausa kola nut) which has two. A native kola nut that has more than four lobes is considered as a sign of good luck to the presenter. The 'Hausa kola nut' also called '*goro'* or 'commercial kola nut' because it is produced in commercial quantities for local and international consumption. In ceremonies such as marriage, coronation, burial and naming both the native and non-native kola nuts are presented, though native doctors, rain-makers and sorcerers usually use the native kola nut for their divination 'businesses'.

In Idjerhe culture like other Urhobos, a ceremony cannot be considered complete if a plate of kola nuts presented is not supported or wedged with money (*igho-acha--evwie* also known as "kola nut-wedging"). It is also cultural to add alligator pepper and bitter kola nuts to the plate of kola nuts presented, including assorted drinks (A. Isiorho, personal communication, November 14, 2020). It is also required that an unspecified amount of money must be deposited in the kola nut plate for the purpose of breaking the kola nuts by the most elderly man present in the ceremony. This money is popularly called *igho-ia-bele-evwie* ("workmanship money").

In any ceremony in Idjerhe land, it is only the oldest man that is permitted by tradition to break the kola nuts. He breaks the kola nut and takes the *igho-ia- bele-evwie* because it is believed that the task of kola nut breaking is a very hard job and only the most elderly man has the strength to carry out such task (E. Aminobile, personal communication, November 3, 2020). In breaking the kola nut in any ceremony, a young man or boy is called upon to hold the bowl or plate facing the elders or eligible person who prays and breaks the kola nut. In Idjerhe culture like other Urhobos, females are not allowed to break kola nuts. They can only do so in their feminine gatherings. Before others can pick from the split kola nut, the 'kola nut breaker' prays for a few notable persons including himself, and for the presenter and his or her spokesman; the presenter is the host - male or female - who is offering the kola nuts to the people or guests present. He or she does not present the kola nuts directly to the guests but does so through a spokesman, a man chosen by the host to offer kola nuts to the guests on their behalf. The prayer over the kola nut must end with the throwing of some pieces of kola nut on the ground, in some cases on the big toe of the person praying. This signifies the sharing of the kola nut with the divinities, spirits and ancestors of the land in order to invoke their blessings and protection. Among the Idjerhe people, women, no matter how elderly, are not permitted by tradition to break kola nut. It is also a taboo for a woman to pick the kola nut from the plate to chew (R. Awinolen, personal communication, November 18, 2020). Instead, she is served by a man or a boy. A woman who innocently or deliberately flouts the tradition could be punished by asking her to pay a certain amount of money including the buying of drinks to compensate the elders.

The kola tree (*irhie - evwie)* that produces the kola nut pod is considered to be sacred among other trees in the land of Idjerhe because of its valued product. Pulling down or cutting and destroying the tree without permission attracts severe sanction. A kola nut tree is seen as a tree of destiny (*urhevwie*) and hence some natives after childbirth bury their children's placentas (afterbirth) under the kola nut trees. (S. Umukoro, personal communication, November 17, 2020). They believe that the kola nut tree will assure the positive side of their children's destinies. This is why it is also considered an abomination to cut down the kola nut tree. If it must be cut down for a certain positive reason, then certain rituals must be performed and sacrifices offered.

Religious Significance of the Kola-Nut among Idjerhe People

Human beings all over the globe practice religion to satisfy their spiritual, emotional and psychological needs. This they do by constantly maintaining a well-established cordial relationship with the supernatural that is called 'God' in religion (Turaki, 2000). The Idjerhe people are not exempted from this global practice. Like other ethnic groups in Africa, the Idjerhe people are religiously inclined. The Idjerhe people refer to God as "*Oghene*" (the Supreme God) whom they worship through other divinities and deities such as *Okunovu* (gods and goddesses of the river), *Esiemo* or *Erhivwin* (ancestors or spirits of their fore-fathers), *Aziza* (whirlwind god), *Ejor-enu* (god of the sky), and *Ejor-ewha* (god of the forest) (A. Agbamisa, personal communication, November 24, 2020).

In Idjerhe cosmology and religion, most of these divinities are considered as *Oghene*'spersonified attributes. They act as intermediaries between God and human beings. The people have always thought of *Oghene* (Supreme Being) and the supersensible world in concrete terms and hence their perception of God is predicated on the nomenclature, role and characteristic features of the Supreme Being as well as from folklore, rituals and ceremonies (Ottuh& Erhabor, 2018). Having briefly analysed the religious life of the Idjerhe people, we now explore the socio-religious values of the kola nut among them. It is significant in several ways, including as a sacred object in oath-taking, divination, communion and communication, sacrifice, and in the veneration of ancestors.

Kola nut as Object of Oath-taking

Oath-taking is the evocation of the super-natural to witness to the truthfulness of a claim or to serve as a binding force to a promise, agreement or a covenant (Iyere, 2011). Among the Idjerhe people, traditional oath-taking (*edu-vwi-iyorhi*or *iyorhi-eduvwo*) is a common cultural and religious practice. In Idjerhe land, for instance, the sudden death of a young man or husband or a child of the family is seen as unnatural, and hence some of the family members of the deceased may suspect foul play. In such a situation, oath-taking is required and administered to suspected members of the family (in most cases the wife or wives are the prime suspects). There are two ways of administering the oath: either through the Esiemo (ancestors or spirits of fore-fathers) represented with the ukhurhe (a piece of wood decorated with cowries and native chalk, “orhie”) or by placing a kola nut on the chest (udu) of the deceased (olivwi) (S. Umukoro, personal communication, November 17, 2020). In this way, the suspected killer or killers are forced to take an oath either by swearing to ukhurhe or udu-olivwi. In the case of oath-taking before ukhurhe, first, the most elderly man in the family (Ekhru or ovwra) sits facing the ukhurhe (usually lying against the wall by the right-hand side of the doorpost inside the sitting room “ughe” or “otor-ru-weyi”) and holds the kola nut (native kola nut “evwie-Urhobo”) and prays over it in the presence of the suspects and other members of the family thus:

> Agbamu, Egbejune, Emeru, Aburhu, Agadarirhe! *Ire-mre-obuko-vo-balo, Avwarhe emo-weh bru-werhe ede-ri nonena ri-guonor otor re omo-wen ro kporho la-agha. Kowho-kowho ro-vwo-obo ughu na oda rhei evwie na jor fa-noma ro ki-ghu. Abi deo owho yi werhe gbe jo kpo gberenede*
> (R. Awinolen, personal communication, November 18, 2020).

This statement in the Urhobo language is interpreted as follows:

> Agbamu, Egbejune, Emeru, Aburhu, Agadarirhe [calling the names of their forefathers]! You are the ones that see the back and the front [knows about the past and the future]. Your children have come before you today to find out about who is responsible for your son’s sudden travel to the great beyond. Whoever that has a hand in his death, let the person confess and die. But if his death is natural let him go in peace to the land of the dead.

