

A BETTER KNOWLEDGE FOR A BETTER COOPERATION: THE CONTRIBUTION OF HUMAN SCIENCES FOR AN INTERCULTURAL COOPERATION TO DEVELOPMENT

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The panel aimed at bringing together researchers in human sciences who share an attentive eye to the specific import of local cultures, knowledge and tradition in the activities subsumed under the collective, and often too vague, concept of cooperation to development.

Our basic idea was that a good preventive analysis of the field, of the human groups living and interacting (and sometimes coming into conflicts) in it, of their specific cultures and languages (often widely divergent among themselves) – chiefly in the poorest areas of the countries in the South of the World – represents a priority in the planning of cooperation projects that aim at efficiency either in terms of empowerment or of assumption of responsibility and management by the local partners. We believe that achieving these aims could bring a better stability of the partnership and a better time continuity in the sustainable-development projects proposed and initiated by international partners.

These ideas derive of course from our direct field experience, and we think that they are – sometimes tacitly – shared nowadays among practitioners in cooperation and development. They are widely echoed in projects in such different fields as, to mention just a few, eco-farming, sustainable tourism and cultural and linguistic revitalization. Here and elsewhere the vision lying behind these projects and inspiring them has enabled, we dare say, a considerable level of success. It is a vision which stresses the enormous value of the specific cultures and traditions of the local people(s) in a perspective which can be labelled a *dynamic safeguard of the past*, and whose actual and final aim is to assure the safeguard of the traditional heritage of the communities involved or in any way interested in the project. As an additional – but far from secondary – bonus, these communities could therefore more spontaneously and confidentially join the project and accept the new perspective of eco-compatible growth promoted by the investors.

These ideas were developed and conjugated during the panel in such different areas as: ethnicity and their political exploitation (Fontana), language and educational policy (Manfredi and Tosco), agro-forestral cooperation among marginalized peoples (Micheli), the archaeological data on ancient farming systems with an eye to facilitate the design of future strategies for sustainable land-use (Sernicola), or, finally, socio-technical innovations and the collective participation of the community (Silvestri).

The proceedings put together all the contributions presented and thoroughly discussed at CUCSTorino2013, and namely, in alphabetical order:

- Lorenza Belinda Fontana: *The power of ethnic labeling: the role of international cooperation and academic community in shaping the new indigenous movement in Bolivia*
- Stefano Manfredi and Mauro Tosco: *Language uses vs. language policy: South Sudan and Juba Arabic in the post-independence era*
- Ilaria Micheli: *Safeguarding the past to guarantee a better future: the role of ethnolinguistics in the NECOFA projects among the Mariashoni Okiek community*
- Luisa Sernicola: *Strategies of land exploitation and management in the area of Aksum (Northern Ethiopia) between the 1st millennium BC and the 1st millennium AD*
- Federico Silvestri: *The case of Zimbabwe Bushpump like a socio-technical network*

We offer them in the hope that they may raise consciousness on the – in our view, fundamental – role of human sciences in cooperation.

THE POWER OF ETHNIC LABELLING: THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ACADEMIC COMMUNITY IN SHAPING THE NEW INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT IN BOLIVIA

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ABSTRACT

Since the electoral victory of the Aymara coca growers' leader Evo Morales in 2005, Bolivia has been undergoing a phase of political transition. One of the most important element within this process is the consolidation of a new discourse around the 'indigenous' that led to key instructional reforms inspired by the so-called 'identity politics'. This phenomenon cannot be fully understood without considering the role, over the last three decades, of external actors, including the international cooperation and the academic community, and their active support to the emerging indigenous movements as well as to the process of legislative reform. This paper will propose a critical perspective on normative paradigms inspired by the 'politics of recognition', through the presentation of two case-studies: the role played by the Danish cooperation in funding the titling of collective indigenous land, and the foundation of a native organization among aymara and uru communities, under the guidance and advice of a group of anthropologists.

As policymakers, practitioners and researchers, we use 'frames' and 'labels' to help our analysis and to describe to others what we do (...) While they may be efficient, such labeling processes are also dynamic and political. Therefore they can produce unintended, and sometimes, unwelcome consequences. For example, labeling may shift – or sustain - power relations in ways that trigger social dislocation and prejudice efforts to achieve greater equality (IDS, 2006)

INTRODUCTION

Since the election of President Evo Morales in 2005, Bolivia has been undergoing a phase of political transition. This process undoubtedly constituted a breakthrough in contemporary Bolivian politics, especially for the sudden and massive inclusion of rural and popular sectors in the national political arena. However, the elements of continuity with the previous three decades are as well significant. One of the most important is the consolidation of a new discourse around the 'indigenous' that led to key instructional reforms inspired by the so-called 'identity politics'.¹ Indeed, with the end of the long cycle of military *golpes*, Bolivia has become a laboratory for testing of the political use of recognition. In this framework, the indigenous movements took a new shape, and developed discursive categories that had a strong cultural and ethnic connotation, starting as well to claim for the demarcation of their ancestral territories [1].

This phase of revitalization of indigenous identities and claims stands in opposition with the trend that dominated during the period between the national revolution of 1952 and the end of the dictatorial period in 1982. In this phase, the Bolivian post-revolutionary governments put in practice a systematic project of 'transformation' of indigenous into peasants. In the 1950s and 1960s, a process of massive *campesinization* imposed the peasant union as a new dominant form of rural organization. At the same time, the affirmation of the *mestizaje* ideology promoted class-based identities instead of ethnic-based indigenous identities as collective mechanisms of self-identification [2]. As a result, in the following 30 years, the very notion of citizenship in the rural world overlapped with the belonging to a peasant union [3]. However, these efforts didn't lead to the disappearance of the ethnic issue for complete. One of the main reasons is the historical and sociological relevance of ethnicity, not only, as it is often emphasized, in the pre-colonial epoch, but also as essential part of the way in which the Bolivian, and more in general Latin American states, were constituted over the last two centuries (what Paula Lopez Caballero, called the *régimes national d'altérité* [4]).

Between the 1970s and the 1990s, new highly politicized social organizations emerged, moved by a strong ethno-

¹ This is true at least during the first phase of *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS)'s government, until the approval of the new Constitution (January 2009) and Morales' reelection in 2010. In the second and current political phase, the relation with the indigenous sectors became tenser. The breakthrough was marked mainly by the conflict around the *Territorio Indígena Parque Isiboro Sécuré* (TIPNIS), where an indigenous-ecologist coalition was formed to mobilize against the State's project of contracting a road throughout the natural park and indigenous territory.

cultural identity and agenda, bringing the ‘indigenous issue’ back into the Bolivian public scene. Similar phenomena occurred at the same time in other Latin American contexts, pushed by socio-economic transformations within rural groups, changes in the political contexts as well as by a new international sensibility *vis a vis* this issue and the rise of a specific and unique legal framework. The latter was based on some striking assumptions, namely: that the issues regarding the treatment of ethno-cultural diversity had become “matters of legitimate international concern and consequently do not constitute exclusively an affair of the respective state” [5]. And that the indigenous issue, which has always had a unique standing within international law [6], had to be addressed through a series of special measures, which in principle constituted exceptions to the post-war set of international rules regarding ethno-cultural minorities. In particular: the recognition of land claims, language rights and customary law and their aspirations “to exercise control over their own institutions” [7].

The new dimension and strategic importance acquired by ethnicity and indigenous movements in Bolivia cannot be fully understood without considering the role of external actors. Under the influence of the international debate on multiculturalism, and of a wave of intellectual fascination towards indigenous issues, a multiplication of cooperation programs took place and a number of *ad hoc* organizations, often run by academics, with an ethno-developmentist focus emerged. In particular, international cooperation and the academics play an active role both in providing funds and advice to the emerging indigenous groups as well as in supporting national institutions in the generation of a new policy framework to address ethnic diversity. However, the operationalization of the differences between social groups through the introduction of ethnic labeling (as criteria of self-identification and of policy design) proved to be an extremely complicated task and entails both epistemological and operational challenges.

This paper will propose a theoretical perspective on normative paradigms inspired by the politics of recognition as well as an analysis of two case-studies drawn from Bolivian recent history. In particular, it will focus on the role of both cooperation agencies and academic community in ‘shaping’ the new indigenous movements as a relevant political subject. This fact was at the bases of both a pluralizing and more inclusive political transition as well as of new tensions between rural (peasant and indigenous) organizations.

THE RISE OF NEOINDIGENISM AND THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL ACTORS

Although the 1960s and 1970s marked the rise of an intellectual stream – the *Katarism* – with deep ethno-cultural bases and of a political movement able to incorporate this discourse and bring it to the national stage, the ethno-cultural issue did not manage to reach a relevant position in the political agenda. It was in the 1980s that the historical situation of identitarian plurality and related problems of exclusion and discrimination (in the economic as well as in the political and cultural domains) was revitalized as discursive base of a new intellectual and academic current, able to give birth to its own political and social platform. To affirm itself, this movement had to develop new categories that, on the one side, were rooted on a strong cultural and ethnic base around the concept of ‘indigenous’, but, differently from *Katarism*, took distance from the syndical corporatist organization. Through a radicalization of the ‘indigenous’, it looked for the affirmation of new social and political subjects – the indigenous peoples –, through the consecration of cultural differences as fundamental lines of social differentiation. Moreover, this movement started to formulate specific territorial claims, arguing that the process of identitarian recognition should be accompanied by land titling and demarcation. In the following years, the indigenous identity became one of the most important factors of political shaping and, with the passing of time, would play a key role as mechanism of social aggregation with high potentialities in term of mobilization and antagonism.

During the 1990s, at the national level, a new political doctrine, generally referred to as ‘neoindigenism’² [9] started to emerge, which marked a breakthrough with respect to the assimilationist model that prevailed in the previous decades. Bolivia shared this process with other Latin American countries, where, in the same period, new constitutional and legislative reforms were implemented, which recognized the pluriethnic and multicultural character of national societies. These reforms entail a change of perspective in symbolic terms, but also a concrete turning point generated by the institutionalization of new rules to regulate the recognition of diversity through the positive right. This process, considering both its top-down and bottom-up mechanisms, was highly influenced by the international community (academics and practitioners)³.

From the 1970s, in Latin America and mainly in the Andean region, a number of anthropologists and ethno-historians, influenced by the work of John Murra, started to highlight the specificities of indigenous communities in past and present times, privileging ethnic over classist categories [11]. At the end of the 1970s, two meetings were organized in the Barbados islands, where, for the first time, a concern was expressed about the need, not only of studying, but also of assuming a concrete compromise to support the emancipation and the development of indigenous

² I define this phenomenon ‘neoindigenism’ to distinguish it from indigenism (*indigenismo*), an ideology that spread in many Latin American countries in the first half of the XX century as an “essential aspect of the ideology of national ethnogenesis, the creation of a new national identity based on the *mestizo*” [8].

³ The role of NGOs and foreign intellectuals in Bolivia and particularly within social movements is not completely new. An example is constituted by the interrelations between *Katarism*, the theology of liberation and some NGOs with international support such as CIPCA. In this sense, key figures are the Catalan Jesuit and intellectual Xavier Albó and the sociologist Javier Hurtado [10].

peoples, through the strengthening of their rights and of their cultural and ethnic identities. In Bolivia, the German anthropologist Jürgen Riester, expert in lowland and Amazonian indigenous groups, decided to support a process of indigenous revitalization. In 1978, he obtained international cooperation's funds to build a shelter called *Casa del Campesino* for the Ayoreos⁴ that migrated to the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra and that lived in condition of poverty and marginalization. In 1980, Riester together with other colleagues, founded the NGO Support *Apoyo Para el Campesino Indígena del Oriente Boliviano* (APCOB), which received funds from the Danish cooperation (DANIDA) and the NGOs Hivos, Oxfam America and Cultural Survival, to bring about long-term projects that linked development programs with institutional strengthening. From that moment, lowland indigenous groups started to be politically structured and, in 1982, the *Central Indígena del Oriente Boliviano* (CIDOB), that later on changed its name in *Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia*, was founded. This organization became one of the main social actors of the lowlands and played a key role within national politics, proposing an innovative project of state reform and putting forward the issue of indigenous rights [12]. At the beginning, this fact generated tensions with other organizations that worked in the area, such as the *Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado* (CIPCA), which still followed a classist paradigm of development, working with the peasant unions of the *Confederación Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB), and considering the traditional organizations – especially the Guaraní traditional authorities, the *capitanias* – corrupted and involved in the exploitation of the population, especially in the sugarcane harvest.⁵ However, in a few years, ABCOB and CIDOB became one of the most important receptors of international funding.

Contemporaneously, in the western part of the country, similar experiences of symbiosis between academic and development cooperation sectors took place, which started to implement projects of what was defined 'transnational ethno-development' or 'development with identity' [13]⁶. The most important was the *Taller de historia oral andiana* (THOA) created in 1983 in La Paz with the support of Oxfam America. This project developed researches on the indianist movement between 1869 and 1950, with the explicit aim to promote a policy of strengthening of indigenous history, culture and identity in the highlands [15]. The results served as discursive bases for the legitimation of a movement of 'reconstruction of the *ayllus*'.⁷ The relationship of this initiative with the peasant unions was obviously tense, especially because an implicit critic was addressed to the syndical organization, accused to be a 'continuation of colonialism' [17]. In 1988, another linked transnational coalitions financed the creation of some federations of *ayllus* in the departments of Norte Potosí and Oruro [18], as will be described more in details in the forth section.

A second example of transnationally rooted ethno-development was the *Proyecto de Autodesarrollo Campesino* (PAC) started in the Oruro department in 1988 and sponsored by the European Union. In this case, 21 million dollars were invested to finance micro-projects with the aim to improve the small scale agricultural and livestock production [19]. The selected stakeholder for the program was the organization of the *ayllus* and its native authorities, which were thus legitimated to the detriment of local syndical leaders. Mainly thanks to these projects, at the end of 1989, three sub-departmental federations of *ayllus* existed, which promoted an alternative development and organizational model on an ethnic basis. As a culmination of this process, in March 1997 in Ch'allapata, the *Consejo Nacional of Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu* (CONAMAQ) was founded and consecrated as the "national authority of the Aymaras, Quechuas and Urus" [20]. In the first stage, this organization made great efforts to differentiate itself from its natural competitor – the CSUTCB – though an ethnic-based discourse that emphasized the 'genuineness' of this movement as expression of an 'original' Andean peoples' identity [21]. The key concept in this sense was the 'nativeness', which allowed this organization not only to take distance from the peasants, but also from the indigenous of the East, and to build thus its own identitarian boundaries. Here are some examples of this kind of discourse:

We are native. We are neither indigenous, nor peasants. Whoever could be peasant! Ruben Costas⁸ could be peasant, since he has its own ranching activity. We didn't come from another country, but we are native, legitimated owners of our land and territory. (...) In the highlands there are no peasants. They call us peasants, but we are not. We are native. We are native nations.⁹

How could one say that the peasants, the syndicates are pre-existent to the colony? This is a serious matter. (...) In the past, they call us 'indians', 'aboriginal', 'ethnic group'. These concepts were rejected, buried, and new ones are rising to reach the true meaning. We are not indigenous, we are native.¹⁰

⁴ An indigenous group of the Amazon.

⁵ Interview with a former officer of APCOB, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 22.8.2010.

⁶ Guillaume Boccara and Paola Bolados studied similar processes in Chile, focusing in particular on ethno-development policies implemented by state or para-state institutions (ethno-government) with the aim to strengthen partnerships with indigenous communities, to hold them accountable and seek, following the World Bank's motto to 'help them helping themselves'. This and other works of Boccara aim to describe ethno-developmentism as the point of juncture between the capitalist, neoliberal market and cultural diversity [14].

