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Editorial Page

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EDITORIAL

RUNNING THE ERJSSH: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

The current issue is the fourth since the ERJSSH was launched in December 2014. From then till the present day we have managed to fulfil our initial objective of publishing two journal issues every year following the highest standards and encompassing relevant, groundbreaking research in the social sciences and the humanities.

Until the present twenty one original research articles have been published, which were written by twenty six different authors. The articles cover a wide range of topics within the social sciences and the humanities, from geography and GIS research to psychology, political science, literature, languages, archaeology, and history. Concerning their nationality, Ethiopian authors have dominated, with eighteen scholars from this country having published with us. ERJSSH is thus achieving one of its missions of becoming a serious scholarly platform for young and senior scholars from Ethiopia's expanding higher education sector. Yet, the journal is also proud to have attracted scholars from other regions, some active in Ethiopia but others also active abroad. Thus, among the foreign nationals represented in our pages are U.S. Americans, Norwegians, Germans, Indians and Nigerians. It is the hope of the ERJSSH editors that foreign scholars will keep contributing with their fair share of manuscripts, along with local scholars, because only in that way the journal will succeed in one of its ambitious goals of being a truly international publication with a general thematic scope, which shall be not bound to topics related to Ethiopia or the Horn of Africa. For the sake of modesty we should not fail in emphasizing these achievements. Publishing a journal of this profile is not an easy task, least in Ethiopia that is, rightly, focusing most of its energies in economic and industrial development.

While the successes must be shared with our readers and authors we must also say a few words about the challenges encountered. An important challenge we are facing is the concurrence from the so-called 'predator journals'; predator journals are those journals–normally published only online–without a clear academic affiliation, which follow low standards and offer to scholars a quick publication platform in exchange for a typically-high payment fee. The fee is supposed to cover editing costs but this is rarely the case. Many young African authors are lured into these journals for the sake of publishing quickly and thus advancing rapidly in their promotion ambitions. It is our hope that the local academic institutions will tackle this problem (for instance by clearly identifying 'predator'-based articles) as it threatens serious non-for profit journals like ours who, needless to say it, do not charge any fees for publishing the articles and carry out a sound revision, advising and editing of the manuscripts. Another challenge is the peer reviewing process. At the present we count with a large pool of peer reviewers and, since this is a crucial part of our journal,

we give the utmost attention in getting every paper reviewed twice (sometimes even thrice). Yet, as it has been acknowledged to me by other colleagues, it is not easy neither for ERJSSH nor for other scholarly journals, to bring academics into a job that is non-remunerated. So I take this opportunity to invite local and foreign scholars to join our peer-reviewing 'team' and I also want to thank effusively those who have put their invaluable expertise, their energies and their time in the service of our journal.

Our achievements might appear meagre when compared to other well-established journals at home and abroad, but they set for us a solid base from which to further continue the work and our commitment for publishing sound, innovative and interesting scholarly work. Of course, there is still a long way ahead. We need to learn new things from well-established journals that have their own publishing traditions and that are also able to innovate. We also need to improve in several areas, such as upgrading the webpage, gaining more authors from disciplines not yet covered, and making ERJSSH better known. It is our conviction that a journal like ERJSSH can positively contribute to the current development of the country. On the one hand, the research published at ERJSSH can provide expertise and advice on key societal topics, such as agriculture, environment, population dynamics, languages, and psychosocial problems. On the other hand, the study of Ethiopia's rich cultures and of its dynamic history can help in policy-making and also in buttressing key development sectors of the economy such as tourism and heritage management. We are confident that, with the active support of the University of Gondar and of the College of Social Sciences and the Humanities, we will be able to keep up to the standards set for the coming future and support Ethiopia in its way forward as one of Africa's leading nations.