Afterwards, he breaks the kola nut throws pieces of it at the *ukhurhe* and drops the other lobes on the *ukhurhe* while the people present chorus *iseeeh* (so shall it be). The suspects in a continuation of the oath-taking ritual will be instructed to pick the kola nut lobes and eat with the words: “*ejor-odia kevwe kilo-obho-atarena mi-dia-ria-abe*” (let it be to me as said if I am guilty). The same process is followed when administering an oath before *udu-olivwi* (chest of the deceased) with the difference that the oath is carried out outside the house while the corpse lies in-state (T. Adjano, personal communication, November 20, 2020). Oath-taking using the kola nut can also be done in the traditional square, shrine or market place. At the community level, oath-taking using the kola nut can be for the purpose of sealing promises, agreements and covenant.

Oath-taking can also be taken by individuals or group of persons who are in a business partnership. Taking an oath with kola nut is required by persons in a business partnership who for one reason or the other are suspicious of being betrayed in the future by any of them. The oath is taken to clear such suspicion and build one another's trust. To do this, each member of the partnership swears using the *evwie* (kola nut) as a contact point between them and the gods (*edjor*) (T. Iboyi, personal communication, November 12, 2020). The breaking and chewing of the *evwie* signifies that they have sworn before the gods of the land to be honest and faithful to one another in their business transactions. Whoever breaks the terms of the partnership agreement after eating the kola nut would be punished by the gods of the land. Until now, despite the presence of the Christian religion and other religions that teach against the people's cultural and traditional practices, the practice of oath-taking of any kind in Idjerhe land has continued to gain momentum (U. Akpofurhe, personal communication, November 22, 2020).

Kola Nut as Object of Divination

Divination is an attempt to foretell future events through a supernatural means. As a religious or occulted ritual, it uses a systematic procedure by organising supposedly disjointed, random facets of existence to give insight into an existing immediate problem (Silva, 2016). Divination is thus a traditional metaphysical method of finding out the unknown by means of, for example, pebbles, numbers, palm reading, dice and kola nut throwing. The major duty of a diviner is to find out hidden secrets and pass them on to people and the diviner usually works in the company of medicine men or witch doctors (U. Akpofurhe, personal communication, November 22, 2020). The diviner attempts to finding out why certain things have gone the wrong way. He or she can tell who has evil intentions against another person. A diviner can diagnose the type of evil spirit that is tormenting a person, what the spirit requires and what should be done to rescue the person from it. For example, the Yorubas of Western Nigeria are well known for their *ifa* divination (Mbiti, 1986). Diviners often have their own language through which they get in touch with the spirits. In their divination, diviners also apply their reasoning, imagination and common sense. As we have seen, the people of Idjerhe consider the kola nut (*evwie*) as an object that is sacred. In fact, the people regard the kola nut as the "king of all fruits" (*evwie ovie-re emamor*). The nut is used as an object of divination (*evwha*) to commune with the plethora of gods and spirits of the land. The Idjerhe people like other ethnic groups in Nigeria also practice *Evwha* (divination) similar to the Yoruba *Ifa* (L. Isosorobia, personal communication, November 27, 2020). A diviner in Idjerhe land is called *obo-evwha,* and may be a man or a woman. *Evwha* comprises cowries joined together with string and animal skin.

The diviner sits on the floor and throws the *evwha* on the animal skin that is positioned on a bare floor between their legs. When using the kola nut for divination (usually *evwie-Urhobo,* "native kola nuts" are used), the diviner gives a lobe of the kola nut to the enquirer to make his or her wishes; the enquirer then returns it to the diviner who speaks to the gods or deities in an unknown language and throws the lobes of the kola nut on the bare floor. The resulting positions of the different lobes of kola nut are very significant, and this is where the expertise of the diviner comes into play. In this way, the gods speak to the diviner through the kola nut and answers are provided to the questions raised by the enquirer.

Although Christianity and other religions in the land may regard the interpretations or answers given by diviners as superstitious, divination with kola nut remains a valid religious and cultural practice to the Idjerhe people. Because of the lack of empirical verification, scientists and skeptics in the contemporary period have also criticised and dismissed the practice of divination and its interpretations as superstition (Regal, 2009). However, this does not negate the possibility that the future can be predicted by humans through the instrumentality of divinations.

Kola nut as Object of Sacrifice and Offering

The practice of making sacrifices and offerings finds expression across the globe, including across the African continent. In this practice, physical objects are given to God (gods) or the spirits or deities in the land. Among the Idjerhe people, the sacrifice is called *ize-obo* while the offering is called *oke* or *esio-obonho*. Their practice of making sacrifices and offerings marks the meeting point between the physical world and the supersensible world, indicating their desire to be projected into the super-sensible world.

Among the Idjerhe people, sacrifices or offerings can be given to God or gods by individuals, family or the community as a whole. The annual Iyeri festival is a special period and an avenue where individuals, families and the entire communities offer prayers, sacrifices and offerings to their gods. The purpose is to attract the protection, blessings and goodwill of the gods and deities of the land (T. Adjano, personal communication, November 20, 2020). Sacrifices or offerings to the gods of the land are made with different types of objects, including farm produce, fruits, animals, foodstuffs, drinks, honey, cowries, native chalks, money and kola nuts. The nut is certainly an important sacrificial object used by Idjerhe people. Prayers are always offered during sacrifices and offerings, and this is where the kola nut plays a vital role.

Kola Nut as Object of Communion and Communication

The act of praying was a common practice among Africans even before the advent of Christianity and Islam in Africa. Prayers are offered by individuals, families and communities. There are also prayers offered to God or the spirits on behalf of others. Prayer (*erovwho*) by the Idjerhe people chiefly involves the use of drinks (English gin "*udi-oyibo*" or *ogogoro* "native gin") and most importantly, kola nuts. When praying, an Idjerhe man would hold the kola nut, turning it between his fingers and uttering such words as: "*evwie revwie-obo-re oji-oyivwin ka-avware ijo-bi, orio oma-kpokpo, otovwieh, emo-ve-igho, erinvwin wa-lie wa-sivwo-avwarhe*" ("kola nut is in my hand, let it be well with all of us, for good health, long life, more children and money, our ancestors eat and protect us") (U. Akpofurhe, personal communication, November 22, 2020).

Prayers are offered during social and religious ceremonies such as worship at the shrine, marriages, funerals, and coronation. Prayers are offered not only to receive from the gods but also as a thanksgiving (including veneration of the ancestors) for what they have done previously. For instance, the Idjerhe person may offer his or her thanksgiving prayer by saying: "*oghene mi-kpevwowe*" ("God I thank you"). Thanksgiving prayers are offered to the gods in every occasion where kola nut is presented. By using kola nut to pray to the gods or the spirits, personal and communal fears, worries, natural calamities and anxieties are conquered.

Kola Nut as Object of Entertainment and Hospitality

Apart from its religious significance, the kola nut has social values and functions in African societies. It is used for peacemaking, conflict resolution, and entertainment among other things. In Idjerhe land, in the event of family or communal disagreement and enmity, it is the kola nut that is used to broker peace and effect settlement. Ukaegbu (2005) thus argues that the kola nut is a source of mutual trust amongst people in the community and that without trust there cannot be meaningful development.