⁷ The *ayllu* is a form of extended familiar community originally from the Andean region, which work the land in a collective form in the framework of a commonly owned territory. In its origin, the *ayllu* was a territorial unity that gathered a lineage of related families, belonging to segmented and dual hierarchies, with different geographical scale and complexity [16].

⁸ One of the most important leaders of the regionalist movement of Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

⁹ Interview with a Jiliri Apu Mallku, most important authority of CONAMAQ, La Paz, 5.8.2010.

¹⁰ Interview with an advisor of the CONAMAQ, La Paz, 5.8.2010.

Meanwhile, CONAMAQ started a 'proselytism campaign' in the highlands trying to 'convert' rural communities to the *ayllus*' cause through a discourse based on a shared historical memory and pre-colonial identity. Reinterpreting the anti-colonialist principles of the indigenous movement's ideology, the *ayllu*'s activists presented their organization and the native authorities as 'more indigenous' (in term of authenticity) and with more potential (in terms of development), rapidly creating a powerful rival movement for the peasant organizations of the highlands.¹¹ Nevertheless, CONAMAQ did not manage to replace the peasant union that, on the contrary, imposed itself in the national scene leading important social mobilizations after 2000. A multifaceted relationship was thus established between the two organizations that has been at the origin of a complex and fragmented socio-political scenario until today.

International cooperation agencies and anthropologists also played a key role in influencing the process of institutional reforms that underpinned this 'indigenous rise'. In the 90s, two reforms made by neoliberal governments contributed to change the rural identity-building process, and in particular to modify the political space around indigenous peoples: (1) The Popular Participation Law that, in 1995, introduced mechanisms of devolution of power and a formal distinction classifying communities as indigenous or peasant; (2) The Law of the National Institute of the Agrarian Reform (*Ley del Instituto Nacional de la Reforma Agraria*, INRA) of 1996 that legalized the Native Communitarian Lands (*Tierras Comunitarias de Origen*, TCOs), i.e. vast territorial areas assigned on an ethnic bases. Although the indigenous issues *per se* were not of particular interest to a wider electorate and not even to the vast majority of people who might be described as indigenous [23], these reforms triggered a process of political ethnicization [24], which, despite the explicit aim to deepen country's democracy, ended up generating a certain degree of fragmentation and the rise of particular, rather than national, identities. In fact, this process benefited geographically concentrated social movements, whether regionalist or ethnically rooted [25]. As Manuel Centellas wrote, "ironically Bolivia became politically unstable after reforms that improved the political system's representativeness and embraced multiculturalism" [26]. These legislative initiatives of the neoliberal governments benefited in their implementation by the fundamental support of the international cooperation, especially North European. One of the most interesting cases is the support of the Danish cooperation agency (DANIDA) to the process of titling of indigenous territories.

DANIDA AND THE INDIGENOUS LAND TITLING

In Bolivia, one of the most important and effective indigenous-related cooperation programs in terms of impact was the DANIDA's program *Support to the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, whose aim was to generate a "growing recognition and implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples, in combination with the active and democratic participation of the indigenous population in an economic and political development process" [27]. In concrete terms, the program, which developed along 15 years from 1995 to 2010, provided support and advice to the Bolivian state to implement the TCOs' titling, the process of decentralization and popular participation, the bilingual education in the lowlands, and the sustainable management of natural resources in the TCOs. All in all, it was an effort of mainstreaming of the indigenous issue in the design of development programs and public policies. However, reading the program's systematization documents, it often emerges a simplistic vision of the indigenous issue. Moreover, although there is a recognition of the strategic role of social movements in the generation of tensions over land tenure, the focus rests mainly on the vertical conflictive axes (*latifundio* vs. indigenous), neglecting the multiple horizontal conflictive axes (between social organizations).

Despite these problems, the Danish cooperation has considered its strategy of support to Bolivian indigenous peoples as one of its most successful programs, as it is clearly stated in the final report. A similar opinion has a Danish Embassy's officer that was in charge of the program for four years:

This program has been one of the most successful I have ever seen, since it was well formulated and it led to interesting results. In terms of land, 11 million hectares were titled, which correspond to the 70 or 80% of what has been titled for indigenous peoples.¹² It was not only a titling process but an empowerment process of these peoples.¹³

Clearly, the effects on identity-building processes and the positive discrimination criteria introduced in favor of the indigenous were not only well known, but explicitly incentivized.

A different and more critical opinion on the role of the international cooperation in the process of ethnic identities' revitalization is the one of a former officer of the Viceministry of Indigenous Issues:

¹¹ For a recent study of the fights between *ayllus* and peasant organizations in the Norte Potosí see Le Gouill, 2011 [22]. Focusing on permanent organizational tensions around the construction of identities and the definition of regional spaces of power, this article shows how the rise of the MAS at the national level triggered a process of reconfiguration and generates new forms of ethnicized political representations whose goal is the management of economic and natural resources based on a rather developmentist vision.

¹² During the first 10 years of implementation, the international funding contributed to cover the 67% of the total costs for the TCOs' titling process. Moreover, until December 2009, 135 TCOs were titled thanks to the support of DANIDA [28].

¹³ Interview with a Project Manager of DANIDA, La Paz, 11.6.2011.

There are cooperation agencies that expressly supported exclusively indigenous peoples, and not the peasant sector, because they thought that, from the 169 ILO Convention, the logic of indigenous peoples was different and that it had been made invisible. This fact has been contributing to the resurgence of certain identities and to the empowerment of others. (...) In fact, distortions introduced by the international cooperation's funds generated conflicts, since it is true that there are cooperation agencies that only sponsor indigenous, and not peasants.¹⁴

Another important element that the interviewee mentioned is that the civil society's stakeholders of this kind of programs were mainly indigenous organizations – i.e. CONAMAQ and CIDOB – while CSUTCB, for its syndical nature, was not taken into consideration, ignoring thus, and in the long term probably contributing to weaken, its original indianist stream. According to the Danish Embassy's officer, the stakeholders' selection was made according to a criteria of 'most representativeness' in ethnic terms: "It was considered that CONAMAQ and CIDOB were the most representative within the indigenous world, the most organized and with national representation".¹⁵ However, these decisions generated much critics and discontent within peasant organizations, which accused the international actors to benefit a social group to the detriment of another one. I quote here an example:

The cooperation is the empire and we are puppets that say what the cooperation wants us to say. The cooperation makes the agenda. Since there is money, invitations, good hotels, flight tickets, they buy interlocutors, ventriloquists. All the money that comes from Finland, Norway, Denmark, comes to destroy syndicalism, Marxism. Supposedly, they think they come to destroy communism. Who are the communists? Syndicates! Who should they support? The neutral, those that are not going to make any problem, the *carriñosos* [affectionate people]. And who are they? Indigenous and CONAMAQ (...).¹⁶

ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND THE CREATION OF A NEW INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATION IN ORURO

Among the generation of young anthropologists that, in the 1970s and 1980s, started to get involved with indigenous communities carrying out an intense ethnographic and political work of historical reconstruction and memories collection, one of the most relevant and influential works was carried out by the *Antropólogos del Sur Andino* (ASUR) in the altiplanic department of Oruro. In the mid-1980s, they conducted an ethnographic research to trace back the historical trajectory of the 'ethnic unit' of the actual Quillacas community. The results of this study – entitled 'From aymara kingdoms to communities'¹⁷ – had important and unexpected consequences in the local debate on the organizational fragmentation that the region was experiencing, eventually inspiring the conformation of a new explicitly native (*originaria*) organization called *Federation de Ayllus del Sur de Oruro* (FASOR). This organization and territorial unit, which coincided with the ethnic regional demarcation of the XVI century, was intended as a way of unifying the ancestral territory, consolidate a common ethnic identity and cohesively negotiate with the state and international NGOs operating in the region through important programs of local development.

FASOR was formally constituted in 1989 during a meeting of the traditional authorities of the *ayllus* of Southern Oruro, whose primary goal was to analyze the intervention and impact of NGOs and national development programs in the region. The anthropologies played a key role in supporting the organization of the event and in gathering funding (from the Swiss cooperation agency SDC) to sponsor it. During the meeting, the historical study was presented and, at least according to its authors [30], had a significant impact in influencing the minds of local authorities. On the one side, it generated a sense of urgency on the need to resolve problems of poverty and exclusion in the region and, on the other side, it rescued a long-term tradition as a basis for the reconstruction of a unifying political entity of the *ayllus* to contrast fragmentation. A decision was made to create a new organization, and, at the moment of defining its name, the authorities explicitly asked for the advice of one of the anthropologists present at the meeting, Ramiro Molina Rivera. As he reported in a later book, in his intervention, he emphasized the indigenous past and memory as the elements that articulated these communities in the past and that could serve as catalyzing forces against fragmentation still in those days. The opinion of external actors was greatly considered by local authorities. Answering to some leaders who feared racist reactions and prejudices around indigenous categories, an authority of the community of Pampa Aullagas said:

True, the Bolivians are so afraid to speak the Aymara language, the same happens with the Quechua, but foreigner people, the *gringos*, appreciate our language, while Bolivians say *indios*. On the contrary, we should be proud of our language. Therefore I agree to put the name of *ayllu* [31].

The creation of FESOR was the first step towards the rise of a new national native organization in the highlands. Two years later, the same group of anthropologists of ASUR was part of the creation of a similar federation of *ayllus* in

¹⁴ Interview with a former officer of the Viceministry of Indigenous Issues, La Paz, 5.8.2010.

¹⁵ Interview with a Project Manager of DANIDA, cit.

¹⁶ Interview with an advisor of the Bartolinas, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 19.8.2010.

¹⁷ The research, coordinated by Rossana Barragán, was published in the book of Ramiro Molina Rivero (2006) [29].

the Norte Potosí region. There, a project was put in place with the aim of conducting a process of consultation with the *ayllus* on the Popular Participation Law. The hidden aim was the consolidation of a new native organization. The project was funded by the German cooperation agency. In this context, the resistance of the peasant unions was much stronger and started to feed and reactivate long-term conflicts. This was an unintended consequence for the anthropologists who participated in the process, since their idea was to create an integrated system *ayllu-union*¹⁸. However, the peasants strongly refused this option.

The culmination of this process was the foundation, in 1997, of CONAMAQ, as national organization of representation of the native peoples of the highlands. This organization played a key role in the mobilizations and ‘social wars’ (the water and gas conflicts in Cochabamba and El Alto) during the early 2000, was one of the main allies of Morales’ fist government, a crucial actor in the Constituent Assembly and still holds an important, although more critical, role in Bolivian national politics. In the words of one of the anthropologists that were part of this process, the rise of the native movement in the highlands was not endogenously driven, but rather the result of a symbiotic interaction between three main actors: local communities, anthropologists and cooperation agencies:

The very idea of indigenism and the new social movements does not arise only from their own conception and strength. It arises symbolically from non-indigenous intellectuals and mainly anthropologists and historians, some sociologists, and from the cooperation. (...) That creates a whole continental movement during the 80s. The same three axes generated the international conjuncture: indigenous leaders that started to articulate, supported by NGOs and cooperation, and anthropologists.¹⁹

Tellingly, some members of this group of anthropologists were, in the 1990s, part of the neoliberal governments, actively advocating for the incorporation of the international framework on the rights of indigenous peoples within Bolivian laws and Constitution. Ramiro Molina Rivero himself was the first National Secretary for Ethnic Affairs under the government of Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada and one of the main players in the design of the Popular Participation Law and the INRA Law, as mechanisms to grant more power, participation and territorial control to Bolivia indigenous and native groups.

CONCLUSIONS

In the case of Bolivia, and in particular, in the two case-studies that were briefly presented, a clear influence of external actors (academic and practitioners) can be detected, which actively influenced both the way people self-identified as well as the design of a new generation of public policies. These interventions were led by a political and ideological agenda, which somehow refers to the ‘theory of recognition’ and ‘identity politics’. The priority given to the classification and self-identification of social groups through ethnic categories was intended as a way to widening and deepening their rights through the recognition of their cultural and ethnic features. Although intellectual and political mechanisms inspired by the recognition paradigm contributed to the strengthening of the democratization process in the country and to the social and political inclusion of traditionally marginalized sectors of the population, the following paragraphs will briefly focus on some problems and limitations of those approaches and experiences.

One of the side effects related to the support of the international cooperation to indigenous organizations is the ‘professionalization’ of these movements – and of their leaders – as development actors. As Yvon Le Bot wrote referring to Latin America in general: “Indigenous actors and the militants that support them would tend to ‘professionalize’ themselves, to adopt essentially strategic conducts, fights of position and resources harnessing – financial, juridical and symbolic – and to enter, together with other actors, into a game of reciprocal instrumentalization” [32]. A ‘project-based logic’ is thus installed within the indigenous movements’ leadership, which converts them in sort of lobbies and managers of development, experts in fund-raising and in the use of a specific ethno-developmentist language [33]. This fact demonstrates a great adaptation capacity of these actors, while at the same time, it constitutes a consistent limit to their autonomy. Indeed, it triggers a vicious circle that strengthens the movements’ dependency from funds, advising and support of external agents, weakening their economic and ideological independence [34].

Secondly, the cases presented contribute to emphasize the normative reluctance of recognition. In the Bolivian context, traditionally characterized by a high degree of polarization of peasant and indigenous identities, it proves to be extremely difficult to identify the rules governing the conditions of success of (ethnic) recognition, formal procedures, as it were, that tell us when to recognize (in which contexts), and how to recognize (to whom is it appropriate to grant recognition, what counts as proper recognition). What rules the fact of conceding recognition to certain people, and not to others? This constitutive indeterminacy impinges tacitly on the normative use of recognition, with consequent problems at both the epistemological and political level. As the Bolivian case showed, it is generally very difficult (if not impossible) to operationalize the difference between social collectivities, making them viable on the basis of ethnic or identitarian categories. Moreover, institutionalizing the link between resource allocation and ethnicity (the

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Interview with an anthropologists and former National Secretary for Ethnic Affairs, La Paz, 6.6.2011.

recognition of native title as a basis for land-claims by indigenous people) and, in particular, stating a policy of positive discrimination dependent on displaying acknowledgement of ‘authentic’ identities, turns identity into a target, hence increasing the risk of an instrumental use of identity for economic or political purposes, and potentially multiplying conflicts between social organizations. All these critical aspects were apparently underestimated both by anthropologists and cooperation agencies.

As I mentioned, the social and political weight both at symbolic and concrete levels of rural and popular sectors has increased, especially from 2005, after the electoral victory of Evo Morales. Nevertheless, although I definitely recognize these important improvements, I would like to mention here a still controversial as well as widely underestimated issue concerning the effective impact of this dynamic on post-colonial marginalized groups and individuals. Kymlicka argues that:

In (...) the struggle against ethnic and racial hierarchy, what matters is not the change in international law *per se*, which has had little impact on most people’s everyday lives. The real change has been in people’s consciousness. Members of historically subordinated groups today demand equality, and demand it has a right. [36]

The issue of right, equality and, before that, of consciousness of oppression is thus a key point in the analysis of ethno-cultural movements, and force to bring the analysis to the individual dimension, whereby the cognitive domain is strongly influenced by emotions and feelings. I argue that the process of development of this consciousness is not linear but it rather moves along a complex, multifaceted, non-teleological path. In particular, a difference might exist between predominately endogenously or exogenously-driven processes of emancipation, with respect to the ‘quality’ of the emancipatory dynamic itself. An hypothesis inspired by this paper that would need further research is that the ‘quality of emancipation’, in terms of its potentialities of enhancing a ‘consciousness of oppression’ and the very ‘ontology of freedom’ that this would imply, is directly proportional to the degree of endogeneity of the emancipatory movement. An exemplification coming from another historical context could be the ways in which the universal suffrage was implemented in different countries and the consequences for the feminist movements. Namely, the differences between the United Kingdom, where it was the result of women movements’ struggle after the drastic social changes triggered by the First World War, and Turkey, where it was included in the constitutional reform of 1924, under the Ataturk one-party government. The consequences inscribed in the genesis of the feminist movements in the two countries are still visible today. In the study of social dynamics, it is hence paramount to consider the conditions in which supposedly emancipatory dynamics take place, the role of external actors, and, when possible, the effects in terms of the very individual and collective ontology of freedom.