Andreu Martínez
Managing editor

RESEARCH ARTICLE

KNOWING SUICIDE TERRORISM? TRACING EPISTEMIC VIOLENCE ACROSS SCHOLARLY EXPERTISE

Claudia Brunner[1]

ABSTRACT

This article introduces a critical view on terrorism research and its knowledge about suicide terrorism. The analysis combines a feminist-postcolonial perspective with a sociology of knowledge approach, including discourse and dispositive analysis. It draws attention to the limitations of hegemonic knowledge production and to an Occidentalist self-assertion as its by-product. What we know about suicide terrorism and how we generate this knowledge, I argue by presenting a comprehensive study of analyses of scholarly publications on suicide bombing from the 1990s to 2006, is embedded in globally asymmetric power arrangements. I establish a link between the various forms of political violence that are present in scholarly expertise on suicide terrorism and the epistemic violence that is inherent in this field of knowledge production. By introducing the concept of epistemic violence, this text contributes to a more complex understanding of our fields of research, their objects of analysis, and the entanglements between these two dimensions, of which we are inevitably complicitous as scholars. First, the transdisciplinary research perspective is introduced in order to move away the focus from political violence (suicide bombing) and turn it on epistemic violence (knowledge production about it). Second, I present the results of the research project that this article summarizes.

Keywords*:* epistemic violence, suicide terrorism, Occidentalism, knowledge, coloniality

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Suicide attacks challenge normative conceptions of power and order, legitimacy and illegitimacy, rationality and deviance within the academic and political realm of International Relations and beyond. Producing and disseminating expertise on suicide attacks is one way of coming in terms with some of the challenges that these violent articulations of political agency affect in politics and science. Yet, what do the scholars and experts really know about it? How has this knowledge been aggregated and in what ways is it shaped? Which epistemologies, theories and methodologies lay the ground for the creation of this object of knowledge? And: What does this have to do with global power politics?

Scholarly expertise is thought to provide solid explanations. Yet, the mainstream body of knowledge on suicide terrorism is not free from simplifica-

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tions, ideologizations, and biases. It adheres to the positivist model of a modernist paradigm and a problem-solving approach that is likely to be essentialist. This field of scholarly expertise is part of the globally asymmetric power relations in which both the attacks and the production of knowledge about them are situated. As I have shown in a comprehensive study (Brunner, 2011) of texts, paratexts (Genette, 1997), graphs, models, illustrations and book covers, a close assessment of the scholarly object of knowledge, i.e. suicide terrorism, can tell us a lot about the entanglements of political violence and scholarly knowledge production. Such an analysis exposes the ambivalences of the said knowledge production in a field of "embedded expertise" (Burnett & Whyte, 2005) which is situated between public discourse, politics and the academia. We are, thus, tasked to think of political violence and knowledge production as existing in a complex setting of "entangled histories" (Randeria, 2006) which did not begin in the fall of 1989 or in September 2001. These entanglements have to be thought of in the light of a longer and broader legacy of Western dominance, in a "colonial matrix of power" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 2).

Firstly, here, a theoretical framework at the interface of Feminist IR (International Relations), Postcolonial Theory and Sociology of Knowledge is introduced. Then, the argument for enlarging discourse-oriented approaches through Foucault's less received notion of the dispositive, which enables a more materialist approach, is made. Finally, Coronil's concept of Occidentalism which allows for a significant twist in the debate on political violence is proposed. Starting from the central notion of epistemic violence, the suggested perspective starts from a decolonial understanding of an ongoing coloniality not only of power, but also of knowledge. It challenges existing scholarly expertise on the issue of suicide terrorism, which, as a broadly discussed object of knowledge, has turned into a privileged signifier of Western self-assertion.

Due to the spatial limitations of this article, the aim to argue for a theoretical shift in the debate on political violence, and the centrality of epistemic issues on the topic, the empirical data can be introduced only cursorily. However, the main results of the study in three steps are presented in the second half of the text. Seven contours and conditions of the emerging object of knowledge are briefly outlined in the first place. This is followed by a methodologically sensitive description of the different paths that expertise has taken towards and around the issue during the past twenty years of scholarship (1996-2006). In a third step based on the analyses of the study, an analytical framework of six major modes in which Occidentalism is at work in scholarly expertise on suicide terrorism is offered.