Hospitality among Idjerhe people, as with other African communities, is a shared norm. Guests (*erhorha - plural* or *orharha* - singular) are always welcomed whenever they arrive. The first sign of warm welcome and hospitality for the visitor is the presentation of kola nut (drinks may also be included) with some money to 'wedge' it so that the kola nut will not roll off the plate. This practice among the Idjerhe people is known as "*eghor-orhrarha*". It is done without the stranger (*orhorha*) first stating the reason for their visit. The visitor is expected to state their mission after the breaking and eating of the kola nut. The presentation of kola nut to a guest in Idjerhe land symbolises the following:

i. It is a sign of respect for humanity.

ii. It is a symbol of a shared love for one's neighbours.

iii. It is a mark of friendship and hospitality to visitors irrespective of where the person is from (Mayaki, 2011).

iv. It is an indication of mutual trust, fellowship and fraternity (Ekhosuehi, 2015).

v. It is an expression of cordial relationship, unity and acceptance among other people.

vi. It is a symbol of manhood and the ability to promote the communal goal (Isidienu, 2018).

vii. It is a sign of mutual agreement among people.

Conclusion

We have seen that the kola nut is a very important fruit in Idjerhe land due to its social and religious significance. Among the Idjerhe people, the religious values of the kola nut are found in its use as a religious (or sacred) object and offering during prayers, veneration of ancestors, divination, and communion and communication with the spirits or gods. At the level of social significance, the kola nut remains valuable among the Idjerhe people to consummate social events such as namings, weddings, coronations, festivals and funerals.The functions it performs in the socio-cultural and religious life of the Idjerhe people are indeed all pervasive.

Above all, among the Idjerhe people, the kola nut is an inevitable object for offering prayers and making sacrifices to the Supreme God through the spirits of the long-dead, gods and goddesses of the land. The kola nut could also be considered as an object of inculturation among Christian churches in Idjerhe land. The kola nut could thus be used as a Eucharistic element that would make the ritual meaningful and indigenous to the Idjerhe people.

References

Burdock, G. A., Carabin, I. G and Crincoli, C. M. (2009). Safety assessment of kola nut extract as a food ingredient. *Food and chemical toxicology* 47(8), 1725-1732.

Chidume, C. G., Osisioma, U.S. and Echem, S.O. (2015). The symbolism of kolanut in Igbo cosmology: A re-examination. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies* 2(8), 51-56.

Ekhosuehi, A. (2015). Kola nut in custom. Retrieved May 23, 2020 from: https://www.edoworld.net/The_Kola_nut_In_Benin_Culture.html

Ekundayo, S.B. and Ugwu, E.N. (2015). The semiotic function of the kola nut in Nigeria. *Chinese Semiotic Studies* 11(1), 421-440.

Ibeabuchi, O.M. (2013). Metaphysics of kola nut: towards an authentic African Igbo communion; a challenge to Christianity. *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 2, 517-531.

Isidienu, I.C. (2018). The lessons of kola nut in searching for Nigeria's unity. *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities* 19(2), 131-149.

Iyere, I. J. (2011). The socio-religious significance of obi (kola nut) among the Igala people of Kogi State. *Cross-Cultural Communication* 7(2), 199-208.

Kammampoal, B. and Suuk, L. (2019). The kola nut: Its symbolic significance in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature* (IJSELL) 7(8), 26-40. Retrieved from: http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.0708003.

Kola. Microsoft Encarta (2009). Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

Mayaki, V. O. (2011). Kola nut a true symbol of our culture. Retrieved June 15, 2020 from: https://allafrica.com/stories/201105091228.html

Mbiti, J. S. (1986). Introduction to African religion. London: Heinemann Books.

Nnamdi-Eruchalu, N. I. (2012). A study of the language of kola nut in traditional Igbo setting. *Academic Discourse: An International Journal*, 2(1), 159-170.

Nwachukwu, M. (2015). Kola nut: Nigeria's seed of togetherness. Retrieved April 12, 2020 from: https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/05/kola-nut-nigerias-seed-of-togetherness/

Odebunmi, E. O., Oluwaniyi, O. O., Awolola, G. V. and Adediji, O. D. (2009). Proximate and nutritional composition of kola nut (cola nitada), bitter cola (garcinia cola) and alligator pepper (afromoum melegueta).*African Journal of Biotechnology* 8(2), 2731-2749.

Ola, D and Eighemhenrio, D. (1998). Official negligence results in grave tragedyat Idjerhe, Niger Delta, Nigeria. Urhobo Historical Society. Retrieved June 17, 2020 from: http://www.waado.org/Environment/IdjerheFire/idjerhe_ERA_Ola.html

Ottuh, P. and Erhabor, F. O. (2018). Assessing the relevance of Ize-obo (sacrifice) in traditional religion of Idjerhe people of Nigeria. *Calabar Journal of Liberal Studies* 20(2), 310-328.

Regal, B. (2009). Pseudoscience: A critical encyclopedia. London: Greenwood.

Silva, S. (2016). Object and objectivity in divination. *Material Religion* 12 (4), 507-509.

Sprague, K. (2018). The kola nut: West African commodity in the Atlantic world. African Studies Centre. Retrieved May 23, 2020 from: https://www.nhlrc.ucla.edu/asc/Article/186740

The precious African Kola nut. (2019). BellAfricana. Retrieved June 5, 2020 from: https://bellafricana.com/the-precious-african-nut-kola-nut/

Tindall, R. (2018). The culture of cola: social and economic aspects of a West African domesticate. Retrieved May 2, 2020 from: https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1307&context=ebl

Turaki, Y. (2000). Foundation of African traditional religions and worldview. Nairobi: International Bible Society of Africa.

Ukaegbu, F. N. (2005). The Igbos: the African root of nations. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational.

Umeogu, B. K. (2019). Symbolismic Universe: Towards the Creation and Constitution of Igbo Science and Arts. *Canadian Social Science* 15(4), 1-6.

Australasian Review of African Studies, 2021, 42(1), 64-80 *AFSAAP 2021*
http://afsaap.org.au/ARAS/2021-volume-42/
https://doi.org/10.22160/22035184/ARAS-2021-42-1/64-80

Mental health data: A case for the African communities in New South Wales

Daniel Kwai Apat
Independent researcher
dankapat@yahoo.com.au
Wellington Digwa
Independent researcher
welliedi@yahoo.com.au

Abstract

This paper examines mental health policies in relation to African communities residing in New South Wales, Australia and the attitudes of African communities toward mental disorders and mental health services. Current mental health policy frameworks have shown an inadequate inclusion of African communities. This may negatively affect the design of mental health interventions and how African communities engage with mental health services. The available mental health literature on African communities showed disjointed and uncoordinated data which focuses on specific community-groups within African communities. Insufficient mental health or suicide data, combined with African community members' perception toward mental disorders and mental health services, makes it very difficult to progress engagement and interventions. There is a need for proper and sizable data on mental health related to people of African descent in NSW and Australia wide, if positive outcomes are to be realised.