ACHRONYMS

APCOB	Apoyo Para el Campesino Indígena del Oriente Boliviano (Support for the Peasant Indigenous of the Bolivian East)
ASUR	Antropólogos del Sur Andino (Anthropologists of de Andean South)
CIDOB	Central de los Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (Confederation of Indigenous People of Bolivia)
CIPCA	Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado (Center of Research and Promotion of the Peasantry)
CONAMAQ	Consejo Nacional of Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu (National Council of Ayllus and Markas of the Qullasuyu)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
CSUTCB	Confederación Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (Unique Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia)
DANIDA	Danish Development Cooperation
FASOR	Federation de Ayllus del Sur de Oruro (Federation of Ayllus of Southern Oruro)
INRA	Instituto Nacional de la Reforma Agraria (National Institute of the Agrarian Reform)
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement Towards Socialism)
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PMC	Pacto Militar Campesino (Military-Peasant Pact)
TCO	Tierra Comunitaria de Origen (Native Communitarian Land)
THOA	Taller de Historia Oral Andina (Workshop of Oral Andean History)

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SAFEGUARDING THE PAST TO GUARANTEE A BETTER FUTURE. THE ROLE OF ETHNOLINGUISTICS IN THE NECOFA PROJECTS AMONG THE MARIASHONI OKIEK COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

Cooperation to development in rural Africa is often a matter of handling with technologically archaic societies, where tradition has still a very high cultural value. In such societies things must be done, “as they have always been done”, because “the forefathers said it was like that”. Shifting from a traditional way of doing things to a more modern one is a delicate issue, touching the very core of a people’s identity. How to handle with this identity matter, bringing people to open themselves to the new perspectives of modernity without infringing upon their traditions, their values and their right to choose their own way of life? Only a true reciprocal knowledge can result in true reciprocal confidence and therefore no project of cooperation to development can be successful if it does not consider the context in which (Western) highly educated volunteers are called to operate. Human sciences like anthropology, history, archaeology and linguistics, with their multifaceted views of the context, represent a precious key for accessing an often remote world, and the only means to get in touch and at the same time obtaining and showing respect to the communities living in a territory which is going to be subject to a project of development. Only reciprocal confidence and a real tentative of empowerment of the local people, adapting new technologies and modern ways of doing things to traditional methods can bring indigenous people to feel part and actors of the project.

As an object of discussion on the methodology of intervention proposed in the paper, the author presents a real case-study, which demonstrates the positive evolution of a sustainable agro-forestral project aimed at the implementation of beekeeping in the Okiek region of Mariashoni, Mau forests complex, Kenya, pursuant to the introduction of an ethnolinguistic study linked to the technical part of the project and aimed at facilitating the mutual comprehension of local Okiek and technicians in the domain of beekeeping. The study revealed itself not only functional to the correct execution of the project, but also fundamental to the constitution of a strengthened consciousness of the Okiek community as the bearer of a proper identity, stimulating the ideation, by the Okiek themselves, of further possibilities of cooperation on the field for the future.

INTRODUCTION. SAFEGUARDING THE PAST TO GUARANTEE A BETTER FUTURE

In West Africa the glorious Ashanti Empire, whose capital was Kumasi, in modern Ghana, used to forge very sophisticated gold weights, a kind of bronze statuettes, in some cases, real artistic masterpieces, which represented symbols of their cultural tradition. Many of them were animals, whose role in traditional tales were well known, like the caiman, which represented the wise, patient, man, or the hare, which represented deceitfulness and a brilliant mind. Sometimes these animals were fantastic ones. This is the case of a mythical bird they called Sankofa. Sankofa is one of the most important symbols in the Ashanti world. It is a bird, standing on top of a hill, or pyramid. Its wings are closed, its tail kept straight upward. It has a long neck and its face looks down, backwards at its feet. The meaning of Sankofa is that no one can reach the top - read: become “someone”, a wealthy, respected or a rich man -, if he does not constantly remember his origins, and if he forgets his past. It is only on someone’s past that one can build his future as well as his (good) fortune. The same, according to the Ashanti, is true for every society in this world.

And the same, of course, is what is considered true also in our Western World, despite our untiring projection towards the future.

Even though the core idea is the same, the attitude we have towards the past is very different from the one showed by our African neighbors.

Trying to put things in the most simple way, we in fact look at our past as at the path we have followed to reach the place where we are. It can have been full of obstacles, but, thanks to our efforts and a certain degree of ideation and luck, we could go on and finally ameliorate our initial condition. What is in our past, has been necessary to forge us as we are now, and it is important to know it, in order to avoid repeating the mistakes we made in life. We do not long going back to an initial idillic heroic phase, rather, we aim to continue our way towards something new, which is located somewhere in our future, and which is always thought to be better.

African traditional (above all rural) peoples instead, educated at the school of their forefathers, are convinced that

in the past lays the secret of luck and good fortune, and only remaining attached to the traditional laws and ways of doing things transmitted unchanged to them from generation to generation, the world can go on, preventing the sky from falling, one unlucky day, on their heads.

This is of course an oversimplification of the matter, but sometimes oversimplification is more useful than philosophical meditation when we are in front of real, concrete problems, like, for example, the emergency caused by savage deforestation in an area, like the Mau Forests complex we will consider in a while, which until some 30 years ago, had always represented the main water catchment of Kenya, and which is now collapsing, due to the loss of forest cover and to climate change caused by pollution in the Western, modern world, with all the terrible effects we can imagine both on the fields and on the people living in the country.

In contexts like the one I depicted, knowledge of the past is not only synonym with understanding the habits, ideas or position of a single people in its local chessboard, rather, it is fundamental to avoid false steps in the construction of the relationships we aim to create in order to cooperate to *their*, and at the same time *our*, development, in a positive global vision of the world.

If the past continues to represent a model for the indigenous inhabitants of a region, it is important not only to know it, but also to understand what can be maintained and valued positively in a process of “forced” or “accelerated” evolution, and what is necessary to throw away. If the past is the guardian of a people’s identity, it is important to safeguard what in it is considered fundamental and unavoidable by the insiders. Many times this involves the necessity to negotiate and discuss what is moral or ethically correct in a determined society. In the last years this problem has often been on the table of discussion in our academic world. Can we really say that there is only one (Western) way to conceive issues such as *Human Rights*, *Morality* or *Ethics*? And anyway, once assumed that we could agree upon the idea that *Human Rights* must be respected everywhere in the world, we must admit that what we call a moral or ethical behavior is necessarily shaped by the context we live in. Thus, in different contexts we will differently perceive something as being *very much* or *not so much* against a determined *Human Right*¹.

For example, in all societies hunger is seen as something nobody should suffer from, but in different contexts access to food resources is regulated in different ways. It is a Western concern that if there is little to eat, the first to be nourished must be children, because they represent our future and are most vulnerable. In many African societies, on the contrary, the first to be nourished must be elders, because if an elder dies, a treasure of knowledge disappears with him, while if a baby dies, just nine months later the mother can have another one.

Thus, many times it is a matter of perspective, deriving from cultural and traditional values, embedded behaviors and embedded ideas of what is considered *right* or *wrong*, what is *appropriate* and what *is not*. If we do not try to understand this point, and if we do not recognize to the *others* the same value as the one we recognize to *ourselves*, in terms of cultural starting position, we surely cannot hope to get to a really accepted, shared and empowered project of cooperation.

On many occasions and in many traditional contexts safeguarding the past, or what is pivotal in that past, according to those whom we are addressing, is the first step to obtain a reasonable degree of confidence and respect.

In this sense safeguarding one people’s past is often the key factor to guarantee a better future for everybody.

THE ROLE OF HUMAN SCIENCES IN COOPERATION

The label *Human Sciences* covers such an enormous amount of disciplines and fields of research, that it is particularly hard to consider them really as a whole. Therefore I think it is important here to try to be a bit clearer and specify what I am exactly referring to. The *Human Sciences* I am thinking of here, are those aimed at the knowledge of the mechanisms of formation of determined societies, of their values, their beliefs, their way of doing things and interact with others, their view of the world and of themselves inside the world, their ways to cope with *otherness* and their ways to manage interpersonal relations according to their cultural and traditional habits in terms of gender distinction and distribution of labour, hierarchy and age class or political and economical prestige.

In other words, when speaking of *Human Sciences*, I think of history and archaeology, which are the tools we have to understand the situations, choices and events, which made a people adapting itself in a specific way to survive in its

¹ The academic literature on this kind of topics (Anthology of Moralities and Ethics, Development Studies in general and Anthropology of Development) is now very rich. I do not think it is the right place here to discuss the different positions. I just cite those I think are the most important productions: [1] A. Appadurai *Modernity at Large*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986; [2] K. E. Browne & B. L. Milgram eds. *Economics and Morality. Anthropological approaches*. Lanham: Altamira Press, 2009; [3] D. Fassin “Beyond Good and Evil? Questioning the Anthropological Discomfort with Morals” in *Anthropological Theory* 8 (4): 333-344, 2008; [4] D. Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011; [5] C. Grootaert & T. Van Bastelaer T. eds., *The Role of Social Capital in Development. An Empirical Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; [6] S. Howell, *The Ethnography of Moralities*. London: Routledge, 1997; [7] J. Lindlaw, “For an Anthropology of Ethics and Freedom” in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 8 (2): 311-332, 2002; [8] G. McCann & S. McCloskey eds. *From the Local to the Global. Key Issues in Development Studies*. London: Pluto Press, 2003; [9] D. Mosse, *Cultivating development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice*. London: Pluto Press, 2005; [10] A. Tsing A., *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005; [11] R. A. Wilson & J. P. Mitchell eds., *Human Rights in Global Perspective*. London: Routledge, 2003; [12] J. Zigon, *Morality: An Anthropological Perspective*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2008.

natural and geo-political context. I then think of anthropology and ethnology, because these are the disciplines which handle specifically with the description and interpretation of the cultural heritage of a people and of the ways in which its values are estimated, expressed, preserved and transmitted to the new generations. I finally think of linguistics because every language keeps in itself the traces of successive contacts with other human groups, has the possibility to create genuine labels for what is typical of a culture and adopts terms from other languages when it needs to indicate objects or concepts which were not part of its speakers' tradition, revealing which kind of exchange there have been with those communities the term came from.

With the label *Human Science* I then refer to all these disciplines taken together, which I see as the different faces of an elaborate solid, each one mirroring just a part of the whole, a whole which comes out from the correct reconstruction of the original image, which can be obtained only through a constant confrontation and discussion of the same issue, taken from all the different points of view.

Aim of what I call *Human Sciences*, should be the reconstruction of this complicate image.

Assumed this position, the role I see for *Human Sciences* in projects of cooperation to development is fundamental.

On the one hand *Human Sciences* should provide for an accurate reading of the conditions, reasons and expectations of all the human groups living in the area interested by the project (never mind what is its final aim), and on the other hand they should evaluate, step by step, the effective possibilities of the project to be accepted, taken in charge and carried on by the local partners, once the intervention of the interested NGO or international partner is finished.

Historians, archaeologists, anthropologists or linguists should work side by side with the technicians involved in the project and act as mediators between them and the local people, in order to make their communication clearer, to stimulate the local people's involvement and their real empowerment, making new ways of doing things as something chosen and not only accepted, or, worse, badly suffered by indigenous people.

Even though in these last years from this point of view things are going much better than before, there is still much to do to make Western partners abandon the idea of being there just to *teach* to indigenous communities how to do things better, without showing any care for their traditional know-how and ignoring religious or moral constraints preventing their partner to do determined (taboo) things, or to act in a specific (immoral) way, work or live in a determined (sacred, or spiritually dangerous) place and the like...

Before being *teachers*, we have to learn to be *learners* and try primarily to understand where we are, which are the values our project could be contrary to, which are the categories of people who could never be asked to do a particular task, or how we could bring our partners to change their minds on specific important issues.

In short, Western or International partners of local projects of cooperation to development, should first of all make a thorough recognition not only of the technical possibilities for the project to function, but also of the human context the project is intended for and the possibility it has to be accepted.

An interesting case study, demonstrating how much important it is to consider all these factors before starting any kind of cooperation project, is presented by Lianne Holten in her "Mothers, Medicine and Morality in Rural Mali", edited in 2013 by LIT.

In her book, Holten reports her own experience in the village of Farabako, in the Mande Mountains of southwestern Mali. The author is at the same time a midwife and an anthropologist and in Farabako she has done the experience of being both things at the same time. She was there as a midwife, cooperating in a health care project funded by some Dutch charitable organization aimed at the setting up of a maternity clinic in the village, but at the same time she was there in order to gather first hand materials for her PhD thesis in anthropology. I will not resume her book here, but I suggest my readers to have a look at it. It is in fact a genuine description of the mistakes one can make, even in good-faith, applying the way of thinking of a Western biomedical expert in a context in which most of the times Western biomedical practice is seen just as one (and not the best, even though more expensive) possible healing method. Reflecting on her experience, Holten admitted to have been initially badly surprised by the fact that, despite the opening of a maternity clinic and the opportunity to refer to a Western midwife for consultation and prompt intervention, in such a remote Mande village as Farabako, when a child had a serious health problem, such as severe malnutrition, his mother hardly went to ask the midwife for help. Many women seemed not to take care of their children, because they seemed not to take any initiative to get rid of the disease of their babies, waiting for others to make a decision. Only after long months spent in the village, Holten understood that the women's attitude towards their children's illness was due to their social condition. Decision making in issues like health care in Farabako is a male task and if a wife doesn't respect this traditional rule of letting her husband decide for her and her child, behaving in a different way and looking for help elsewhere than in her family, this could cause her to loose even the very small social capital she can rely on in the patrilocal, patriarchal and polygamous society she lives in. In her book, Lianne Holten demonstrates in concrete facts the kind of in-depth comprehension there should be of the human and social context of people on the field before starting any cooperation project.

Many times good-will and technical know-how reveal themselves simply insufficient.

THE ROLE OF ETHNOLINGUISTICS IN THE NECOFA PROJECTS AMONG THE MARIASHONI OKIEK COMMUNITY (KENYA)

Okiek have always been hunters and gatherers, moving periodically from the highlands to the lowlands of the Mau Forests complex, following the lifecycle of savage bees, whose honey was the Okiek's first source of energetic food. Living out from the common standards, speaking a Kalenjin language in a Bantu context, having nothing to offer on the market and limiting their trade to the barter of game food against the milk of Maasai or Nandi cows, they were considered "dorobo", that is "servants", of their Maasai or Nandi neighbors, and esteemed nothing.

Such a low social position caused them to be used to think of themselves as the savage, bad copy of their neighbors and, despite their rich traditional heritage, they had never done anything to value it.

In the last 30 years, due to the reduction of their original habitat, their life changed and they had to start sheep farming and garden activities to earn a living.

Despite their number, estimated at 79.000 between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania², the Okiek are generally considered an endangered minority, speaking an endangered language (even though a recent sociolinguistic survey I conducted in the months of January-february 2013 and now in print for the types of *Incontri Linguistici* demonstrates quite the contrary), living in an endangered habitat, which, since 2004, is the object of NECOFA's attention.