FEMINIST IR, POST- AND DECOLONIAL THEORIES AND SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Feminist, post- and decolonial thinkers claim that violence has never been the exception to international relations (as a field of politics) and of IR (as an academic discipline), but it is constitutive of them. Moreover, the historical and contemporary asymmetries in which violence and power are embedded have always had structural (Galtung, 1969) and symbolic (Bourdieu

& Wacquant, 2004) elements. The organization, production, dissemination, consumption and application of knowledge are central to these dimensions of violence, which cannot be grasped by the narrow definition prevailing in positivist approaches. In an attempt to read this field of knowledge production against the grain, I focus on what post- and decolonial authors call epistemic violence. Starting with Spivak (1988), I employ the notion of epistemic violence to point out the function of scholarly expertise for the perpetuation of globally asymmetric relations between knowledge and power. Spivak defines the term as "the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other" (1988, pp. -281). Scholarly expertise has always played a major role in this project—and it continues to do so today. But epistemic violence is about more than that. Thus, according to Enrique Galván-Álvarez,

> [e]pistemic violence, that is, violence exerted against or through knowledge, is probably one of the key elements in any process of domination. It is not only through the construction of exploitative economic links or the control of the politico-military apparatuses that domination is accomplished, but also and, I would argue, most importantly through the construction of epistemic frameworks that legitimise and enshrine those practices of domination (Galván-Álvarez, 2010, p. 11).

While IR and Terrorism Studies aim to establish order by categorizing social phenomena that seem to be beyond the rationalities of the modern nation state and its monopoly on violence, feminist approaches have always been busy challenging these orders while at the same time theorizing them in a profoundly different way (Hunt & Rygiel, 2006; Riley, Mohanty, & Pratt, 2008; Sjøberg & Gentry, 2011). Postcolonial critique pursues similar goals, while it is interested in deconstructing Eurocentrist and Universalist theories and practices in general (Engels, 2014; Shilliam, 2011). Decolonial perspectives (Coronil 1996; Mignolo, 2002) point at the persistent coloniality of power and knowledge and its effect on continuing imperial politics today. Another tradition on which this analysis is built is rooted in the German tradition of the sociology of knowledge (Keller, 2005; Keller, 2011). Neither of these perspectives are present at the core of terrorism research, just because of their broad concepts of violence and their focus on knowledge production. Set against this theoretical background, I understand the sub-discipline of Terrorism Studies as a field of knowledge and power in the first place. It has to be located within the highly asymmetric setting of international relations in which both political violence (incidents commonly subsumed under suicide terrorism) and epistemic violence (scholarly expertise on them) take place simultaneously and interdependently.

FROM ORIENTALISM TO OCCIDENTALISM

Said's concept of Orientalism focuses on the link between politics and scholarship, which has always accompanied and enabled colonial projects (1986, p. 223). Coronil's understanding of Occidentalism (1996) focuses on the same phenomenon, but he highlights the other side of the process, namely the epistemologies, theories, methodologies, structures, agents and practices that have enabled the production of Orientalism. He does not

conceive of Occidentalism as the opposite of Orientalism, as Buruma and Margalit do by defining Occidentalism as "the West in the eyes of its enemies" (2004). Such an understanding creates the illusion that the term Occidentalism is a simple reversion of Orientalism, a claim to which Coronil convincingly objects. On the contrary, he views Occidentalism as the historical prerequisite which allows for the construction and perpetuation of Orientalism and locates both in deeply asymmetric power relations which stem from 500 years of colonialism (Coronil, 1996, p. 57). Rejecting the idea of simple reciprocity and reconsidering global politics and political violence therefore includes "relating the observed to the observers, products to production, [and] knowledge to the sites of formation" (Coronil, 1996, p. 57) in order to point out asymmetries of power and knowledge in the past and the present.