Introduction

This paper focuses primarily on the population group of African communities living in New South Wales (NSW) Australia. It examines firstly the attitudes of African communities towards mental health disorders, and their views towards mental health services. Then we survey existing mental health policies and data in relation to African communities across NSW. Finally, we highlight the implications for mental health services provided to individuals of African descent across NSW and make recommendations accordingly.

The populations of African people living in Australia has increased rapidly in recent years. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census (ABS 2016), 317,183 people identified as African born, defined as those who arrived from the Central, West, Southern and East African regions. Northern Africa is recorded as part of the Middle East by ABS and has been excluded from this study. The vast majority of this population considered here arrived in Australia as skilled migrants, humanitarian entrants, and in family stream visa programs including family reunion, spouse and child migration.

While people of varying African heritages arrived in Australia through differing pathways, they fundamentally share similar cultural beliefs and similar life experiences (Copping & Shakespeare-Finch, 2013; Ogunsiji, 2018). Though there are a number of variations throughout African cultures, with no one particular culture entirely resembling another, attitudes towards mental disorders as well as mental health services are believed to share similarities across all African communities (McCann, Renzaho, and Lubman, 2018). Individuals with an African background residing in Australia face numerous challenges associated with the acculturation process in their resettlement journey, which may lead to increased risk of experiencing mental health issues.

Studies that have examined the settlement of refugees and migrants in the host countries reveal that refugees and migrants have often witnessed or been subjected to torture and trauma before resettlement, which may significantly impact their settlement journey in a negative way (Uribe Guajardo, Kelly, Bond, Thomson & Slewa-Younan, 2019). While not every person of African descent in Australia would have witnessed or been subjected to torture and trauma prior to arriving in Australia, it can be suggested that cultural beliefs and attitudes towards mental disorders may influence how individuals engage with mental health services or access mental health services in Australia (Babatunde, DiGiacomo, Power, Davidson, & Jackson, 2020).

Many people of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, including African people, are faced with several challenges associated with adjusting to life in a new country, including changing gender roles, adapting to different parenting styles, learning a new language, adjusting to a new environment, and fitting into systems such as healthcare and education. There are a number of intersectional issues which make adjusting to a new country extremely difficult, including memories of past traumatic events, separation from loved ones and worries about the safety of remaining relatives in a country of origin (McCann, Mugavin, Renzaho,

& Lubman, 2016). Stressors experienced by people of African and other cultural backgrounds can result in an increased risk of poor mental health outcomes, prompting a need for mental health policies that are inclusive of all cultures. These policies must seek to understand the impact of such stressors on an individual's mental health, while also aiming to provide effective care in conjunction with support that is culturally appropriate, as healthcare and culture are inextricably linked.

African attitudes towards mental illness and mental health services

Mental disorders in African cultures are understood differently from the Western perspectives. Stigmatising people with mental disorders is more prevalent in African cultures, for example, and individuals experiencing issues of mental health are often perceived as dangerous, leading to them experiencing discrimination to a significant degree which then negatively impacts many areas of their lives, including employment, housing, education and relationships (Corrigan, Druss, & Perlick, 2014; Rüsch, Angermeyer, & Corrigan, 2005). These challenges are not distinctive to African communities but are prevalent in other communities around the world, where mental health education is not prioritised. Despite the differing views between African and Western cultures, some similarities are present; for example, it is stated that 45 - 60% of Americans dissociated themselves from people with mental health disorders such as depression and schizophrenia (Link, Phelan, Bresnahan, Stueve & Pescosolido, 1999). Western cultures stigmatise individuals with mental health issues too, although due to the higher level of education around mental health, the rate of stigmatisation is decreasing. When an individual experiences stigmatisation and disassociation from friends and family further challenges to their recovery are presented and the likelihood of them seeking support lessens due to a fear of being increasingly discriminated against.

Stigma toward mental disorders is a major concern within African communities and can be attributed to cultural and religious beliefs (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo, 2013), exacerbated by low mental health literacy (McCann et al., 2018). In a qualitative study of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa living in Australia, negative attitudes and beliefs were identified to be some of the biggest deterrence to help seeking (McCann et al., 2018). In most African cultures, mental disorders are attributed to supernatural influences such as evil spirits, witchcraft, curses or displeasure from God (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo, 2013). As a result, discussions around mental health problems are discouraged in the community as they are believed to bring spiritual misfortune, and perceived as a destructive force deciding one's reality (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo, 2013). These beliefs can create a lack of mental health awareness, and in turn lead to an inability to recognise associated problems, as well as the importance of utilising available supports and treatment services. Instead of providing support to people with mental illness, family members of the individuals experiencing mental health problems may decide to keep it a secret due to shame associated with the illness (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo, 2013). These social responses limit the opportunity for early detection, intervention and treatment.

Literature Review

Africans migrate to Western countries in search of a better life, but perception does not always match reality. On arrival in host countries, Africans face a number of challenges that negatively affect their settlement journey as well as their mental health and well-being, including, in Australia as elsewhere, unemployment, accommodation problems, and racial discrimination (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010). These challenges have a tremendous effect on the level of contribution that African migrants are able to make to the Australian economy and society, and can negatively affect their psychological and social well-being.

A study conducted with migrants to France from Sub-Sahara Africa suggested that individuals from this cultural group faced levels of unemployment and discrimination higher than immigrants from other regions, and were at higher risk of hospital admission for psychosis (Annequin, Gosselin, & Dray-Spira, 2017; Tortelli, Morgan, Szoke, Nascimento, Skurnik, de Caussade & Murray, 2014). A Swedish study indicated that there was a high level of discrimination, alienation and threats of violence from the indigenous population in Sweden towards the African population (Lindencrona, Ekblad, & Hauff, 2008). African Australians share similar challenges and experiences, as research suggests that migrants of African origin in Australia may experience challenges adjusting to their host culture, including racism, unemployment, and gender role reversals that may result in family breakdown, further leading to mental health issues (Abur & Spaaij, 2016; Kuyini & Kivunja, 2020).

Although mental health issues can affect anyone at any stage throughout life, the frequency differs across social groups (Elliott, 2016). Research suggests that higher rates of mental health issues are correlated with poverty and socio-economic disadvantage with social characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and family status influencing the rates of mental health issues and the access to support services (Elliott, 2016). These social determinants of mental health point towards negative health outcomes for

African migrant communities. Policies are required that are based on an understanding of these determinants of mental health so that culturally appropriate services can be framed and made available to alleviate the harmful effects of undiagnosed and untreated mental illness.

Young people of African descent who are raised in Australia experience the challenges of reconciling traditional practices and norms passed from their parents with mainstream Australian practices and norms learned through their peers. This often leads to intergenerational conflict (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010), as well as limited participation in mental health services which in turn perpetuates the cycle of mental health problems within African communities. More research is required to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the social determinants of mental health on African communities. This research will also assist in providing practical strategies that can be implemented to encourage help seeking, service utilisation and to provide culturally appropriate services for the affected population groups. Professor Vikram Patel from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine suggests that traditional healers "should be working in a mutually that respectful relationship with other health workers as part of the health system" (Patel cited Gordon, 2011). Whether such an approach is possible in Australia or not, there is no doubt that a positive approach strategy to mental health diagnosis and treatment can a powerful tool in ameliorating the plight of affected individuals and their families (Keyes & Lopez, 2009).