NECOFA, the Network for Ecofarming in Africa, is a Kenyan community based NGO, ruled by a Kikuyu, Samuel Karanja Muhonyu, and its aim is the promotion of ecofarming, that is of an ecologically and socially sustainable form of land management. In their website they declare that: "*It (NECOFA) works towards empowering communities to sustainably access education, health, food security and social dignity*"³.

NECOFA met the Okiek in the framework of its projects aimed at the forest conservation and management. Since the beginning, NECOFA involved the Okiek community in different projects, such as beekeeping and the establishment of combined traditional and modern apiary production, the establishment of forestal (and other) tree nursery and the establishment of environmental clubs in primary schools.

Principal partners of NECOFA in the area of Mariashoni are the Italian NGO "Manitese", which, in collaboration with Ethnorêma and the Province of Bolzano is involved in the apiary establishment, and SLOW Food.

One of the principles on which NECOFA and Manitese base their action, is the fact that local communities not only must be involved in the cooperative programs they finance, but, of course, they must be empowered.

All their projects provide for special trainings for all the figures they envisage being necessary to the operativeness of the project once it reaches its full speed.

In 2012 NECOFA, together with Manitese, supported in Mariashoni the birth of MACODEV, the Mariashoni Community Development SHG, engaged in "*the popularization of its initiatives in the community*". According to the 11/16/2012 post on NECOFA's website, MACODEV operators "*have been conducting meetings and barazas with community members so as to engage them to participate more actively in the process of community development. To strengthen their capacity to operate more efficiently the project (NECOFA) supported them with a one day training for its committee members. The training entailed Leadership and Management, Record Keeping Resources Mobilization, roles and responsibilities of committee members and growth and development of an organization. The CBO has also been coordinating the honey procurement from local farmers. This activity is ongoing considering that the harvesting season is approaching thus the CBO is trying to acquire as much as they can so that it can be refined at the Mariashoni honey refinery, then certified for by the Kenya Bureau of Standards. After the honey is certified the CBO will be in charge of Marketing the honey countrywide thus providing a path way for the Mariashoni Okiek community to earn some decent compensation for their honey production without being exploited by the middlemen who buy it at a throw away price. Other areas of the CBO engagement include commercialization of locally produced milk, wool purchase and value addition and pyrethrum commercialization and popularization in the area*"⁴.

The *case study* I discuss in this paper is that of the ideation, actualization and prosecution process of the project on beekeeping in Mariashoni, funded by Manitese and realized in cooperation with NECOFA and MACODEV, which I see as a model to be valued as a good method of intervention on the field.

Aim of the project was the establishment of traditional - modern combined apiaries and the promotion of a new way of doing beekeeping not only for personal sustenance, but also for commercial purposes.

I have already said that honey had always been the principal source of nutrition for the Okiek and, therefore, the introduction of modern methods, if on the one hand was supposed to be accepted as a modernization and simplification of traditional techniques, on the other hand touched and, in a sense, invalidated, many practices and beliefs which were taken for granted because "*the forefathers did it like this*".

A specific training phase had thus to be prepared and studied carefully.

Moreover, in the Okiek tradition, beekeeping and honey production had always been a male concern. Okiek

² <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/oki>.

³ <http://necofakenya.wordpress.com/about/>.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

women could never substitute their male partners in the collection of the precious nectar. Men stored their honey in a secret place in the forest, divided it among the women, who then could carry it to their locations and use it in their domestic activities, for cooking, the preparation of traditional medicine and as a preservative for smoked meat.

Far from being unaware of this, NECOFA and MACODEV decided to admit in their project also cooperatives of women and this implied a serious engagement in education, in order to avoid problems with the women's husbands.

The first step was financing the formation of the activity manager on the field, John Kemoy, an Okiek member of the NECOFA staff, at the Baraka college in Molo, one of the most renowned schools for beekeeping in the region.

Being an Okiot, John would then easily communicate with those other Okiek involved in the project.

Despite his success at the school, once back in Mariashoni, John had anyway to confront with some ethnolinguistic problems. On the one hand, in fact, he had no Okiek words to refer to the modern tools and garments he learned to use at the Baraka college, and therefore he had to use many English and Kiswahili terms his mates were not used to, and this caused initially a bit of confusion. On the other hand, during his training at the Baraka college, John learned a lot about the nature and roles of the different kind of bees and about the different products of the bees and the possibilities of use they have.

Much of this knowledge was completely new for his mates, and sometimes it was contrary to traditional beliefs.

The problem was then one of knowledge and consciousness. John's concrete problem was to find a way to explain all this new stuff to his Okiek, often very less educated, collaborators, during the training meetings in the different locations. A choice had to be made: abandoning tradition and adopting *tout court* modern beekeeping methods, or rather trying, with the help of an expert anthropologist, or better, of an ethnolinguist, to help the Okiek community preserving what was good in its tradition, implementing it with modern knowledge and technology?

NECOFA and Manitese discussed the problem with MACODEV and the community elders and the choice was taken: the intervention of an ethnolinguist was very welcome.

I do not describe here the selection process which was committed to Manitese, but finally the choice fell on me. My task as an ethnolinguist was manifold. My first concern, in agreement with my customers, Manitese and NECOFA, as we decided together in a meeting we had in Peschiera del Garda some months before my departure for Kenya, was to find a way to transpose Okiek phonemes in a graphic system understandable to the Okiek, and the second goal was the realization of informative materials (handbooks) in Okiek for the beekeepers who were already involved in the program, or who intended to join it.

Before my arrival in Mariashoni, NECOFA engaged itself in the selection of some Okiek youth, sufficiently educated to be trained in the methods of ethnolinguistics, who were supposed to act as interpreters for me.

The two young Okiek selected demonstrated to be ok, and even if one of them left the project one month later, because of another job he found elsewhere, I am still in touch with the second, Catherine Salim, daughter of the Mariashoni village chief, who is going on working for NECOFA. The day after my arrival in Mariashoni, a community meeting was organized with MACODEV and the elders of the various locations.

Samuel Muhunyu explained my role in the project to everybody.

I asked the permission to visit all the locations of the region, asking questions here and there to understand the Okiek traditional way of handling with bees and honey, explaining to them that my aim was helping them to document and preserve their beekeeping tradition and finally they would have decided how to use the materials I would collect in order to transmit their knowledge to modern and future Okiek beekeepers. The reaction of people was literally enthusiastic.

I believe that this happened not because of a particular ability from my part in resulting nice to others, but because the community elders saw that the need they had manifested had been taken seriously and cooperant partners were now acting to help them doing things as *they themselves* desired.

At their eyes this was in fact a concrete demonstration that in this synergetic relationship with NECOFA, Manitese and MACODEV they really had the power and the right to take part in the decision making process. Due to this, my work on the field in Mariashoni was very productive.

People were happy to help me and answer to my questions. Many of the elders invited me at their locations to show me traditional tools and techniques, and when we had to meet to discuss particular problems in group, all the elders, even though living some km away from Mariashoni, came to the NECOFA office to give me their contribution in terms of knowledge and traditional visions of things.

Soon, beekeeping became also an excuse to speak of many other traditional issues, and the idea to come back to go on working for the promotion and safeguard of the Okiek traditional culture started to live in my mind.

On my second community meeting, I shared this idea with my customers and hosts.

I proposed to go on working with them, training Catherine in the methods of material culture collection, and trying to study the grammar of their language for the production of a book which could be useful for the future generations.

The Okiek community did not only accept it, but autonomously proposed new fields of intervention, such as the study of oral tradition and the production of a book of tales for children in the school, or the combination of an ethnolinguistic work with the production of educational material in the framework of a health care project for mothers and babies which was then being studied, and so on.

I suddenly started to work on these new issues and before my departure in february 2013, besides the cultural lexicon on beekeeping and honey I had done 46 out of 142 interviews for my sociolinguistic survey (the other 96 were done by Catherine and sent to me via e-mail), I had collected more than 700 words belonging to the domain of

traditional daily life objects and practices, I had done some grammatical investigations, and recorded and analyzed a bunch of folktales.

Now the cooperation with Manitesse continues, I inserted the ethnolinguistic part of the project in the outline of the ATrA program presented in the *postilla* below, financed by the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research (MIUR) in the framework of FIRB 2012, and for the next three years I will go on working on it.

The *case study* I discussed here, demonstrates that today Okiek, through MACODEV and the system of community meetings, are autonomous in the decision making process and the projects promoted in the area following this method are firmly taken in charge by easily *empowered* local operators.

The synergetic and constant dialogue between NECOFA and MACODEV in fact caused the Mariashoni Okiek community to get a sense of dignity for itself and to start participating in the creative process of proposition of future interventions in order to ameliorate their living conditions as well as safeguard and promote their cultural heritage.

I must add here that recently NECOFA and MACODEV assisted the birth of the *Kaprop Cultural Centre*, ruled by a cooperative of Okiek women trying to preserve their ancient way of life (with the reconstruction of traditional huts, cooking tools, fur clothes, honey bags and containers, but also dances and songs).

After the success of my cooperation as an ethnolinguist in the beekeeping project and the very interesting cultural dimension it has assumed, the decision has been taken to improve seriously the *Kaprop Cultural Centre* and now NECOFA and MACODEV are thinking of the future, envisaging even the building of a hostel for *slow tourists* in Mariashoni.

CONCLUSIONS

The Ashanti Sankofa teaches that a society cannot make any progress if it is not able to value what it inherited from its forefathers.

People have to struggle to go ahead, and their past should be kept in their minds and hearts as a treasure to be safeguarded, without becoming a chain impeding them to move.

You can understand where to go, only when you have a clear idea of where you come from.

Too many projects of cooperation to development in poor countries until now have ignored this important issue, trying to make people jump from tradition to modernity without taking enough time and spending enough energies to make the point with indigenous people, before changing their habits, behaviors, ways of doing things and values.

Too many projects have been imposed from outside and people had only the sad choice to be subjected to them or to refuse them.

Real *empowerment* cannot be obtained *during* the realization of a project on the field. The premises for it must be posed *before* any step on the field. People must be conscious of the meaning and aims of an intervention coming from abroad and thought for their sake. They must be put in the condition to understand its usefulness and be engaged in its promotion. They must feel actors and not victims of cooperative projects.

Even when a cooperative project has a very technical objective, as it was the case of the maternity clinic in the village of Farabako in Mali, or of beekeeping among the Okiek of Kenya, *human sciences* in general can be a useful tool to get to the point.

Whatever the issue, disciplines such as archaeology, history, anthropology, ethnology and linguistics can do a lot to suggest Western partners how to behave with their local counterpart, which are their values and modalities of relationship within their group and outside of it, in gender marked exchanges or in social hierarchies once on the field.

Valuing in an adequate way local traditions and culture and the history of the people we are going to work with, is a way to show them respect, a manner to tell them indirectly that they have the right, and the duty as well, to express their idea, to be *agents* also in the first phases of a cooperative project, which should always be designed together with those who live since generations on the field we are going to invest in.

Once we apply this simple rule and accept to be for a while just *learners* instead of *teachers* in a new environment, we can be sure that our project would gain a lot from the dialogue with our interlocutors and local partners.

It can gain so much that it can be extended as to reach a dimension of which at a first sight we would never have thought of.

I think that the two examples I brought here, the Mande case reported by Holten and the Okiek one I am personally involved in, can be considered a demonstration of what I have tried to explain so far.

Postilla

Horizon 2020 and the ambition of creating inclusive, innovative and safe societies. The gamble of ATrA.

Horizon 2020 is the new EU program for Research and Innovation. On its website it is defined as “the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global

competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020 with an €80 billion budget, the EU's new programme for research and innovation is part of the drive to create new growth and jobs in Europe"⁵.

Its aims should thus be merely financial and its attention focussed only on the EU countries and maybe on those international partners the EU considers central to its economic growth. The EU vision is however luckily much wider. The EU, of course, is not an isolated area in the globe and we are aware that everything that happens, in terms of climate change, global pollution, societal insecurity and health or demographic crisis has its repercussion on the whole world. Therefore, as the EU website says, "International cooperation will be an important cross-cutting priority of Horizon 2020"⁶.

This EU strategic priority is well understandable in a global perspective, and far from being just a void assumption, concrete initiatives, like for example the granting of funds for research projects in line with the objectives of Horizon 2020 to National Ministries of Education, Universities and Research, has already taken place in order to reach the goal.

In detail, the third priority of Horizon 2020, very closely related to the main issues of cooperation in developing countries, is that of coping with what they call the current Challenges of Society, which means studying possible solutions to problems like sanity, demographic changes and wellness (point 1 of the program), or alimentary security and sustainable farming (point 2) or even the creation of inclusive, innovative and safe societies (point 6).

All these factors, which mainly interest poor countries, represent key issues for the political and demographic stability of entire regions, for example in Africa, most times rich in raw materials, minerals and metal reserves. The solution of these problems, far from being only a matter of Human Rights' recognition, becomes also a question of (possible future) business.

Be it as it may, the EU interest in these kind of problems represents a first step towards the promotion of civil, human and cultural rights among many peoples who, until now, have always been ignored.

But the mission is not so easy.

The goal of building inclusive, innovative and safe societies, for example, cannot be reached if not passing through a correct, serious and respectful study of all the ethnic, cultural and linguistic parts of the human mosaic sharing one and the same territory and most times struggling for the same resources in terms of water, food and infrastructures.

This involves the eternal problem of identity constitution, shaping, reshaping and negotiation, in a game whose factors are always multiple choices represented by the different and always changing cultural, traditional and imported habits and values making up a people's peculiar heritage and representing those core traits of a culture for which one can decide to die.

It is in this context that the 3 years project "ATrA - linguistic and cultural zones of transition in Africa", financed by the EU through the MIUR (Italian Ministry of Universities and Research) in the framework of FIRB 2012, of which I am the Principal Investigator and which involves the Universities of Trieste, Torino and L'Orientale of Naples, with its mixed team of ethnolinguists, archaeologists, anthropologists and historians, has been launched.

Starting from the study of ancient and modern situations, mainly in the Horn of Africa, ATrA's aim is trying to offer an interpretation grid, valid also in different contexts, for all those phenomena which, from antiquity to our time, have been and still are characteristic of those melted areas where different peoples, cultures, languages and traditions get in contact, creating tensions and instability resulting too often in civil rebellion, genocides or civil suppressions.

Also in this case, I firmly believe that only the knowledge of the past and present ways of being human in a determined context can be at the basis of a significant dialogue. Only through a sane exchange of opinions and the true will to reach a common point, negotiating what can be negotiated, can bring to the realization of a pacific, even not idillic, cohabitation.

The gamble of ATrA is thus to give to those peoples living in such chaotic contexts the right tools to try to understand each other. We hope to give the start to a virtuous cycle in which the correct knowledge and recognition of the identity, history and culture of all the peoples living in an area of transition can be the first step towards reciprocal acceptance and mutual respect for the sake of a higher value than ethnical superiority, which is a peaceful and harmonious relationship of neighborhood.

The ethnolinguistic study among the Okiek of Kenya will continue, for the next three years, in the framework of this program, always in collaboration with NECOFA, Manitese and MACODEV.