We can consider Terrorism Studies as a part of these asymmetries. Finally, we can understand one of its most popular objects of knowledge today, suicide terrorism, as a privileged signifier in a process of Western self-assertion which tacitly naturalized dominance through Occidentalism. (Counter-) terrorism expertise itself can therefore be understood as being implicated with structural, symbolic, epistemic and various kinds of direct and physical violence. To highlight these entanglements, we have to change our perspective on violence. We should understand it as part of a larger process, in which definitions of violence are fiercely contested, since both politics and the academia are located within the above mentioned "colonial matrix of power" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 2). Disputes within them revolve around the questions of whose and which kind of political violence is legitimate and which is not.

In this setting, addressing the role and function of epistemic violence is a means to examine the contested field of knowledge production itself, and not just the incidents that are described, explained and at times theorized by mainstream expertise. Such an understanding does not relativize the problem of violent agency and its consequences. Quite to the contrary, it increases the level of attention that we pay to political violence and highlights the often invisible conditions under which it unfolds. Seen in this light, suicide attacks are a complex phenomenon including structural, symbolic, discursive and epistemic dimensions. They unfold in a setting of highly asymmetric power relations, which have their own epistemic-political histories and legacies. The communication or discourse theory approach, which Critical Terrorism Studies (Jackson, Breen-Smith & Gunning 2009) apply to contrast the positivist paradigm of Terrorism Studies, does not suffice to meet this challenge, however. Therefore, in this work Foucault's concept of the dispositive along the concept of Occidentalism are applied, and integrated it to a feminist-postcolonial-sociology of knowledge based approach.

FROM DISCOURSE TO DISPOSITIVE ANALYSIS

The present research links key questions of discourse analysis to the Foucauldian notion of the dispositive (Bührmann & Schneider, 2008; Caborn Wengler, Hoffarth, & Kumięga, 2013) as the net that can be woven between "discourses, institutions, architectural arrangements, reglemented deci-

sions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral or philanthropic teachings, in brief, what is said and what is not said" (Foucault, 1978, p. 119). Keller's (2005) sociology of knowledge also widens the scope of discourse analysis to include institutions and agents. Such an understanding allows the analysis of more heterogeneous material to be included than its linguistic predecessors. This analysis started by identifying relevant textual materials defined according to the following criteria: language (English as the dominant language of mainstream research), form (scholarly articles and books) and time of publication (1996–2006), disciplinary profile (various social sciences that merge in the field of Terrorism Studies) and research focus (on suicide terrorism) of the publication, institutional location of publishers/editors (renowned publishing houses, think tanks etc.) and of the respective journals (8), monographs (14), anthologies (5) and selected articles within them (15),[2] quantity and quality of citation in the field, location across Terrorism Studies and neighbouring fields of research, and relevance for the making of this object of knowledge.[3] Non-textual (25 images, graphs and models) and paratextual elements (legends, indices) from within the written expertise were selected and analyzed according to selected methods of textual (Jäger, 1999; Keller, 2004), para-textual (Genette, 1997) and visual (Breckner, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) analysis, and integrated the findings into the results of the textual analyses.[4] By working through this vast range of materials, the conditions and contours of a larger counterterrorism dispositive are identified. This enabled the analysis of the methodologies, theories and epistemologies that shaped this recently booming sub-discipline of IR, as well as its interrelations with non-academic fields of knowledge and power. Building on these results, six different modes of Occidentalist self-assertion that have characterized the object of knowledge suicide terrorism during the examined time period (1996–2006) are discerned.