African Mental Health Learning Circle (AMHLC)

One path is suggested by a comparative study of Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Germany, the United Kingdom and Israel. It argued that challenges faced by new migrants, such as Africans, could be addressed by a partnership between government and not for profit organisations (Gebre-Selassie, 2008). While stigma and shame associated with mental disorders continue to be a barrier to help seeking behaviour within African communities in Australia (African Australian Communities Leadership Forum, 2017), members of the African communities in Sydney have found such a way to explore mental health related issues. In 2016, the African Mental Health Learning Circle (AMHLC) was established, and is currently funded by Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club under the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) (Sipilanyambe, Ajang & Dukuly, 2017). The main aim of the AMHLC is to raise awareness of mental health and suicide related issues impacting on the physical and mental well-being of all African communities across the

Greater Western Sydney region. The AMHLC is a series of group discussions and interactions where members of the learning circle sit together to share their experiences and knowledge and learn about topics identified by the members themselves.

Given that sharing knowledge and learning in a circle is a concept familiar to nearly all African traditions (Bremer, 2015; Sulamoyo, 2010), it offers a relaxed learning environment where members of the group experience equal powers while respecting their differences as well as the presence of elders in the group. Through these series of learning circles, African community elders, leaders, professionals and service providers are able to interact, listen and exchange ideas in a culturally safe environment. AMHLC engages African communities to increase their understanding of mental disorders while building trust between the African communities and mental health services, which may help break access barriers and increase service utilisation.

NSW Mental Health Policy Framework

The mental health policy environment in Australia has been constantly evolving since the 1950s, with the National Mental health strategy endorsed in 1992 by the Australian Health Ministers Conference playing a pivotal role in driving mental health reform over the last twenty-nine years (National Mental Health Commission, 2017). The National mental health strategy consists of a suite of documents that include the national mental health policy, a statement of rights and responsibilities in mental health, and successive mental health plans. Since 1992 there have been five such plans, with the fifth endorsed in August 2017. The national mental health strategy is the foundation upon which the states and territories mental health plans are built. One example is “Living Well” – a strategic plan for mental health in NSW 2014-2024 developed through a consultative process that included a cross sectional representation of the NSW populations giving the plan the authority of collective voices (Mental Health Commission of New South Wales, 2014). However, the strategic plan acknowledges that the NSW mental health system is uncoordinated, lacks integration, and can be inefficient and difficult to navigate (Mental Health Commission of New South Wales, 2014).

New South Wales governments have also implemented frameworks aimed at addressing mental health problems and suicide prevention, such as the NSW Strategic Framework and Workforce Plan for Mental Health 2018–2022, the Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018–2023 and the NSW Youth Health Framework 2017-2024.

While these frameworks aim to ensure that New South Wales residents receive the best mental health care, minority groups, which often includes CALD people, such as African communities, are consistently not included in the development process of such frameworks. The Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018–2023 (NSW Ministry of Health, 2018) states that minority groups such as Indigenous Australians, gay and lesbian people, the disabled and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds experience high rates of suicide in comparison to mainstream society; and it suggests that this may be due to mental health problems that have not been addressed. However, there is not enough research to understand the underlying causes of these high suicide rates, and thus further research would assist in developing culturally appropriate interventions to ameliorate the rates of suicide. This research can also support the government in improving the quality of data for policy making. Minority groups need to become a focus of mental health policies as the current data presents a lack of support for such groups within the current healthcare systems.

As indicated in the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan 2017 (National Mental Health Commission, 2017), mental health engagement differs across communities or cultures and is often influenced by features such as an individual's gender, sex, age, family environment and ethnicity. This means that recognising the inputs of diverse cultures in the development of the strategic frameworks, as with African communities, can be a step toward successful mental health engagement, not only for African communities but for CALD communities in general. There is low level of participation in mental health services by people from African background, presumably because of culturally inappropriate services (Baker, Procter & Ferguson, 2016). State governments should approach mental health issues through a lens of social inclusion, with particular focus on migrant communities where social isolation is most prevalent due to a lack of extended family members in Australia and other reasons.

Available mental health data on African communities across NSW

The available mental health literature and data on African communities is fragmented, disjointed and acquired through small scale and uncoordinated research. For example, a few qualitative and quantitative research publications address certain African groups such as West African, South Sudanese, and Liberian immigrants. These studies focus on humanitarian immigrants from Africa, yet there are many other African populations who arrive through different pathways into NSW, in particular through the pathway of a skilled migration visa and family reunion, from countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa and Nigeria**.**

Themes emerging from the literature

Traumatic experiences - traumatic experiences due to exposure to war, violence and rape before migration are recurring aspects in African mental health literature, and together with the effects of post migration experiences are thought to exacerbate the vulnerability of African humanitarian migrants to mental illness and psychosocial distress (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010). A study by Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, and Greenslade (2008) that examined the traumatic experiences of Sudanese refugees during the three phases of pre-migration, transit and post migration, revealed that the challenges faced during all phases had a significant impact on individual overall mental well-being and settlement leading to despair. This can lead to some individuals self-medicating through misusing alcohol and other drugs as coping mechanisms (Fozdar & Torezani, 2008).

Family breakdown, intergenerational conflict - consultations conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2010) highlighted that family breakdown and intergenerational issues were some of the factors negatively affecting African Australians mental health and well-being. Family breakdown and intergenerational conflicts are believed to emanate from culturally inappropriate services and interventions that subvert long-established African family traditional values and norms, while promoting individualistic approaches (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010). Young African Australians face a growing challenge of reconciling their traditional cultures and norms with the host culture and expectations from their young Australian peers, often leading to confusion, difficulties with cultural integration, and conflict with their parents and elders (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010; Fozdar, 2009).

Acculturation - the impact of acculturative stressors is often moderated by safeguarding factors such as family cohesion and social support, and the preservation of close cultural community ties has proved to be a safeguarding feature of mental health in children and adolescents (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2002). Social isolation and lack of social support affect both voluntary and involuntary migrants, however, and involuntary migrants have an added layer of stress associated with sudden separation from family members without knowledge of their safety and well-being (Ikafa & Perry, 2019). Research suggests that segregation from one's bloodline can give rise to melancholy, anxiety, and continuous mental torment (Savic, Chur-Hansen, Mahmood, & Moore, 2013).

Social isolation - African Australians' physical and mental health is undermined by factors such as language barriers, feelings of culture shock, and social isolation as well as absence of family networks (African Australian Communities Leadership Forum, 2017; Fozdar, 2009; Abur & Spaaij, 2016). A study in Adelaide in 2017 exploring the determinants of increased suicide deaths among African youth in South Australia reported isolation, reduced social interaction and stress contributed to rising rates of suicide in the state (Mwanri, Okyere, & Pulvirenti, 2018). Separation from family leading to social isolation and difficulties in adjusting to new culture and systems are perceived to be ongoing sources of stress, sadness and poor mental health outcomes among African families and other refugee families in Australia (Ziersch, Miller, Baak, & Mwanri, 2020).