NOMENCLATURE

NECOFA	Network for Ecofarming in Africa
MACODEV	Mariashoni Community Development Programme
ATrA	Aree di Transizione Linguistiche e Culturali in Africa (<i>Linguistic and Cultural zones of transition in Africa</i>)
EU	European Union

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020 viewed on 08/21/2013.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

MIUR Ministero Italiano dell'Università e della Ricerca (*Italian Ministry of Universities and Research*)
FIRB Futuro in Ricerca

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STRATEGIES OF LAND EXPLOITATION AND MANAGEMENT IN THE AREA OF AKSUM (NORTHERN ETHIOPIA) BETWEEN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM BC AND THE FIRST MILLENNIUM AD

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ABSTRACT

Northern Ethiopian highlands, like most of the country and the whole Horn of Africa, have always been perceived as low-productivity regions with very fragile ecosystems, where local communities, often relying on a traditional ox-plough agriculture, are continuously exposed to the threat of drought, famine and starvation because of environmental and social factors.

This paper intends to contribute to the reconstruction of the long-term dynamics of human-environmental interactions in these regions by analyzing how agricultural land was managed, exploited and manipulated and how ancient farming communities faced environmental degradation phenomena like soil impoverishment and erosion. The study will focus on the area of Aksum, an important historical centre located in the region of Tigray, northern Ethiopia, which emerged between the 1st millennium BC and the 1st millennium AD as the capital city of a vast kingdom. Agriculture in Aksumite history is commonly regarded as a system in which problems of soil-exhaustion are linked to land clearance and population increase, and the intensification of agricultural resources' exploitation has long been considered the trigger for both Aksum's rise and decline. Nevertheless, archaeological and paleoagricultural investigations recently conducted in the area significantly clash with this model, suggesting that even during the periods of greatest extent of Aksumite kingdom the erosion rate was relatively low, proving the effectiveness of Aksumite farming strategies in managing and maintaining the soil. This unresolved debate is a useful spur to research, as understanding ancient farming systems may facilitate the design of future strategies for sustainable land-use.

INTRODUCTION

The northern regions of Ethiopian highlands have, for many years, been perceived as low-productivity areas characterised by extremely fragile ecosystems where climatic fluctuations and/or conflicts among ethnic groups or polities periodically resulted in severe phenomena of environmental, social, and economic deterioration. Episodic events or long-enduring processes acting at local and regional scales, have threatened local communities with chronic drought, famine, and starvation. Land-use and land-management strategies and their environmental, economical and social consequences are therefore issues of great significance for present Ethiopia, as 85% of the country's economy is based on agriculture practiced with traditional techniques and equipment. In particular, soil erosion processes are considered a major factor heavily affecting rural ecosystems.

This paper will describe the results of over ten years of combined archaeological and paleoenvironmental studies conducted in the area of Aksum (Tigray, northern Ethiopia) by the University of Naples "L'Orientale"¹ in collaboration with geologists, geoarchaeologists and soil scientists from Boston University (USA), University of Cambridge (UK), University of Florence and University of Ferrara (Italy), and aimed at investigating ancient strategies of manipulation and exploitation of the territory and at reconstructing long-term dynamics of human-environment interaction in this area, also in the light of present phenomena of environmental degradation and soil erosion processes.

The basic theoretical assumption is that archaeology can give a significant contribution to larger debates on present environmental degradation and on the role played by human communities in ecological dynamics by providing evidence about long-term ecological processes and on their temporal nature. Archaeologists have developed very sophisticated procedures to recover, analyse and explain, by means of cultural materials, the traces left by human actions on a specific territory and to organize such evidence in spatial-temporal sequences with century scale resolution for the Late Holocene.

The research adopted a multidisciplinary approach that integrated innovative methodologies with well established

¹ The Italian Archaeological Expedition at Aksum of the University of Naples "L'Orientale" conducts archaeological researches in the area of Aksum since the early nineteen-nineties. From 1993 to 2003 has conducted archaeological investigations on the hilltop and northern slopes of Bieta Giyorgis hill in collaboration with the Boston University (co-directors Rodolfo Fattovich and Kathryn A. Bard). Between 2004 and 2009 has investigated the plain to the north of Aksum and the eastern, western and southern slopes of Bieta Giyorgis (director Rodolfo Fattovich). Since 2010 it conducts research at the pre-Aksumite site of Seglamen, ca. 12 km to the SW of Aksum (director Rodolfo Fattovich).

procedures. Archaeological, geoarchaeological, geological and ethno-historical investigations generated site-specific datasets necessary to model the ancient landscape of the area, and provided new perspectives for analyzing the causes and rates of ancient erosion dynamics, and the evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of ancient strategies adopted by rural communities to face this problem. Archaeological investigations included the systematic, complete-coverage survey of the area of Aksum [1] in order to document the distribution of archaeological evidence within the region and to reconstruct the ancient settlement pattern. Geoarchaeological, geological and pedological investigations represented a basic component of the project as they provided paleoenvironmental evidence for a more detailed correlation between natural and cultural phenomena. Archaeological, geological, and geoarchaeological evidence were spatially positioned using GPS and related information have been uploaded, through geo-referencing, in a Geographical Information System and analysed through the implementation of thematic maps, statistical and spatial analysis, Remote Sensing and 3D modelling. Ethno-historical researches and enquiries were conducted to get information from written historical sources and local oral traditions about local and regional environmental changes, land-use and land-management strategies, and demographic pressure. In particular, ancient Ethiopian texts, reports by European travellers who visited the country since the 15th century and recent data published by International Agencies were scrutinised. Finally, information about traditional infrastructures has been recorded as a first step towards possible future strategies of protection and promotion of traditional knowledge as an important aspect of the cultural heritage.

SOIL EROSION AND ANCIENT HUMAN COMMUNITIES: NEW EVIDENCE FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALEOENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

The city of Aksum is located in Tigray, the northernmost region of Ethiopian highlands (Fig. 1), at an average altitude of about 2,200 m asl, in an alluvial plain situated at the hub of a radiating network of river valleys linking the area with the surrounding regions. The plain is dominated in the centre by two prominent hills, Bieta Giyorgis and May Qoho while a ring of surrounding hills forms the natural boundary of the territory (Fig. 2). The geological and lithological variety of the area results in a mosaic of soils with a different degree of productivity [2].

The area is characterized by a tropical climate with an average annual temperature between 15° C and 20° C, and by highly seasonal rainfall, mainly concentrated between June and September. In moist periods, a second rainfall may occur between March and May. Paleoenvironmental studies suggest that, during the Holocene, this region experienced an alternation of wet and dry periods with an evolution towards more arid climatic conditions from 1000 AD [3][4][5][6][7].

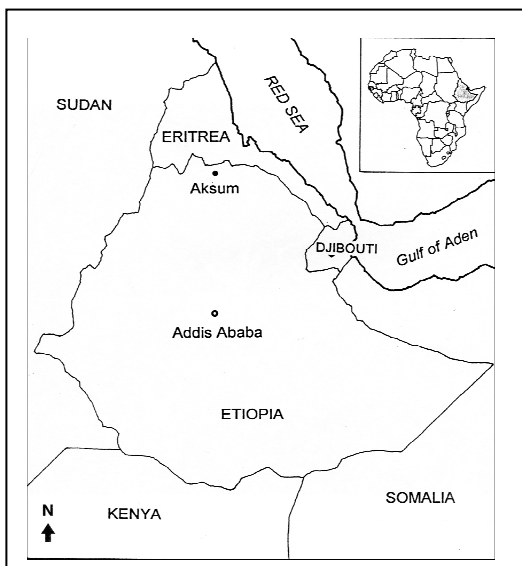


Fig. 1 – Location of the study-area.

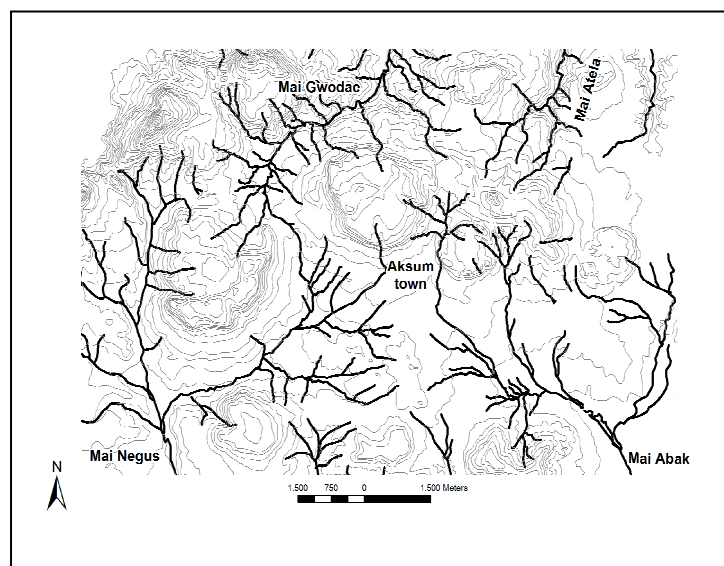


Fig. 2 – The plain of Aksum with major river valleys.

The vegetation pattern is characterized by perennial herbaceous plants, thickets of bushes and scattered, medium-height trees, including acacia and African olive. Eucalyptus have been planted since the beginning of the 20th century. Present domestic fauna includes dromedaries, asses, cattle, sheep, goats and poultry, while wild species are mainly represented by hyenas, baboons and a wide variety of endemic and other birds.

From about the 1st century BC, the area of Aksum emerged as the capital of a powerful and vast kingdom directly involved in a long-distance exchange circuit which included the northern Horn of Africa, the Nile Valley, the Mediterranean, Southern Arabia, and the western coastal regions of India [8][9]. Nowadays, Aksum is one of the most important religious centre of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and a very important symbol of Ethiopian cultural identity. Moreover, it is presently one of the major archaeological areas in the country, and is included in the UNESCO

World Heritage Sites List.

Due to its geographical position, the area of Aksum is exposed to severe phenomena of environmental degradation, the whole ecosystem being extremely sensitive to climatic changes. One of the most common forms of landscape degradation occurred in this region is soil erosion. The current model for ecological history of the area of Aksum, and of the whole Tigrean plateau, argues for a progressive increase in land clearance and human impact on the natural environment due to the intensification of agriculture since the 3rd-2nd millennia BC, which ultimately resulted in severe soil impoverishment and erosion processes [3][4][10][7].

On the contrary, recent archaeological, pedological, geomorphological, and paleoagricultural investigations in the area highlighted new and encouraging results concerning the effectiveness of ancient terracing systems and land-management for the conservation/exploitation of the hill slopes and provided significant information on the possible causes of soil depletion and erosion [11][12][13].

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PALEOAGRICULTURAL STUDIES

Research, carried out at a local scale, involved the northern slopes of Bieta Gyorgis hill, an area largely devoted to farm-lands where the present landscape is characterized by scattered isolated rural dwellings or hamlets alternated with cultivated fields. A smaller portion of the total area is given over to grazing while most of the up-slopes is characterised by forests of eucalyptus planted to minimize soil erosion.

Here, as in many other parts of the Tigrean plateau, farming has been practiced along the slopes of the hills since at least the mid-1st millennium BC, by means of a terracing technique which helps to reduce the gradient and improve the drainage of the soil [14][7]. The traditional plough still used in the region is the *maresha*, an “ard plough” drawn by a pair of oxen; it seems to have been introduced in Ethiopia by the 1st millennium BC [15]. The impact of the plough against the stones is frequent, and the stones are consequently scratched (Fig. 3): 1) on the top if rocks are at a lower depth than the tilling depth (8-16 cm), or 2) on the sides if rocks are protruding [11][12]. The occurrence of plough- marks, thus, is a safe evidence for previous cultivation on lands presently cultivated or abandoned.

In the case of Aksum, the finding of large outcropping rocks with ancient plough-marks in the now abandoned area between Enda Gyorgis and Ma Qono, on the northeastern slopes of Bieta Gyorgis hill, allowed reconstruction of ancient cultivation procedures and agricultural terracing systems. Systematic mapping and study of the thicknesses and orientations of the marks suggests that the ancient ploughing procedure was, similarly to present, characterised by concentric progress of the plough from the outer edge of the terraces towards their centres [11][12]. Moreover, as the plough-marks have been found at different levels on the outcropping rocks, these provide a reliable indication of soil erosion rates during the various chronological phases. Chromatic differences in the superficial alterations of the rock (becoming progressively darker as exposure to external pressure and atmospheric agents increases) show that the highest marks are the most ancient while those found lower down are progressively more recent (Fig. 4). Correlations between the heights of plough-marks on the rocks and phases of utilization of the terraces testified by the associated archaeological material, allowed us to estimate the rate of soil erosion that occurred in the area from the Aksumite period up to the present. The study suggests that the level of erosion that occurred in the area during the 1st half of the 1st millennium AD (which is a period of increasing demographic pressure in the area [16][17][18]) is between 1.9 and 4.8 t ha⁻¹ y⁻¹ Tons per hectare per year [11][12].



Fig. 3 – Plough impacting outcropping rocks.



Fig. 4 – Ancient plough-marks on a boulder.²

² Figures 3 and 4 are courtesy of Rossano Ciampalini.

This value, which is much lower than the threshold erosion rate commonly accepted by international soil conservation agencies, shows that ancient strategies of land management and exploitation were effective and that the whole ecosystem was extremely stable. On the contrary, the land reform begun in the early nineteen-seventies during the socialist regime of Menghistu Haile Maryam, which led to the abandonment of the area under examination, caused a significant increase in the rate of soil erosion which sharply accelerated environmental degradation processes. Thus, at least in this area, high demographic pressure and soil exploitation should not be considered the principal cause of soil depletion and erosion. On the contrary, anthropic presence and land-exploitation strategies appear to play a crucial role in preserving the landscape and maintaining environmental stability. Whereas soil erosion and impoverishment seem to be the result of a lack of maintenance of the infrastructures consequent on the abandonment of the area. The relationship between soil erosion and human activity in the Aksum area should therefore be considered in a new perspective, probably nearer to the paradigm “More people less erosion” introduced by Tiffen at the end of the last century [19]. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by modern data according to which the areas worst hit by soil erosion in the Ethiopian highlands are those which are not currently exploited (3.8% of the total) with an erosive intensity of 70 t ha⁻¹ y⁻¹ [20]. Geoarchaeological analysis conducted on exposed paleosoils in the same area confirm that between the 1st millennium BC and the 1st millennium AD the territory was characterised by stable environmental conditions with localised, low-energy erosional episodes [13][18].

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The hypothesis revealed by paleoenvironmental data and ancient plough-marks is supported by the analysis of the ancient settlement patterns in the study-area, particularly, of diachronic changes in the spatial correlations among ancient rural settlements; a method commonly used for measuring anthropic reaction to environmental changes [21]. If, as has been claimed, excessive anthropic pressure degraded the local environment by accelerating soil erosion processes, the people who occupied and exploited the northern slopes of Bieta Giyorgis hill would have been compelled to abandon the degraded portion of their territory and relocate to more productive areas. Such relocation should be archaeologically detectable in the spatial segregation of sites from adjacent chronological periods, by a reduced number of settlements in the degraded area and increased settlements elsewhere. In the absence of erosion or environmental degradation, an economically productive area will be continuously exploited and the distribution of the settlements will remain relatively unchanged. Quantitative analysis and statistical measures of temporal and spatial correlation of residential sites have been employed to evaluate the extent of settlements relocation. Nearest-neighbour (NN) analysis is presented here. The NN coefficient is the ratio of the average distance between the nearest neighbours among a set of points, and the expected average distance if the same number of points were randomly distributed within the same area [22]. Values around 1.0 indicate a random distribution; values greater than 1.0 indicate spatial segregation; values less than 1.0 indicate a concentrated distribution with a high rate of spatial aggregation. In the present study, the coefficient of spatial correlation was correlated with the diachronic changes in the number of settlements recorded in the study area and in the wider Aksum territory.