In the following sections, the results of this comprehensive study are briefly elaborated to show on how many levels we can find elements of epistem-

2. Monographs are: Berko, 2007;Bloom, 2005; Davis, 2003; Hafez, 2007; Israeli, 2003; Khosrokhavar, 2005; Laqueur, 2003; O'Neill, 1981; Pape, 2005; Pedahzur, 2005; Reuter, 2004; Shay, 2004; Skaine, 2006; Victor, 2003. Anthologies include Reich, 1990; ICT, 2001; ICT/ADL, 2002; Gambetta, 2005 and Pedahzur, 2006 (for a more detailed selection of articles from these books see Brunner, 2011, pp. 65-67). Journal articles stem from *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Israeli, 1997; Weinberg et al., 2003; Strenski, 2003; Kimhi/Even, 2004; Pedahzur, 2004; Silke, 2006; Lewis, 2007), *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (later: *Conflict and Terrorism Studies*) (Kushner, 1996; Hoffman, 2002; Cunningham, 2003; Dolnik, 2003; Moghadam, 2003; Hoffman/McCormick, 2004; Lester et al., 2004), *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (Dale, 1988; Ferrero, 2006), *Foreign Policy* (Sprinzak, 2000), *Science* (Atran, 2003), *American Political Science Review* (Pape, 2003), *The Atlantic Monthly* (Hoffman, 2003; Lewis, 2002) and *The Washington Quarterly* (Atran, 2006). For a detailed contextualization of these journals and their publishers and editors see Brunner, 2011, pp. 65-66.
3. For a detailed definition and justification of the body of material and the methods of textual, visual and para-textual analysis see Brunner, 2011, pp. 57-61.
4. For a detailed description of methods and methodologies see Brunner, 2011, pp. 61-79, 81-151.

ic violence. Tracing this violence across scholarly expertise goes beyond a merely textual analysis. It is also more than a methodological critique, which suggests that we could do better research on terrorism if we only used the right methods and thereby evaded epistemic violence. The aim of the following overview is not to present every analytical step of the perennial work underlying this article, but to give an impression of the multiple ways in which epistemic violence unfolds throughout the process of scholarly knowledge production on suicide terrorism, and to underline the importance of a conceptual shift in the analysis of political violence.

CONTOURS AND CONDITIONS OF AN EMERGING OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE

Seven contours, which shape the object of knowledge during the first two decades of its formation, emerge from the analysis of the material.[5] First of all, scholars are usually not the first to provide knowledge on suicide attacks. Whenever and wherever attacks occur, it is the media which produce and distribute knowledge first. Newspaper articles are frequently cited in the analyzed texts and provided the basis for scholarly articles and books prior to the first comprehensive research projects. It is remarkable as to how unfiltered many of these journalistic accounts were absorbed by Terrorism Studies. The blurring of academic and journalistic traditions and practices is particularly striking when it comes to knowledge production on women suicide bombers, a field in which facts and figures are to a large extent taken from journalist sources without further reflection (Davis, 2003; Skaine, 2006; Victor, 2003; for a detailed critique of these volumes, see Brunner, 2007). This also holds true for knowledge generated by security and intelligence agencies which equally enters the field of scholarship, albeit less explicitly.

Secondly, a specific and IR-related format of the English language is absolutely dominant in the constitution of this scholarly object of knowledge (Stump & Dixit, 2013, p. 63). This normalized condition of knowledge production reflects epistemic-political power relations and is thus neither natural nor pure coincidence. Therefore, only a few non-English books made it into the canon before 2008; one translated from a German book (Reuter, 2004) and another from a French book (Khosrokhavar, 2005), both were first published in 2002 and passing through substantial omissions and adaptions for the international market.