Racism and discrimination - globally, research has linked poor mental health conditions and psychiatric admissions to experiences of racism and discrimination (Kastrup, 2016). A study by Alemi and Stempel (2018) on Afghan refugees in the United States associated individual experience of racism and discrimination with high levels of stress. Additionally, racial discrimination has also been reported as one of the major barriers in finding employment as well as navigating the housing market for refugee and migrant communities not only in Australia but also in other nations such as the United Kingdom and the United States (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014). With the rising cost of living in Australia, unemployed individuals find it very difficult to afford private rental leaving them at risk of eviction and homelessness (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014). While racial discrimination generally intends to disadvantage, humiliate or hurt others, it can be a source of re-traumatisation for individuals from refugee and migrant backgrounds (Flatau, Smith, Carson, Miller, Burvill & Brand, 2015).

Employment - for the vast majority of recently arrived refugees and migrants, being employed offers a sense of self-worth, self-confidence and financial stability, whereas being unemployed has been linked with low self-esteem as well as lack of self-confidence (Wood, Charlwood, Zecchin, Hansen, Douglas, & Pitt, 2019). According to the Refugee Council of Australia (2010), recently arrived refugees are enthusiastic to find work soon after they arrive in Australia, and as a result, securing employment is viewed as personal growth and ability to support a family as well as an opportunity to contribute to Australia's economy. Gaining employment not only provides one with a sense of financial security but also the capacity to be able to support remaining relatives back home or in the refugee camps (Shandy, 2006). When such hope to find employment becomes impossible, "refugees risk becoming trapped in a cycle of social and economic marginalisation affecting not only them but possibly future generations" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2002, p.173).

Housing - housing affordability is one among many factors contributing to poor mental health conditions for the majority of refugee and migrant communities across Australia including African communities (Flatau et al., 2015). In particular, it becomes extremely difficult to find a property with a number of bedrooms able to accommodate the family (Settlement Council of Australia, 2019). While several factors may explain housing unaffordability, the Settlement Council of Australia (2019) found large family size among the reasons many families from refugee and migrant backgrounds struggle to afford private rental especially properties with sufficient bedrooms (Settlement Council of Australia, 2019). In Australia, access to affordable housing facilitates successful settlement as well as full participation in the economy (Flatau et al., 2015; Ziersch, Walsh, Due, & Duivesteyn, 2017).

Broader implications and recommendations

The current Australian mental health policies and frameworks at both a state and national level attempt to address issues of mental health problems within CALD communities, although it can be suggested that there are irregularities in the implementation, evaluation and monitoring. For instance, there is minimal data available to determine whether the policy statements were translated into implementation objectives and to show the progress and effectiveness of the policy interventions. The lack of monitoring and evaluation data in relation to implementation of mental health interventions further proves that more needs to be done in this area, if Australia is to meet the needs of its changing populations. Not only will irregularities in implementation, evaluation and monitoring hinder participation of people from CALD backgrounds, it would also make it very difficult for mental health services to address access barriers.

There are few studies that have examined the prevalence of mental disorders in people of African backgrounds, and the data from such studies are not a true representation of all people of African descent and the methodological approaches are not rigorous enough to make generalisations. The implications from a lack of data are that policy makers, health experts and mental health services cannot determine the severity and extent of mental health issues within African and CALD communities.

Recommendations

Understanding mental health prevalence and cultural practices - national mental health surveys should include a representative from the African population along with representatives from other minority groups, to capture their voices and views at both the policy making and implementation levels.

Co-design cultural appropriate mental health services - involving community members in the initial design of mental health programs or projects would give them a sense of ownership and may lead to improved participation.

Mental health literacy - by raising awareness of mental disorders within African communities, stigma would be reduced and increased access to mental health services can be achieved.

Mental health education programs - it would be beneficial to design mental health education projects for African communities in Australia to assist them in understanding and recognising signs associated with mental disorders as well as how to reach out for mental health support. Cultural gatherings would provide an opportunity for mental health education as well as processes of intervention.

Partnerships and collaboration with relevant communities - health services and government agencies could cultivate equal partnerships and collaboration with relevant communities in order to establish high impactful community services at the grassroots level.

Learning Circle – adapting mental health interventions similar to the 'learning circle' would help group members explore mental health related issues in a more relaxed and culturally appropriate environment. Learning circle is a concept familiar to nearly all African communities.

Recognise diversity within African communities - acknowledgement of the influence of various African (including other CALD) cultures on the level of participation in mental health services across NSW is necessary. This highlights the role every person or culture plays in their mental health recovery journey.

Funding - providing targeted funding to African communities would help in addressing issues related to mental health at a grassroots level. Much implementation is completed at the grassroots level and this needs to be acknowledged and supported by tailoring funding to support the grassroots organisations.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the mental health frameworks in NSW and Australia, available mental health data on African communities and African communities' attitudes toward mental disorders including their engagement with mental health services. While mental disorders place a huge health and economic burden on nearly all communities across Australia, tackling mental health problems in African communities remains a significant challenge which needs collaboration between the state and federal governments and other non-governmental actors. Insufficient mental health or suicide data, combined with African community members' perception toward mental disorders and mental health services, make it very difficult for any engagement or interventions to progress.

References

Abur, W., & Spaaij, R. (2016). Settlement and employment experiences of South Sudanese people from refugee backgrounds in Melbourne, Australia. *Australasian Review of African Studies,* 37(2), 107–128.

African Australian Communities Leadership Forum. (2017). African Australian Communities Leadership Forum's submission to the Royal Commission in Victoria Mental Health. Retrieved from http://rcvmhs.archive.royalcommission.vic.gov.au/African_Australian_Communities_Leadership_Forum.pdf.

Alemi, Q., & Stempel, C. (2018). Discrimination and distress among Afghan refugees in northern California: The moderating role of pre- and post-migration factors. *PLOS ONE*, 13(5), 1–19.

Amuyunzu-Nyamongo, M. (2013). The social and cultural aspects of mental health in African societies. *Commonwealth Health Partnerships* 2013, 59-63. Retrieved from http://www.commonwealthhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/The-social-and-cultural-aspects-of-mental-health-in-African-societies_CHP13.pdf.

Annequin, M., Gosselin, A., & Dray-Spira, R. (2017). Trajectories and professional mobility around migration. *Course. Life course and health of Africans immigrants in France.* Paris, The Discovery, 73-91.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2008). National survey of mental health and wellbeing: summary of results, cat. no. 4326.0. 2008. Retrieved from www.abs.gov.au.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). NSW Estimated Resident Population Projections – 2016. Retrieved from www.abs.gov.au.

Australian Human Rights Commission. (2002). Psychological Well Being of Child and Adolescent Refugee and Asylum Seekers. Retrieved from https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/psychological-well-being-child-and-adolescent-refugee-and-asylum-seekers.

Australian Human Rights Commission. (2010). In our own words - African Australians: A review of human rights and social inclusion issues. Retrieved from https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/projects/our-own-words-african-australians-review-human-rights.