Diagram 1 shows a spatially aggregated distribution of settlements during the 1st half of the 1st millennium AD with a NN coefficient reaching its lowest value (and thus the peak of spatial aggregation) during the Middle Aksumite period (ca. 350-550 AD, “Aksumita Medio” in the diagram). This apparently confirms the hypothesis obtained from geoarchaeological, paleoagricultural and erosional evidence, that despite intense demographic pressure and constant agricultural exploitation, Aksumite management system effectively minimised soil erosion along the north-eastern slopes of Bieta Giyorgis.

A slight decrease in settlements’ aggregation occurred between the end of the Middle Aksumite period and the Post-Aksumite period (ca. 550-1100 AD, “Post-Aksumita” in the diagram). This phenomenon may have been related to a demographic decrease which affected the entire area of Aksum during this period [17][18][23]. Whatever the cause of this demographic decline, progressive abandonment of the area may have accelerated soil erosion.

Geoarchaeological evidence suggests that, between the 7th and 8th centuries AD, the territory of Aksum conurbation was subjected to severe environmental degradation [3] and that, towards the end of the 1st millennium AD, the entire Tigrean plateau was affected by a period of environmental instability probably due to a phase of greater aridity [6]. The abandonment of areas within this territory may have resulted from the interaction of ecological, economic and/or social nature factors.

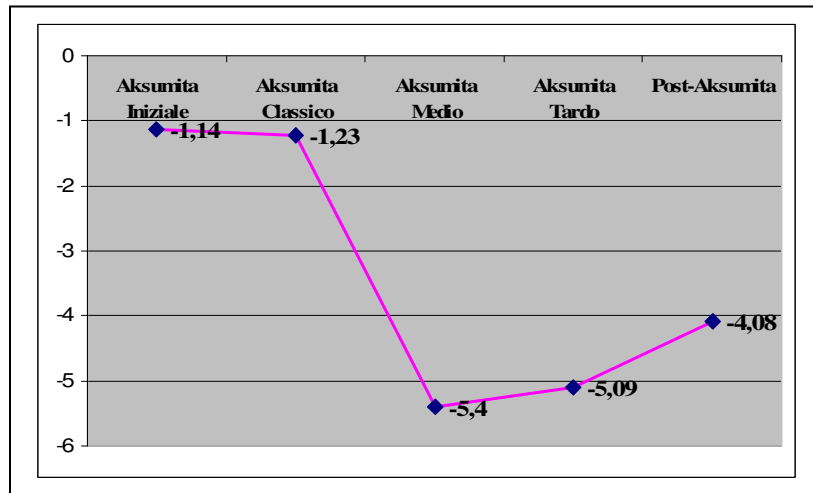


Diagram 1 – NN coefficient in the area of Aksum.

FINAL REMARKS

Although present-day military actions strongly contribute to regional environmental degradation processes by forcing communities to abandon some areas, famines caused by drought, invasions of locusts or epidemics, are to be considered as well. These problems are not limited to recent history. Eastern Africa appears to have been affected by plague at least since the 6th century AD [17][23], when, according to Procopius, the so-called “Justinian Plague” spread from northeastern Africa to the whole of the Mediterranean [24]. Famine on the Tigrean plateau, as recorded in local and foreign chronicles, goes back at least to the 8th-9th century AD, and that the phenomenon has periodically recurred ever since [25]. The consequences of epidemics and famine on farming and on the organisation of the rural communities are well-known from ethnographical observations. As well as the loss of human lives and livestock, famine and epidemics reduce the energy of the farming communities and leads to the destruction of natural resources culminating in weakening social structures and the abandonment of populated areas. This process, which has been extensively studied by anthropologists and historians, is characterized by four phases: a) reduction of consumption; b) temporary migration, generally limited to the head of the family; c) exploitation of natural resources; and d) migration of the entire household [26]. In the most severe cases, the central government uses the mass relocation of entire communities from the areas strongly affected by the disease to less densely populated regions as a long-term solution to the problem of soil depletion and food starvation.

To conclude, the case-study here presented demonstrates that combining archaeological evidence, environmental and historical data, and ethnographical observation permits a long-term reconstruction of human-environmental interplay, the identification of ancient strategies of land exploitation and the investigation of how ancient communities faced environmental degradation. These insights may help to define the trajectories through which the present situation has emerged, to increase our knowledge of the possible causes of present-day environmental problems and, perhaps, to contribute to the design of future strategies for sustainable land-use especially in those areas, like the northern Ethiopian highlands, where many activities of daily life are still practiced by using traditional knowledge and equipment.

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THE CASE OF ZIMBABWE BUSHPUMP LIKE A SOCIO-TECHNICAL NETWORK

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents a case study on the Zimbabwe Bushpump, a manual pump used for water supply in rural areas of Zimbabwe.

Assuming a point of view located, relational and dialogic, through ethnographic analysis of social practices, the analysis develops the concept of "fluidity" to indicate the variability, adaptability and flexibility of the operation of this technological artifact, as well as multiple identities it represents: subject to simplified mechanical, hydraulic system, installed and maintained through the collective participation of the community, but also hygienic intervention for the protection of health and the foundation of the process of nation building.

Through the analysis of the relationships between the technical object and the subjects involved in its design, installation, maintenance and use, we propose a reading of technology interrelated social environment, to demonstrate how social and technological realities are co-emerging from processes and negotiation practices.

The object is described as a collective product, defined by the network of relationships that keep it in place, demonstrating that the fate of a project depends on the resilience of these associations.

In the belief that the meaning of an intervention for development cooperation derives from the ability to take charge of contingencies and local specificities, it is proposed, therefore, the adoption of a normative "travel", adapted and modified to different contexts, or too fluid.

INTRODUCTION

This paper intends to present the contribution to broader thinking on development cooperation and technology transfer as part of a case study done by Marianne de Laet and Annemarie Mol [9], whose goal is to analyze the particular quality of the technological artefact for the use of water resources. The authors, originally engaged in a research project on the path of patents within the countries in the developing world, arrived in Zimbabwe, have the opportunity to appreciate a remarkable piece of technology: the Zimbabwe Bushpump, a volumetric manual pump for uncultivated land that is characterized not only by the rapid spread of its facilities, including the fact that it was never recorded any patent¹.

The supply of water resources in Zimbabwe takes place mainly through four models of water pump, cylinder heads from the Blair Research Laboratory in Harare, which differ in their technical characteristics and use. However, the intent of the study by De Laet and Mol is to formulate a set of theoretical statements using empirical materials - interviews with health professionals, experts in patents and manufacturers of pumps, visits to factories and research institutes government - about the nature of the technical object and its relations with the subjects and local practices.

The Zimbabwe Bushpump is the flagship of a policy of intervention that can be considered successful. First, because it effectively allows to make available clean water to rural areas of the country thus contributing to the health of the nation. Its mechanics has become the standard in the field of government water systems and its image is imprinted on the national currency. Its use is also being promoted by UNICEF in other countries such as Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland. However, as discussed by the authors of the research, the fact that a pump is or is not good depends on something more of the technical characteristics.

In this way, the study of Zimbabwe Bushpump is, in the opinion of the writer, relevant to development cooperation as the issue of technology transfer also involves the question of the "nature" of technology². So, if in the conventional formulations the nature of the technical object is considered to be stable and fixed, this assumption is questioned here by using the metaphor of the "fluidity". Developing the theme of the fluidity of the object, in fact, the authors intend to offer a perspective opposed to analytical research of a specific nature, fixed and specific technology, ontologically distinct from the context in which it's inserted.

Through ethnographic investigation of the organization of social activities, able to take into account the multitude

¹ The materials of the search are collected in an essay originally published by the authors in the journal *Social Studies of Science*, April 2000. A revised version is published in Italy on the book by Alvise Mattozzi, *The sense of technical objects*, 2006 Meltemi.

² The question of the "nature of technology" is discussed by historians and sociologists of science and technology with the intention of detecting the critical importance of the social dimension in techno-scientific processes, including the action in the analysis of relevant social groups in the crystallization the technical artifacts. For a first review it against Bijker, Huhhes, Pinch, edited, *The Social Construction of Technological Systems*, 1987 Cambridge, MIT. Press.

of stakeholders around the object, is offered a detailed description of the tests, the successes and failures of the design, management and use of this particular manual pump for the water supply. The thesis of fluid is carried out emphasizing the collective nature, distributed and negotiated the technical object and showing that, although the Zimbabwe Bushpump is visibly a solid object and mechanical in nature, nevertheless “*its borders, rather than being clearly defined and stable, are vague and constantly moving*” [9: 157].

HOW TO DEFINE THE ZIMBABWE BUSHPUMP? THE FLUIDITY OF BOUNDARIES

In Zimbabwe, water is scarce and the issue of water supply is one of the most critical for the development of the country. In many areas the Bushpump existed for more than half a century and its spread has been encouraged and supported by the programs of government policy for water resources. The current model, the type "B" produced by V & W Engineering in Harare under the charge of Dr. design. Peter Morgan, is therefore the result of improvement practices of an old manual water pump subjected to numerous adaptations and changes over time.

This mutability and variability are a first element to support the view of the fluidity of the object pursued by the authors in the attempt to analyze the specific qualities of this pump and its field of action.

Designed to be a simple object and durable, the Bushpump is composed of several parts. Those visible, above ground level, and those not visible, relative to the hydraulic system underground. But, as we will see, the Zimbabwe Bushpump is part inside a socio-technical network much larger, representing a node in a loop composed of multiple heterogeneous elements interconnected.

The current model offers above to view a harmonious design and inviting, able to convey messages of meaning: a blue color, which evokes the purity of water that provides a compact and essential that invites you to a simple to use. The unit water discharge - the upper part of the well - is formed from a base of steel bolted to the frame plate to protect the hole in the ground and by a lever, a wooden body fixed in a flexible manner to the pump body. The mechanical components are made of steel and wood to increase the durability of the object and at the same time make it a cheap product.

The pipeline slopes, composed of a series of technical elements functional to the instrument for pumping water from the soil and bring it to the surface, however, remains invisible since placed under the ground level. Here, in the place chosen, following the drilling of an artesian well, we proceed to install the hydraulic components: cylinder, piston, valves, bars lifts.

The borders which define the Zimbabwe Bushpump are however not limited to the aesthetic shape that characterizes it. The Bushpump is a technology with the aim of safeguarding and raising the level of health of the population. It does not just make itself available as a source of water that is otherwise inaccessible, it becomes a source of clean water, healthy. To ensure the hygiene and health of the water, a series of preliminary works are to be made: the installation of a frame that ensures the impermeability of the well to pollutants and sealing of the pump to prevent water poured on the surface.

So, for the pump to be defined as such and provide clean water to rural areas where it is located must be assembled and installed correctly. For this reason, a detailed set of instructions, illustrating the various components and describe the stages of construction - by carrying out preliminary work to put into use the object - accompany the transfer on-site pump distributed by V & W Engineering. A distinctive feature of this paper is that both the preliminary works that the installation and commissioning of the Bushpump are usually made by future users, local village to which it is addressed. Not only that. The same mechanism of hole drilling for water used, the rig manual Vonder product is made in the same factory where the Bushpump, is designed to be operated on a Community basis. The total drilling with the participation of the village community, where men sit on the axis of the drill to deepen while women pushing, turning around and punching the ground up to the proper depth.

Is through this involvement, this collective participation that the community appropriates the object and builds trust necessary for its maintenance³.

The involvement of the village, the authors remind us of bringing the views of technical experts interviewed, it is an essential feature for both the preliminary works and for the act of drilling for proper installation, operation and proper maintenance of the pump. In addition, in the person of the legitimate "nganga" the water diviner, the village contributes to the choice of site. So, unlike other development programs in which the excavations are conducted by NGOs and governments determined to maintain decision-making power on Intervention and implemented solely on the basis of geological surveys, in the instruction manual mentioned above is clearly stated the importance consultation of local water diviners to decide the location of the water outlet hole.

Shared ownership and collective responsibility are essential characteristics of Zimbabwe Bushpump. It is considered much more efficient as more capable of uniting people around him, to become a node in a larger network involving the social collectivity, a socio-technical network.

This technical artifact is part of a concrete political intervention that consists of a technology suitable for the

³ The instruction manual states as the pump is designed so that the villagers can play by yourself maintenance [26]. The importance of taking into consideration the culture of the local community was reiterated on several occasions especially in reference to the need for consulting the "nganga" or water diviner.

purpose and placed at the service of the community, which reinforces the cohesion, improves health and helps to overcome the inequality on the division between those who, in population has access to water and who is excluded. This orientation has gradually become part of the national water policy and Zimbabwe Bushpump has become the standard model chosen by the government program in order to achieve water infrastructure capable of integrating the various village communities in the nation. Designed and built locally produced materials available in the country and incorporated into the local community, the boundaries of the pump have become those of a whole nation⁴. Zimbabwe is the only African country to produce its own pump.

The Zimbabwe Bushpump is defined by a multiplicity of different frames in connection between them. Therefore, to offer a definition, reference should be made to the fluidity of its multiple boundaries: it is a mechanism for the extraction of water, a hydraulic technique, but also a device for the maintenance of hygiene and public health. Its essential parts, besides the technical features, appear to be the mechanism and procedure for drilling, instructions to be followed during installation and maintenance, as well as the village community to which the entire process.

HOW DOES ZIMBABWE BUSHPUMP? THE QUESTION OF AGENCY

Interestingly, the authors, describe in the fluidity of Zimbabwe Bushpump, articulate their text in symmetrical parts, where a first section dedicated to the pump as an argument in key physical-mechanical, sanitary and hydraulic national policies, useful in clarifying the definitional aspects of the object, corresponding to a next portion, which describes the operation, in which each of the preceding arguments is considered as a field in which the distinction between subject and object becomes fluid, revealing the continuous adaptations and associations between the technical and the social.

Since it is an effective technology to Zimbabwe Bushpump acts, works and continues to do so. The authors report the impressions of Dr. Morgan that, during the monitoring visits, proves surprised by the unexpected adaptability of the pump, which is able to operate even with defective or missing parts. The pumps, in fact, are not identical to how they are delivered, they are turned "on site" at the way in which users will repair the parts and they fit mechanisms. Worn gaskets and bolts skipped do not affect much on the operation of the pump that is wonderfully effective due to the repair with other materials produced by the ingenuity of the users of the village. The elasticity and flexibility of which is equipped with this technology allows so to adapt and run longer.

From the hydraulic point of view, the Bushpump reveals an unexpected fluidity compared to other models of water pumps. This is related to the ease of repair of those items which, although installed under the hole of the pit, have been progressively made less rigid and easily removable. The possibility of removing the lower parts of the device without having to remove the entire pump and thus risk of damage, and on-site repair or replace damaged parts without the need for skilled workers, gives the double benefit of reducing the costs and involve the community room that can be responsible for the repair. The changes made over time to the hydraulic components that make it up - pipeline lifts wider and thinner bars - increasing the fluidity and smoothness of the connections between these, make Bushpump, perhaps an object less rigid and less solid, but still more serviceable, then better in the long run.

A spring technology (mechanical repair, hydraulic components easier to replace) and permeable to the action of users proves to be able to adapt better and more effective to the contingencies of daily living in which it is located to act: through a more fluid design changes and the Bushpump turns constantly but the efficiency can remain unchanged.