The third contour is that it is striking how easily a field of research, which is dominated by the social sciences, has integrated fragments of knowledge originating from Islamic Studies (Israeli, 1997) without closer assessment of the compatibility of research designs, theories and methods of the respective disciplinary traditions. The same is true for psychology (Merari, 1990) and criminology (Berko, 2007) which have co-constituted the field and its objects of knowledge from the beginning, when the search for individual motivation and profiling dominated the analyses. Later on, political science (Pape, 2005) established a strong reference for the field

5. For all details, analyses and references on these aspects see Brunner, 2011, pp. 81-151.

with its rational choice approach. Later work fosters a re-biologization of knowledge, as life sciences (Thayer & Hudson, 2010) gradually gain ground in the social sciences when it comes to explaining violent agency on the sub -state level (for a critique of neo-biological racism in Terrorism Studies, see Brunner, 2012a).

Fourthly, one can observe a remarkable shift in the naming of the object of knowledge and, hence, in the definition of the narrow gap between legitimacy and illegitimacy of political violence over time. Preferences change according to disciplinary, ideological and political standpoints, and suicide terrorism has slowly replaced more neutral terminology such as suicide attacks or suicide bombing. The lack of discussion in the academic field about the differences between and contents of the respective terminologies is problematic though. The most striking example for this development is when "[…] a suicide terror attack […]" (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 78) tacitly turns into "[…] a suicide attack […]" (Moghadam, 2006, p. 18). The simple omission of a single word illustrates this problem in a nutshell. This obviously incorrect citation shows up in many later publications and establishes what resonates with the use of the term today: Suicide attacks are hence per se defined as terrorist, which puts the question about the legitimacy or illegitimacy of political violence beyond discussion and erases the use of political violence by states. It seems that once transformed into a specific and narrow interpretative framework, suicide terrorism is not in need of further definitions.

This result can be linked to the fifth contour of the object of knowledge, i.e. the normalization of a counter-terrorism perspective which takes centerstage. The nexus between the military, politics, and intelligence services on the one hand and terrorism research on the other becomes evident and powerful. A number of scholars explicitly subscribe to the impetus of fighting terrorism (for a detailed analysis of this problem, see Brunner, 2011, pp. 101-126), while others only implicitly apply attitudes and approaches that are influenced by this dominant discourse. The attitude of having to contribute to combating terrorism is deeply inscribed into the analyzed texts and obviously influences the theories, methodologies and epistemologies with which the respective objects of research are approached and treated, resulting in a sense of emergency and morality that underlies much of the scholarly work on the issue. The features mentioned so far have led to a much narrower understanding of the forms of political violence associated with suicide terrorism.

A colourful unambiguousness–the sixth contour identified by the research–is most visible in the images which escort the object of knowledge through academia, politics, and public discourse. An analysis of the book covers has revealed a veritable "spectacle of the other" (Hall, 1997, p. 225).[6] These

6. Three thematic foci can be identified: images of visually anonymized male and strikingly personalized female perpetrators, stagings of an explosive belt (despite the fact that it is not the preferred method), or abstract visualizations of fire and/ or transcendental notions of heaven. Only few illustrations exceed these visual topics. For a detailed discussion of visual analysis of the issue see Brunner, 2012b.

most telling artifacts (which more often than not look like fiction bestsellers rather than academic books) can be understood as interfaces between the scholarly expertise inside the books and public discourses that surround it. On the surface, the covers seem to condense what the social sciences themselves disregard as rational expertise suitable for the content of their books. What remains unspeakable for them is most explicitly displayed on the colourful outside of their products: a gaudy and blatant orientalization around its main ingredients, namely sexuality, violence, and religion.