Babatunde, S. O. O., DiGiacomo, M., Power, T., Davidson, P. M., & Jackson, D. (2020). Resilience of African migrant women: Implications for mental health practice. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing,* 29(1), 92–101.

Baker, A. E. Z., Procter, N. G., & Ferguson, M. S. (2016). Engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse communities to reduce the impact of depression and anxiety: a narrative review. *Health & Social Care in the Community,* 24(4), 386–398.

Bremer, M. (2015). How to co-create change in an Ubuntu Circle. - https://www.leadershipandchangemagazine.com/how-to-co-create-change-in-an-ubuntu-circle/.

Cook, L. (2019). Mental health in Australia: a quick guide. Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1819/

Copping, A., & Shakespeare-Finch, J. (2013). Trauma and survival in African Humanitarian Entrants to Australia. In K. Gow & M. Celinski (Eds.), *Mass trauma: Impact and recovery issues*. (pp. 331–347). Nova Science Publishers.

Corrigan, P. W., Druss, B. G. & Perlick, D. A. (2014). The impact of mental illness stigma on seeking and participating in mental health care. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 15, 37-70. doi: 10.1177/1529100614531398.

Elliott, I. (June 2016). Poverty and Mental Health: A review to inform the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Anti-Poverty Strategy. London: Mental Health Foundation.

Flatau, P., Smith, J., Carson, G., Miller, J., Burvill, A., & Brand, R. (2015). The housing and homelessness journeys of refugees in Australia, AHURI Final Report No.256. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited. Retrieved from http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/projects/p82015>.

Fozdar, F. (2009). "The Golden Country": Ex-Yugoslav and African Refugee Experiences of Settlement and "Depression." *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies*, 35(8), 1335–1352.

Fozdar, F., & Hartley, L. (2014). Housing and the Creation of Home for Refugees in Western Australia. *Housing, Theory & Society*, 31(2), 148–173.

Fozdar, F., & Torezani, S. (2008). Discrimination and Well-Being: Perceptions of Refugees in Western Australia. *International Migration Review,* 42(1), 30–63.

Gebre-Selassie, H. (2008). Integration strategies of migrants and refugees. The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia. Retrieved from http://www.att.org.au/pdf/Report%20-%20integration%20strategies%20of%20migrant%20and%20refugees%20-%201.1.pdf.

Gordon, Anthea. (2011). Mental Health Remains an Invisible Problem in Africa. *Think Africa*. Retrieved from https://thinkafricapress.com/mental-health-remains-invisible-problem-africa/.

Ikafa, I., & Perry, L. (2019). Resettlement experiences of African migrants in Australia and how they affect mental health. *Mental Health Practice,* 22(5), 27–33.

Kastrup, M. (2016). The impact of racism and discrimination on mental health of refugees and asylum seekers. *European Psychiatry*, 33, S43.

Keyes, C. L., & Lopez, S. J. (2009). Toward a science of mental health. Oxford handbook of positive psychology, 89-95.

Khawaja, N. G., White, K. M., Schweitzer, R., & Greenslade, J. (2008). Difficulties and Coping Strategies of Sudanese Refugees: A Qualitative Approach. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 45(3), 489–512.

Kuyini, A. B., & Kivunja, C. (2020). African refugee spouses' experience of resettlement in regional Australia: Disempowering and empowering narratives. *International Social Work*, 63(4), 431–444.

Lindencrona, F., Ekblad, S., & Hauff, E. (2008). Mental health of recently resettled refugees from the Middle East in Sweden: the impact of pre-resettlement trauma, resettlement stress and capacity to handle stress. *Social Psychiatry & Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 43(2), 121–131

Link, B. G., Phelan, J. C., Bresnahan, M., Stueve, A., & Pescosolido, B. A. (1999). Public Conceptions of Mental Illness: Labels, Causes, Dangerousness, and Social Distance. *American Journal of Public Health,* 89(9), 1328–1333.

Madzhie, M., Mashamba, T. M., & Takalani, F. J. (2014). African traditional healers' perception and diagnosis of mental illness. *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation & Dance*, 1, 319–328.

McCann, T. V., Mugavin, J., Renzaho, A., & Lubman, D. I. (2016). Sub-Saharan African migrant youths' help-seeking barriers and facilitators for mental health and substance use problems: a qualitative study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 16, 1–10.

McCann, T. V., Renzaho, A., Mugavin, J., & Lubman, D. I. (2018). Stigma of mental illness and substance misuse in sub-Saharan African migrants: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing,* 27(3), 956–965.

Mental Health Commission of New South Wales. (2014). Living well: A strategic plan for mental health in NSW 2014–2024. Retrieved from https://nswmentalhealthcommission.com.au/sites/default/files/141002%20Living%20Well%20-%20A%20Strategic%20Plan%20(1).pdf.

Mental Health Commission of New South Wales. (2018). Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018–2023. Retrieved from https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/Pages/suicide-prevention-strategic-framework.aspx.

Minas, H., Kakuma, R., Too, L. S., Vayani, H., Orapeleng, S., Prasad-Ildes, R., Turner, G., Procter, N., & Oehm, D. (2013). Mental health research and evaluation in multicultural Australia: Developing a culture of inclusion. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems,* 7. https://doi.org/10.1186/1752-4458-7-23.

Mwanri, L., Okyere, E., & Pulvirenti, M. (2018). Intergenerational conflicts, cultural restraints and suicide: Experiences of young African people in Adelaide, South Australia. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 20(2), 479–484.

National Mental Health Commission. (2017). The Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan 2017 - 2022. Retrieved from https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/getmedia/0209d27b-1873-4245-b6e5-49e770084b81/Fifth-National-Mental-Health-and-Suicide-Prevention-Plan.pdf

NSW Ministry of Health. (2018). The NSW Strategic Framework and Workforce Plan for Mental Health 2018-2022: A Framework and Workforce Plan for NSW Health Services. Retrieved from https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/resources/Publications/mh-strategic-framework.pdf.

NSW Ministry of Health. (2018). The Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018–2023 - Implementation Plan. Retrieved fhttps://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/resources/Publications/strategic-framework-implementation-plan.pdf.

Ogunsiji, O. O. (2018). Meaning of health: Migration experience and health seeking behaviour of West African women in Australia [ProQuest Information & Learning]. In *Dissertation Abstracts International* Section C: Worldwide (Vol. 75, Issue 1–C).

Potochnick, S. R., & Perreira, K. M. (2010). Depression and anxiety among first-generation immigrant Latino youth: key correlates and implications for future research. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease,* 198(7), 470.

Refugee Council of Australia. (2010). Economic, civic and social contributions of refugees and humanitarian entrants: A literature review, Report prepared for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. DIAC, Canberra. Retrieved from https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/economic-civic-social-contributions-refugees-humanitarian-entrants-literature-review_access.pdf.

Rüsch, N., Angermeyer, M. C., & Corrigan, P. W. (2005). Mental illness stigma: Concepts, consequences, and initiatives to reduce stigma. *European Psychiatry,* 20(8), 529–539.

Savic, M., Chur-Hansen, A., Mahmood, M. A., & Moore, V. (2013). Separation from family and its impact on the mental health of Sudanese refugees in Australia: a qualitative study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 37(4), 383–388.