What to say, however, about the effectiveness with respect to health? Recall that the goal is to supply Bushpump rural areas of pure water, clean and pristine. The hygienic aspect is an integral part of the intervention of Bushpump in Zimbabwe and that is what makes it attractive also for other parts of Africa. To answer this question, we must mention the existence of international quality standards for water - prescribed by the International Reference Centre for Community Water Supply and Sanitation - with which to make comparisons, but it is necessary above all to admit that the operations of measurement and comparison with these universal standards are difficult to apply in contexts such as Zimbabwe. The conditions observed at a well can easily vary over time and are never the same as found in other wells. However, health issues require to be addressed in practice by comparing concrete alternatives. It is thus that it is not appropriate to try to establish if the Bushpump safeguard the health on the basis of a universal standard, fixed once and for all. Would, if anything, more fluid required standards, able to collect the variability of concrete local situations. As for the mechanism for producing health the pump works in different ways and with varying degrees of success: between efficiency and inefficiency, between security and infectious contamination "*there are many intermediate situations, [...] we are once again in front of smooth transition*". [9: 192].

The criteria for the success of a technology, or more generally of a development project, cannot be clearly defined in advance. If the Bushpump Zimbabwe has a multiplicity of fluid boundaries, the evaluation of those activities should be equally smooth. In this way, there are also good reasons to think that a policy intervention more flexible, fluid and editable, you may be better able to deal with local contingencies. The Bushpump needs to function, and to continue to do so, to gather around him a community, usually represented by the village to take care of it. If this condition does not occur, if the reference group of the government program is too small or too large, the pump may cease to act altogether.

⁴ In 1987, the National Action Committee of the Government of Zimbabwe decided to standardize hand pumps as part of the water distribution in rural areas.

But even if unused, the Bushpump, thanks again to the fluidity that is attached, can be transferred to some other place, in the course of work by changing the organizational unit of reference of the intervention. In certain cases, passing by the size of the village to that of the extended family, for example, it is possible to put the pump in the condition of most interest relevant actors, and then to continue to function.

In a sense, from the description of the authors, the Zimbabwe Bushpump is better understood when represented as a project and not as an object in itself, separate from the context in which it is immersed. The object-pump actually exists at a given time t , as if it were a still image in the film project. But it is never equal to itself, acting in continuing association with the practices of other actors forming a network socio-material. The pump acts on the social environment, incorporating it and modifying it, in the same way as the environment exerts an action in more ways than one on the pump. Rather than an object by rigid boundaries and well-defined, radically distinct from the machinations of relationships that involve, it is perhaps more appropriate to think the Bushpump as a hybrid socio-technical system, an assemblage of material and social elements together, the crossroads of the dynamic interconnections that define the existence at any given time. From this point of view, assuming therefore the fluidity as a key and as a characteristic inherent to the technology itself, it is reasonable to say that the pump works, has a role in the construction of social reality, changing, and this is simultaneously changed because his competence is evident from the performance of which in turn is capable.

STS AND ANTHROPOLOGY COMPARED: A STANDARD OF "TRAVEL"

The study by de Laet and Moll on Zimbabwe Bushpump exemplifies the importance of the contribution of human and social sciences can offer to the reflection on development cooperation and technology transfer, in the belief that enlarged perspective, able to take into account the relationships and local specificities involved in a project, is necessary for the success of the intervention.

The argument put forward by the authors differs from traditional analysis technology, which explain the effectiveness of an artifact exclusively through its own intrinsic characteristics, and deliver a linear image of technological innovation, the introduction of which necessarily follows the transformation of 'social environment (if able to comply with it). In traditional approaches, technology is seen as a company that stands for quality and logical that ignore the social context [23] and that spreads in a linear and diffusive, or evolutionary, such as an inertial motion of techniques aimed towards the success.

The study of Bushpump shows us a different story, in which technological development is part of the social process, and in which technical change and social change are read as two sides of the same coin. Describes a path multilinear innovation where the social groups concerned contribute to the stabilization of the artefact through a complex trading practice between them and with the artifact itself. The methodological strategy and analytics with which we presented this case study reveals an empirical approach, contextual, and centered on a problem spatio-temporally located. The authors refuse to explain the fate of the project by invoking mechanisms of "technical necessity". These factors need to be studied in their concreteness and tangibility.

By postulating a radical relationality, it seems appropriate to re-establish the reflection on Bushpump analysis offered by the so-called "French school" of STS [5]. With this wording, which can be read as Science and Technology Studies, or as a Science, Technology and Society, it implies an approach that comes in opposition to the minimalist way, deterministic and utilitarian technology, in the name of a vision capable of asserting the character proceedings, collective negotiation and socio-technical innovation.

According to the assumption that objects have a role in the construction of social reality, as they are socially constructed by practices that they help to establish [17], the Bushpump is not evaluated in terms of utilitarian and functional, represented as a medium or because its social impact. It can be rather defined as an "actant" (Greimas & Courtes, 1979), a term borrowed from semiotics to refer to any entity that has an active role in defining the situation, is amended by amending and relationships that develop around it.

In an attempt to demonstrate how social and technological realities are co-emergent processes and trading practices, the technical artifact is taken as a collective product, defined by the network of relationships that keep it in place. In this sense, the fate of a project depends on the tightness of these associations. If the network of associations for any reason is not maintained, if the project is not open the necessary negotiations and changes about its status of objectivity, it's not quite fluid and flexible, then its reality is less and the operation fails.

In this way the Bushpump can be described following the route of the associations - between objects and subjects that compose it-and it can continue to exist if and only if it is proved capable of coagulating this association. In fact, remember that the success of an intervention depends on the installation of the pump, rather than the pump itself, its maintenance program, which in turn depends on the community of which is to run it. The Bushpump needs of a community that you take care of the maintenance and at the same time helps to establish this community. It is through development projects such as the one that includes the Bushpump Zimbabwe, which the local authority assumes consistency reassert itself as a community, attributing the material properties of the object and acquiring equipment that becomes part of its social order.

The Zimbabwe Bushpump successful, as a source of water, the guarantor of health, community builder, builder of a nation, as a collective instrument. The difference between a good and a bad technology based on the collaborative

effort then common.

Unlike traditional studies on technology that see the individual genius the origin of technological innovation that then spreads to the rest of society, postulating a kind of force of inertia to which the artifacts will propagate by virtue of their efficiency outside of their production context hampered or incorporated in different social contexts⁵. The Bushpump is described rather as a fluid project engineering collective, result of an evolution in time, whose realization and efficiency-and therefore also its transferability-depend on the degree of involvement of users. This, as we have seen, is locally developed and is in the public domain, belonging to the community that runs it.

The authors remind us that the users do not pay the right to use it as it was not expected it to any patent. Dr. Morgan who also has a lot of work to improve the Zimbabwe Bushpump, so it can be considered the father of type B, this has never claimed authorship because the pump is not the result of a single man, but of a collective action distributed which depends on the involvement of other stakeholders. So, leaving the control center, even its builder appears fluid, "*dissolved in the various areas of which he himself and the pump are part*" [9: 201].

There is an actor, not even the most brilliant engineer who can be referred to as the inventor of the Bushpump. All actors have a role in the collective work and, in particular, absorption by the artifact of forms and tasks from trading [22].

Highlighting the fluid nature of this technical object and the path contingent and socially co-constructed technological development, the authors are developing an anthropological model applied to the technique, with ethnographic gaze, joint analyzes the evolution of technology and society, mending context and content into a single fabric, assembly socio-technical system. In this case, then, the pump represents the social bond and material. The Zimbabwe Bushpump technology is responsible for building a nation and at the same time Zimbabwe as a nation is the pump manufacturer since it oversees its facilities: "*this pump helps to build Zimbabwe Zimbabwe to the extent that builds*" [9: 178].

The technology is a social product, but at the same time, the social context is produced by technology. By virtue of this process of mutual definition between technology and society is eliminated any causal hierarchy, so that artifact and social environment are seen as products, however, unstable and continually renegotiated, a network of associations between entities heterogeneous human and non-human, technical and cultural (materials, individuals, communities, state, health policy and development).

Underlining the interconnections between subject and world, technology and culture, through the notion of fluidity is highlighted, on the one hand the flexibility of the definition of the pump and the variability of its perimeter, on the other the contribution of this object in the shape the world of social relations. In the face of such complexity of social life, the Zimbabwe Bushpump, seen in this light, offers, if not the precise criteria for a technology development project, at least one method of observation that, through a sort of "estrangement anthropological, "in which the participant observer puts what is given in brackets for granted by his own culture, may prove to be able to grasp the specificities and both technical and cultural nuances of the actors involved, human and technical resources.

For these reasons, instead of an analysis that radically distinguishes the nature of an object by the recipients of an intervention, it is preferred to read the history of Bushpump as a case of collaboration between technology and society in a continuum of changes that define fluid both. Not that it was dashed a generalized idea of universally valid normative able to state that the principles of this development project are automatically transferable elsewhere. There was even recommended the adoption of a culturalist approach closely and pluralistic, founded an epistemology of points of view capable of taking into account the multiplicity of values and interests at stake, this because the same points of view are not stable defined from the outset, but tend to change the present circumstances and to be articulated in different ways in the course of the project.

In the name of non-hegemonic anthropology, the lesson that can be drawn from this story is to adopt a standard of so-called "travel", fluid and adaptable to different circumstances, be able to grasp the network of relationships that involve objects and associated subjects, technologies and human groups that interact. The success of a particular artifact cannot be used to explain the goodness of that process determined its character as a good practice, but we need to compete with the collective processes and hybrid production and articulation of socio-technical devices.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it was considered useful to present the case study of Zimbabwe Bushpump as through the metaphor of fluidity we have tried to do justice to the many areas of society called into question by a development project that has made the foundation of a particular technology social bond, a node in the network of relationships which, thanks to it, making it more durable stabilize the whole association. It is as if the feature and the very notion of fluidity conceded almost paradoxically a surplus of force capable of consolidating the socio-technical assembly. Through this reading you are considered the many aspects that make the Bushpump a fluid technology. In fact, this item is not uniquely defined by its technical characteristics, but is equipped with fluid boundaries consist of multiple identities: one mechanical

⁵ This is the so-called "diffusion model" for the interpretation of technological innovation. In such a model, which maintains separate technical fields from the social, the analysis is based on a principle of causality of the former over the latter, so that the successes are attributable to the intrinsic characteristics of an object and failures are reported to the lack of adaptation of 'social environment.

object, but also the hydraulic system to safeguard the health, installed and maintained by the community of users and around which constitutes the entire nation.

The fluidity of Bushpump is read primarily as variability over time. Its evolution shows that the object has its own historicity, then variable ontology that draws a range of processing capabilities. Moreover, fluidity becomes synonymous with flexibility and elasticity of sealing of the technical characteristics of the object, it indicates the high degree of adaptability and repairability obtainable with maintenance. Incorporating the possibility of its own break down, Bushpump appear to be sufficiently malleable and durable in the long term.

Another aspect related to the fluidity of this technology is that the relative response to its success or failure is a matter of degree. You cannot determine if the object is effective or not using dichotomous responses, it takes standard fluids, observable in the multiplicity of contexts in which the pump acts (technical, functional, political, health). In this context, a policy of ongoing development capable of modifying its own program of action and to adapt fluidly to local specificities and local contingencies, able to take into account all the elements associated with the network of social relations materials a specific environment, it may prove more fruitful in terms of empowerment and continuity of development over time.

A more fluid intervention, suitable to give space to the methods by which the different actors relate to the object in question, it could be a guarantee of the involvement and empowerment of local actors, on which much of the outcome of the project. In fact, the meaning of an operation for development cooperation, as can be seen from the history of Zimbabwe Bushpump, derives from the ability to take charge of contingencies by a community that, in fact, cooperate for one or more common goals.

The implementation of a technical project escapes an idealized vision of technology and technology transfer that interprets the realization as a mere diffusion of artifacts from individuals. Technological development is not a linear direction, there is always a portmanteau between the project and its implementation, since each device must fit within everyday routines and practices, to be matched with users, who typically change their routine but also change the artifact [6], in varying degrees to the degree of fluidity of the latter. For this reason it was considered useful to refer to Zimbabwe Bushpump not as an object itself, with the force of inertia, but as a socio-technical assembly in which the behaviors of activity differentiate converge, cooperating evolution of a hybrid process of association.

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LANGUAGE USES VS. LANGUAGE POLICY: SOUTH SUDAN AND JUBA ARABIC IN THE POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA

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ABSTRACT

The paper summarizes the language and educational policy of the Republic of South Sudan against the backdrop of a sociolinguistic survey conducted in Juba, South Sudan, in the months of July-August 2013, and aiming at a better understanding of the role, uses and beliefs surrounding the use of Juba Arabic, an Arabic-based pidgincreole widely used in Juba and in a wide part of the newly independent country. The results highlight the fact that, although the government of the newly independent country does not recognize the very existence of Juba Arabic, this is the real lingua franca and the most widely spoken language. In a parallel way, although Arabic, the former official language, is not granted any special role and status, it still acts as the de facto "high variety."

FOREWORD: LANGUAGE IN THE SOUTH SUDAN¹

This is very much the report of a work in progress, and for two different reasons: the first and usual one is the preliminary state of our data, collected in Juba, South Sudan, in July-August 2013. The second, and most important one, is the very undefined and unstable political situation in the South Sudan.

South Sudan is widely known in the general press as the youngest nation-state, having acquired its independence on July 2, 2011. It is formed by the three historical provinces of South Sudan, dating back from the colonial times: the southernmost one, Equatoria, and, to the northwest and northeast respectively, Bahr El Ghazal and Upper Nile. The newly independent state, following various administrative reshuffles during the Sudanese times, is formed by 10 "states:" Western, Central and Eastern Equatoria; Warrap; Jongley; Lakes; Unity; Upper Nile; Western and Upper Bahr El Ghazal.

The linguistic picture is quite complex; *Ethnologue* (<http://www.ethnologue.com>) counts 68 spoken languages and three additional extinct languages. From a classificatory linguistic point of view, most languages in the country belong to the Nilo-Saharan phylum, a minority to the Niger-Congo phylum. From a communicative point of view, it seems safe to say that no single language, local or foreign, is shared by the totality, or even a majority of the population. It is apparent, nevertheless, that some form of Arabic has enjoyed such a role since at least the late 19th century and still is the most widespread medium. Which variety of Arabic is more difficult to say: broadly speaking, one can distinguish between a "simplified" variety of Sudanese Arabic (generally referred to as *árabi al besít*), used in the northern parts of South Sudan (around Malakal) and the West (centered in Wau), and a quite distinct language, usually called Juba Arabic, or, in Juba Arabic itself, *arábi júba*. The latter is traditionally labelled a pidgin, but a better label would be a pidgincreole (as per Bakker 2008) borne out of the contact between Sudanese Arabic and the local languages in the second half of the 19th century (cf. Owens 1985 for a general overview of the genesis of Juba Arabic, as well as Owens 1996 and Tosco and Manfredi 2013 for an overview of Juba Arabic within the Arabic-based pidgins and creoles). It is the status of this variety which was the object of our fieldwork.

The Provisional Constitution of South Sudan does not list each language and ethnic groups. In its Article 6 it states:

All indigenous languages of South Sudan are national languages and shall be respected, developed and promoted.

English shall be the official working language in the Republic of South Sudan, as well as the language of instruction at all levels of education.

On the other hand, the constitution of the single states of South Sudan may flatly contradict the central government's one; e.g., the Interim Constitution of Central Equatoria (hardly known in South Sudan itself) states inter

¹ Fieldwork in South Sudan was made possible by a grant from the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) within the FIRB project "Areas of Linguistics and Cultural Transaction in Africa (*AtRA*). The research was done in partnership with the Department of Arabic of the College of Education at the University of Juba, and in particular its Director, Prof. Siham Osman. We thank her for her assistance in acquiring the entry visa to South Sudan and in making our research possible in the first place. We also thank Claudius Waran Patrick and Sara Bojo Lokudu for their precious help; the Embassy of France and the Ambassador, M. Christian Bader, for their logistic and practical help, and countless other individuals and institutions. All errors and omissions are our exclusive intellectual property.

alia that both ‘English and Arabic shall be the official working languages at all levels of the government of the State as well as languages of Instruction for higher education,’ and that ‘Bari shall be an additional official working language or medium of instruction in Schools at the State level.’