Regarding the political circumstances that lead to increased knowledge production on terrorism and political violence, one has to remember that the period of condensed knowledge production on the issue lies between the end of the bipolar world system (1989) and the second major turn in IR, i.e. the attacks commonly abbreviated as 9/11. These circumstances eventually gave rise to an unprecedented boom in Terrorism Studies in the subsequent decade. But even though knowledge production on suicide terrorism certainly experienced its first peak in 2005, 9/11 was not the first occasion that inspired scholars to investigate the phenomenon. Violent incidents including the simultaneity of killing and self-killing in a political context had already occurred before September 2001. Consequently, this phenomenon had also been analyzed prior to the second turn in IR. Yet, these earlier works focused on single occasions, regions or conflict settings, which later turned into case studies for what slowly turned into a more generalized object of knowledge, namely suicide terrorism. Some case studies have become paradigmatic (especially the Israeli-Palestinian conflict). Others, however, have gradually vanished from comparison and analysis (the state-sponsored Japanese Kamikaze). This constitutes a seventh contour of the emerging object of knowledge. From 2008 onwards, we can speak of a certain normalization of both the phenomenon and the knowledge production on it. This is also sustained by the fact that during the last years more and more critical assessments of both have started to challenge the canonized publications from outside Terrorism Studies as well as from within. The supposedly self-evident object of knowledge named suicide terrorism faces some analytical challenges today. Some of the most serious reproaches can be made via a critique of methodologies (Stump & Dixit, 2013). Such critiques, though, should not merely address problems of (in-)adequate methods, since not all of these problems can be solved within the existing frames of (even critical) Terrorism Studies. In fact, one can discern significant theoretical and epistemological deficiencies when looking at how suicide terrorism expertise is being formed and articulated.

ROCKY PATHS TOWARDS KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

Some of the most obvious methodological challenges lie in the contestation of the ideological and epistemological boundaries which form the object of knowledge. These boundaries have been always and already inscribed in the ways along which suicide terrorism is approached by scholars. Over time, one can observe changes and trends in research designs and methods, which go hand in hand with disciplinary booms, cycles and

turns (for all details, analyses and references on these aspects see Brunner, 2011, pp. 151-220). The four most important paths towards knowledge and expertise are profiling, interviewing, databases, and finally producing proto-theories through graphs and models.

It was psychological and criminological approaches, often developed in direct relation with counterterrorism practices and institutions, that dominated the field in the early period. Due to a desire to grasp both the phenomenon and its protagonists, profiling became a favourite approach not only for intelligence agencies, but also for scholars. This method gradually transformed into different ways of portraying both real and presumptive perpetrators, which is why identikits about typical suicide bombers are present in various dimensions. Portraying and profiling can be discerned on the textual and the visual level (Pape, 2005, pp. 206, 228) as well as in the theoretical approaches to the phenomenon (Lester, Yang, & Lindsay, 2004) or in the methodical make-up of some research designs (Sageman, 2004). With the amplification of an individual-based research focus and perspective upon collectives, groups, regions, peoples, nations or entire cultures and geopolitical entities are subsumed under ideologically laden profiles. These profiles tend to fit a range of culturalized, sexualized and racialized stereotypes which are based on psychological and criminal categories.

Taking some of the theoretical and methodical weaknesses of early profiling into account, researchers soon tried to personally meet and interview their objects of knowledge (Brannan, Esler, & Strindberg, 2001), that is, failed perpetrators or—more problematically—uninvolved prisoners who, for reason rooted in racial profiling, were compared to potential suicide bombers or considered as organizers of suicide attacks (Khosrokhavar, 2005). Even though many studies rely on data gained from interviews, methodological and methodical discussions are almost entirely absent from these texts. The reader is confronted with the so-called facts, the genesis of which remains unclear. Others (Berko, Wolf, & Addad, 2004) do explicate the set-up of their study, but remain assailable with regard to their interpretations. Finally, it is remarkable that only few researchers take their own position in this asymmetric setting and its relation to the outcome of the study into account.