Settlement Council of Australia. (2019). The effects of discrimination on refugee and migrant housing needs. Retrieved from http://scoa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/The-Effects-of-Discrimination-of-Refugee-and-Migrant-Housing-Needs.pdf.

Shandy, D. J. (2006). Global Transactions: Sudanese Refugees Sending Money Home. *Refuge,* 23(2), 28–35.

Sipilanyambe, N., Ajang, D., & Dukuly, M. (2017). Mental Health Learning Circle for communities of African-origin in Western Sydney, New Paradigm. *The Australian Journal on Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 16-20.

Sulamoyo, D. (2010). "I Am Because We Are": Ubuntu as a Cultural Strategy for OD and Change in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Organization Development Journal,* 28(4), 41–51.

Tortelli, A., Morgan, C., Szoke, A., Nascimento, A., Skurnik, N., de Caussade, E. M., & Murray, R. M. (2014). Different rates of first admissions for psychosis in migrant groups in Paris. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 49(7), 1103-1109.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2002). Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva. Retrieved from https://www.unhcr.org/3d9861584.html.

Uribe Guajardo, M. G., Kelly, C., Bond, K., Thomson, R., & Slewa-Younan, S. (2019). An evaluation of the teen and Youth Mental Health First Aid training with a CALD focus: an uncontrolled pilot study with adolescents and adults in Australia. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, 13, 73.

Wood, N., Charlwood, G., Zecchin, C., Hansen, V., Douglas, M., & Pit, S. W. (2019). Qualitative exploration of the impact of employment and volunteering upon the health and wellbeing of African refugees settled in regional Australia: a refugee perspective. *BMC Public Health,* 19(1), 143.

World Health Organisation. (2013). Mental health action plan 2013-2020. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use.

Ziersch, A., Miller, E., Baak, M., & Mwanri, L. (2020). Integration and social determinants of health and wellbeing for people from refugee backgrounds resettled in a rural town in South Australia: a qualitative study. *BMC Public Health*, 20(1), 1700.

Ziersch, A., Walsh, M., Due, C., & Duivesteyn, E. (2017). Exploring the Relationship between Housing and Health for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in South Australia: A Qualitative Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(9).

Australasian Review of African Studies, 2021, 42(1), 81-83 *AFSAAP 2021*
http://afsaap.org.au/ARAS/2021-volume-42/
https://doi.org/10.22160/22035184/ARAS-2021-42-1/81-83

BOOK REVIEW

Franklin Obeng-Odoom, *Property, Institutions, and Social Stratification in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 376, ISBN 9781108491990.

This outstanding monograph is a must-read for scholars and practitioners seeking to better understand the political economy of development in African contexts. Obeng-Odoom's detailed and robust analysis of social stratification in Africa identifies serious flaws in orthodox and heterodox thinking about economic development. He introduces a novel way of knowing about inequality and prospects for change that does not simply draw on the lessons that can be learned from the experiences of South Korea or Taiwan. He brings together contributions from both emerging and long-standing approaches to scholarship in a way that seeks to empower African voices, and especially the research of black economists and people of colour. Obeng-Odoom's research also breaks new ground through applying insights from some of the towering figures of institutional economics, including John Kenneth Galbraith. His framework is an enriching corrective to staid economic development narratives. Professors will find this book an instructive contribution to their graduate syllabi, literature reviews, and hopefully, to their thinking about how to better engage with Africans to understand contemporary development challenges.

From the preface, Obeng-Odoom sets a tone appropriate for a work of such depth and breadth. His critical perspective on the 'obfuscating and diversionary' conclusions that many have drawn from overly economistic or cultural takes on Africa's diverse development challenges is both necessary and refreshing. He injects several personal anecdotes that speak to the lived experience of inequality and the intersectional forces that maintain it within and between generations. As a Canadian, and as relatively empowered researcher who has conducted studies on development challenges in Africa, I found these 'sounds from the ground' to be an invitation for me to reflect more deeply on my own positionality. My hope is that many other similarly empowered readers will take Obeng-Odoom seriously and choose to reflect upon and identify the blind spots in their own ways of knowing and acting.

One of the biggest gaps Obeng-Odoom corrects is to re-orient scholars around the intersection of inequality and the land question. Over the past decade, many researchers working in the field of critical development studies have focused on land issues in relation to foreign direct investment. Since allegations of neo-colonialism were first levelled during the early days of the global food crisis in 2007/08, the spectre of 'land grabbing' has compelled a younger generation of thinkers to pursue research and political activism on this dimension of land politics. Obeng-Odoom's intervention challenges an overly narrow focus on large-scale grabbing, and encourages us to think about land in relation to inequality in every African context, and at every level of analysis. He shows how many of the frameworks used by economic development professionals discount the land question. He argues that we must take land inequalities seriously and specifically to comprehend the realities of social stratification. This perspective should be music to the ears of researchers working on under-studied urban and peri-urban issues, and also to those working on rural areas not subject to large-scale land acquisitions. Instructively, he introduces this principal contribution very early on in the text in a way that also highlights the contributions that various thinkers made to his own intellectual development. As a reader, it was thought-provoking to see a scholar open up about his own influencers, and his distinct path to developing the strong conclusion that land is central to the evolution and dynamics of social stratification.

There is insufficient space in this review to impart the depth of Obeng-Odoom's comprehensive literature review on the Global South and inequality. All I can say here is that his global macro overview is well-structured and consequential. On the latter point, he engages with a broad swathe of literature and in so doing corrects one of biggest flaws of empowered development thinking: overly-narrow conceptual and theoretical engagement. Reading his review I found myself imaging what our scholarly world might look like if all empowered development researchers were similarly careful not to exclude marginalised viewpoints or critical perspectives. In Obeng-Odoom, we have a scholar who brings perspectives into conversation with each other where such engagements have simply not been happening. On one page, for example, we learn about the implications of David Dollar and Aart Kraay's growth centricity - and on the very next, we are immersed in the limits of their growth lens via John M. Hobson's critiques of Western superiority. Let there be no doubt about it - this is critical development scholarship at its finest.

The bulk of the book is structured to deliver solutions to problematic explanations related to property, land, human capital, international trade, and economic growth in Africa. Obeng-Odoom showcases the limits of 'Twentieth Century' thinking on these topics and offers a contemporary analysis that sets a new benchmark for sound scholarship. In the end, he offers a comprehensive discussion of alternatives framed around varieties of 'socialisms' and 'Africanisms'. This emphasis on alternatives in the real world brings home the power of Obeng-Odoom's treatise. He offers lucid theoretically and conceptually informed insights about how the status quo can possibly be transcended. As COVID-19 exacerbates inequalities and creates new ones, engagement with these alternatives has become even more pressing.

Property, Institutions, and Social Stratification in Africa is a book that should inform a new generation of critical development thinking and practice. Simply put, it raises the analytical bar significantly. I recommend this book to anyone committed to learning about Africa, and to better engaging with Africans about development, change, and the future.

Adam Sneyd
University of Guelph
asneyd@uoguelph.ca