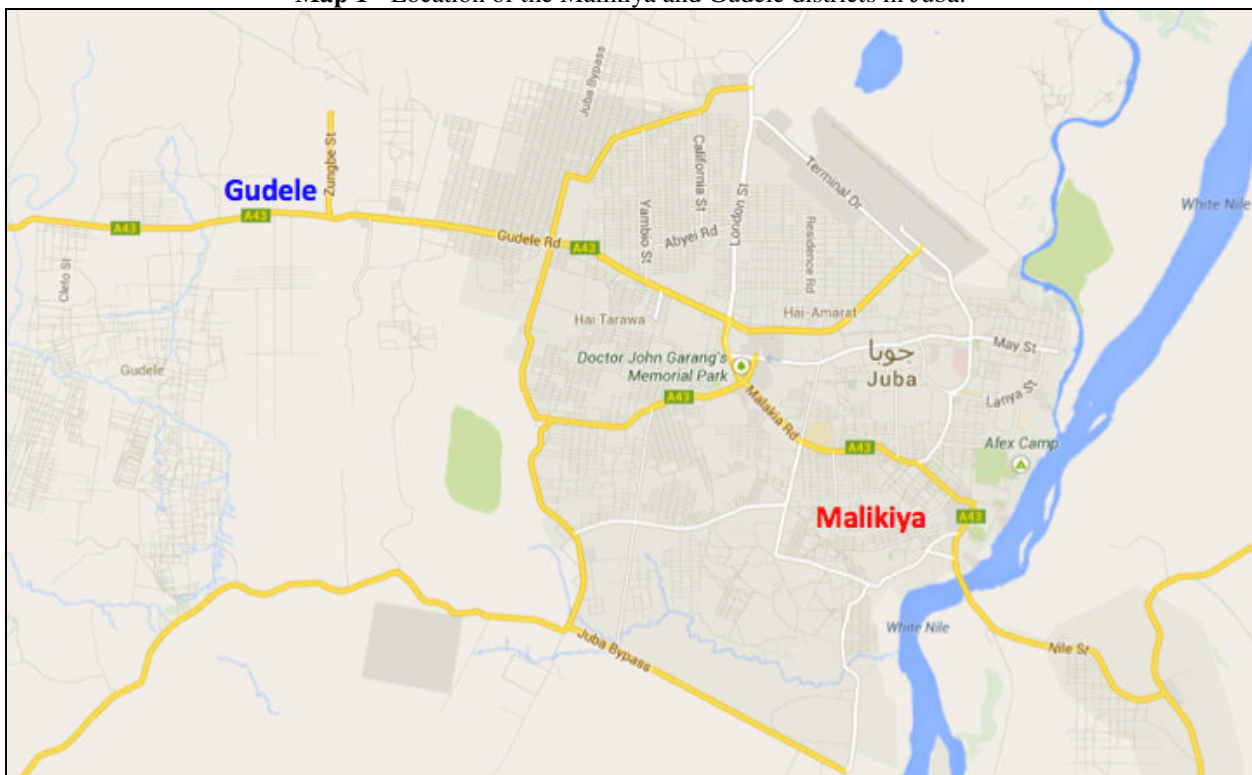
Provided that education in South Sudan is by and large in English, and that locally either Arabic or an indigenous language is used (the latter, in the first years of the primary school), the Government of South Sudan’s educational policy remains unclear, nor did various interviews conducted at the Ministry of Higher Education shed much light: primary education in a number of local languages is planned, but neither the exact number of the involved languages (Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Bari, Zande, and possibly a few others being the most likely candidates, due to the relatively higher number of speakers) nor a timetable were available to us. Most importantly, it is not clear *which* language will be taught *where* and *to who*. Education in the local language is planned for the first three years of the primary school, with English being introduced in the fourth class. If education in the local language will then be dropped altogether, or the language will be taught as a subject, is equally unclear.²

What is clear, on the other hand, is that Arabic is generally ignored at the official level – although, being much better known than English, it is very much in use practically, and probably at any level of government. The same applies to Juba Arabic, the pidgincreole which is the everyday language in the capital, Juba, and in much of the country; things are actually worse, because Juba Arabic is itself an exclusively oral language and it is not standardized at all. What do South Sudanese think about this language? How do they rate its degree of independence vis-à-vis Arabic (its main lexifier)? Even more: how do they use it, when and with who? Our research was aimed at providing a few preliminary answers to these questions.

THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION OF JUBA

The first part of our fieldwork was spent on a qualitative evaluation of the degree of multilingualism and the linguistic uses by means of a sociolinguistic survey. In order to assess the status of Arabic in Juba, two districts were chosen: Malikiya (alternative spelling: Malakiya), the heart of “old Juba,” traditionally inhabited by ethnic Bari and mainly Muslim; and Gudele (alternative spelling: Gudelle), one of the new residential areas extending to the West of Juba town.

Map 1 - Location of the Malikiya and Gudele districts in Juba.



Within each district 50 households were investigated and their members (with the obvious exception of infants) interviewed. This resulted in a total number of 314 interviews (190 Malikiya and 124 in Gudele; 12 additional

² Actually, the present-day South Sudan language policy finds its origins in the guidelines proposed by the Navaisha Comprehensive Peace Agreement (see Abdelhay 2007 for a full discussion).

interviews in Gudele were disregarded for the purposes of the present study). The higher number of interviews in Malikiya stems from a higher ratio of individuals per household (3.79 vs. 2.48).

The data also bring to the fore the very recent and still ongoing inflow of immigration: Juba is a town inhabited by young people (31.5 years in general, and 28.6 years in Gudele), and less than a half of the interviewees were born in town (36.6 of the total), while even in the historical district of Malikiya the percentage reaches 49% only. A grand total of 46% of interviewees settled after 2005 (the year of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which brought to a substantial stop the Sudanese civil war, and paved the way to independence). Within Gudele, the percentage of newcomers rises to 74.1% – three out of four inhabitants.

Tab. 1 - The sample.

	Gudele	Malikiya	Total
Households	50 (+12 not considered)	50	100
Individuals = Ratio	124/50 = 2.48	190/50 = 3.79	314/100 = 3.14
Age (average)	28.6	34.4	31.5
Gender	M 67 (54%) - F 57 (46%)	M 74 (39%) - F 116 (61%)	M 141 (45%) - F 173 (55%)
Length of stay in Juba			
- Born in Juba	22 (17.7%)	93 (49%)	115 (36.6%)
- Arrived after 2005	92 (74.1%)	54 (28.4%)	146 (46,4%)
- Arrived before 2005	10 (9.2%)	43 (22.6%)	53 (17%)
Education			
- university	21 (17%)	62 (32.6%)	83 (26.4%)
- secondary	43 (34.6%)	68 (35.8%)	111 (35.3%)
- primary	34 (27.4%)	42 (22.2%)	76 (24.3%)
- none	26 (21%)	18 (9.4%)	44 (14%)

Juba is also, of course, highly multiethnic and multilingual (more so in the new area of Gudelle than in Malikiya). Table 2 aims at capturing multilingualism on the basis of the interviewees'.

Half of the population of Gudele claims to speak three languages; Malikiya – home as we have seen to an older couch of the population – has a slightly but significantly lower multilingualism rate, with 45.2% of the interviewees claiming to speak two languages.

Tab. 2 - Degree of Multilingualism.

	Gudele	Malikiya	Total
<i>More than 4</i>	8 (6.5%)	6 (2.1%)	14 (4.5%)
<i>4 languages</i>	31 (25%)	16 (9.5%)	47 (15 %)
<i>3 languages</i>	63 (50.8%)	69 (36.4%)	132 (42%)
<i>2 languages</i>	21 (16.9%)	86 (45.2%)	107 (34%)
<i>1 language</i>	1 (0.8%)	13 (6.8%)	14 (4.5%)

Against the backdrop of multilingualism, Juba Arabic is by large the first language for almost a half of the respondents (47%, but as many as 60% in Malikiya).

Flying in the face of an official policy of utter disregard (if not overt hostility) for Arabic and its speakers, Arabic ranks second in the list in Table 3., with almost 10% of the interviewees declaring it their first language.

Most importantly, Juba Arabic is the only medium shared by a very high portion of the inhabitants (6.37% only claim *not* to speak it, the majority of which located in Malikiya).

Tab. 3 - 1st language.

	Gudele	Malikiya	Total
Juba Arabic	33 (26.6%)	114 (60%)	147 (47%)
Arabic	5	26	31 (9.8%)
Bari	6	22	28 (9%)
Moru	11	8	19 (6%)
Zande	13	0	13 (4.1%)
Pojulu	6	6	12 (3.8%)
Dinka	5	4	9 (2.9%)
Madi	6	0	6 (2.0%)
Mundari	6	0	6 (2.0%)
Baka	5	0	5 (1.6%)
Kakwa	3	2	5 (1.6%)

Acholi	3	1	4 (1.3%)
Kuku	4	0	4 (1.3%)
Nyangbara	4	0	4 (1.3%)
Nuer	3	0	3 (1.0%)
Balanda	3	0	3 (1.0%)
other	2	0	2 (0.7%)
Juba Arabic unknown	7 (5.65%)	13 (6.84%)	20 (6.37%)

The use of the different languages is also revealing: Juba Arabic is present in all of the four investigated domains (even, partially, “in the public offices,” where English, the official language, and Arabic, the other de-facto high variety – which are also written media – clearly predominate). On the other hand, Juba Arabic is not the preferred medium at home, within the family: here, as expected, the ethnic language wins out. Juba Arabic is instead the preferred medium to talk with neighbours and, to a lower extent, in the market. Juba Arabic is therefore, first and foremost, the language of socialization.

Tab. 4 - Language uses.

<i>a. at home</i>			
	Gudele	Malikiya	Total
Juba Arabic only	34 (27.5%)	85 (44.7%)	119 (37.8%)
x + Juba Arabic	40 (32.3%)	54 (28.5%)	94 (30%)
x only	21 (16.9%)	30 (15.8%)	51 (16.3%)
Juba Arabic + x	24 (19.3%)	14 (7.4%)	38 (12.1%)
x + y + Juba Arabic	5 (4%)	7 (3.6%)	12 (3.8%)

<i>b. the neighbours</i>			
	Gudele	Malikiya	Total
Juba Arabic only	83 (66.9%)	155 (81.6%)	238 (75.8%)
x only	8 (6.5%)	25 (13.2%)	33 (10.5%)
Juba Arabic + x	20 (16.1%)	8 (4.2%)	28 (8.9%)
x + Juba Arabic	8 (6.5%)	0	8 (2.5%)
Juba Arabic + x + y	3 (2.4%)	1 (0.5%)	4 (1.4%)
x + y	1 (0.8%)	0	1 (0.3%)
x + y + Juba	1 (0.8%)	0	1 (0.3%)
x + y + z	0	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.3%)

<i>c. the marketplace</i>			
	Gudele	Malikiya	Total
Juba Arabic only	79 (63.7%)	115 (60.6%)	194 (61.7%)
Juba Arabic + x	31 (25%)	21 (11.1%)	52 (16.6%)
x only	8 (6.5%)	25 (13.2%)	33 (10.6%)
x + Juba Arabic	2 (1.6%)	18 (9.4%)	20 (6.3%)
x + y + Juba Arabic	0	7 (3.6%)	7 (2.2%)
Juba Arabic + x + y	2 (1.6%)	4 (2.1%)	6 (1.9%)
x + y	2 (1.6%)	0	2 (0.6%)

<i>d. the public office</i>			
	Gudele	Malikiya	Total
English	39 (31.5%)	34 (18%)	73 (23.3%)
Arabic	5 (4%)	54 (28.7%)	59 (18.8%)
Juba Arabic	21 (17%)	23 (12.2%)	44 (14%)
English + Arabic	6 (4.9%)	14 (7.5%)	20 (6.4%)
English + Juba Arabic	10 (8%)	4 (2.1%)	14 (4.5%)
Arabic + English	3 (2.4%)	7 (3.8%)	10 (3.2%)
Juba Arabic + English	8 (6.4%)	2 (1%)	10 (3.2%)
English + Arabic + Juba Arabic	0	6 (3.1%)	6 (1.8%)
Arabic + Juba Arabic	0	4 (2.1%)	4 (1.3%)
Arabic + English + Juba Arabic	0	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.3%)

English + Arabic + Juba Arabic	0	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.3%)
English + Juba Arabic + Arabic	0	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.3%)
Kakwa	0	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.3%)
English + Juba Arabic + Bari	1 (0.8%)	0	1 (0.3%)
not applicable (: elders and young people)	31 (25%)	38 (20%)	69 (22%)

CONCLUSIONS: THE SPEAKERS VS. THE GOVERNMENT ON JUBA ARABIC

A second part of our fieldwork concerned the attitudes towards Juba Arabic vis-à-vis Sudanese (or “High”) Arabic, but also English on the one side and the ethnic South Sudanese languages on the other.

The answers to these questions were elicited through a number of interviews in Juba Arabic with a limited number of the interviewees of the first questionnaire. In total, 35 interviews for a total number of around 40 hours of recording were obtained.

In general, the interviewees agreed on the following:

- Juba Arabic is an independent language of South Sudan and *not* a “part” of Arabic;
- Juba Arabic is the main first and vehicular language in “greater” Juba (possibly in Greater Equatoria);
- although the lexicon of Juba Arabic is by and large Arabic-derived, Juba Arabic speakers in general have a very clear metalinguistic consciousness of its distinctiveness and show a positive attitude toward it (this nicely correlates to the results of a previous survey conducted by SIL South Sudan (SIL, n.d.)
- such a positive attitude towards Juba Arabic does not contrast in the speakers’ minds with a general appreciation of the other indigenous languages and of English.

It was also apparent that, by and large, Juba Arabic speakers would like to have this language taught at school and more widely used (either in Latin or Arabic script). We investigated their attitude towards the national educational policies, and in particular towards the hypothetical adoption of Juba Arabic as a teaching or subject language. In this regard, it is interesting to note that, in contrast to the state’s ideological understanding of language, according to which Juba Arabic is a form of Arabic (i.e. the only official language of the previously unified Sudan) and it therefore has no official status within South Sudan, the majority of our informants showed a positive attitude towards the adoption of what they consider their first and foremost language. In particular, they adopt a pragmatic perspective in arguing that Juba Arabic is the only means that can facilitate interethnic communication in South Sudan.

Although ideology is not absent in the speakers’ attitudes toward language(s), and it is apparent for example in a frequently heard statement about Juba Arabic being “the language which unites South Sudanese,” pragmatic considerations play a much bigger role: the speakers stress the usefulness of an already existing local lingua franca in order to surmount the communicative problems of their communicative settings.

The relative role of ideology and practical considerations is reversed in the case of the government’s attitude toward the language problem: on the one hand, the choice of English as the language of education may be supported by economic and practical considerations, while the recognition of the indigenous languages may be seen as a tactic move to prevent possible criticisms of a scarce attention to the diversity of the country. But ideological considerations are rampant in the choice of English as the sole official language of the country, although it is barely if at all known by the majority of the South Sudanese. Conversely, Arabic, which, in one form or another, is widely used as an interethnic medium, is utterly disregarded. Indigenous languages are paid lip-service in the Constitution, but Juba Arabic, as a “non-ethnic” language, is not even acknowledged.

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