Another important path to knowledge, and chronologically the next step towards knowing suicide terrorism, is the use of already existing databases and the creation of new databases. These more or less comprehensive bodies of systematized information (Pape, 2003; Pape, 2005; Pedahzur, 2005; Sageman, 2004), do not simply merge existing facts and figures into authoritative knowledge. Ideological preferences and epistemic violence also find their ways into what is considered as neutral and objective information. Once aggregated into a database, this presumably objective information is perpetually cited without further reflection on how it came into being. The knowledge that feeds these databases consists more often than not of a mixture of scholarly and journalistic accounts, the differences between which disappear on the way from research to result. It is

striking how little attention social scientists pay to the quality or validity of the heterogeneous pieces of information that feed into a database. Moreover, existing professional and commercial databases are taken for granted by social scientists, since hardly any terrorism scholar considers the conditions and consequences of their seemingly indispensable use. Language, geopolitical location, commercial or the ideological background, or even proximity to powerful institutions of any given data remain unquestioned. Fragmented information and comprehensive knowledge seem to blur when it comes to knowing suicide terrorism, and both are organized in highly debatable relations of knowledge production, dissemination and consumption, if they are open to the public at all.

Besides highly formalized texts and beyond more informal and illustrative images, we can find another form of aggregated and normalized knowledge in conventional terrorism expertise. Sober graphic elements are interspersed with articles and books, and they provide condensed, abstracted knowledge of proto-theoretical quality. In a field of research in which theories and epistemologies play only a subordinate role, I consider the existing graphs and models as telling artifacts of condensed theoretical content. Marginal and incidental as they may seem at first sight, these visuals provide significant information about preferences and trends in constituting the object of knowledge. Their distinct symmetry is striking as it stands in considerable contrast to the conditions under which both the violent incidents and the research about them are organized, and to the claim made by terrorism researchers that this is highly asymmetric warfare. At the same time, these models often erase empirical historicity and locality by suggesting universal validity. A close look at these visual elements exposes another inconsistency that seems to prove the Occidentalist self-assertion which is written into this expertise. Finally, and despite the constant talk about the international and global dimension of the phenomenon and the importance of reacting to it globally, none of the graphs and models provides an international or global dimension.

INTERDEPENDENT MODES OF WESTERN SELF-ASSERTION

Further results of the multi-stage analysis reveal six major modes of Occidentalism that appear across textual, para-textual and visual elements of the material: pathologization, (ir-)rationalization, sexualization, historicization, geopoliticization, and culturalization (see Brunner, 2011, pp. 220-340).

Illness, deviance, contagion on the one hand and immunization and healing on the other, are important notions and items shaping the mode of *pathologization*. Yet, it is not only factual or prospective perpetrators of suicide attacks who are referred to in pathological terms. Early attempts at pathologization, which all operated along physical or psychological parameters, have not been entirely abandoned with the emergence of more sophisticated approaches. Rather, pathologization has spread and diversified along with the dissemination of the idea of profiling. It has transformed from a focus on individual agency (pathologizing deviant subjects)

via groups of persons (families, political organizations) to entire geopolitical entities (the Islamic/Arabic world). I will return to this aspect when I elaborate on the mode of culturalizations.

Terrorism experts soon challenged the earlier paradigm and tried to make their point by distinguishing rational from irrational forms of political agency. Yet, the approaches which subscribe to rationality and political explanations rather than to the psychological and criminological perspectives that preceded them, often revert to pathologizations. However, the *(ir-) rationalizations* perspective is the only one that explicitly focuses the core of Terrorism Studies, which may be considered to be the definition of legitimacy and illegitimacy of political violence. The discussion of the notions of hero (nation state soldier) versus martyr (suicide terrorist) by Diego Gambetta (2005, pp. 272–278) is a most telling example. The ambivalences that are written into this issue are exposed when one tries to draw a clear line between what is legitimate, rational and therefore normal, and what can never be. Suicide attacks tend to be rationalized when counter terrorist practices are at stake, and they tend to be irrationalized when it comes to mobilizing acceptance for these practices. Last, but not the least, the issue of (ir-)rationality lies at the heart of most analyses of the so-called female suicide terrorism, not only with regard to the sex and gender of its protagonists, but also concerning the striking absence of debates about the (il-) legitimacy of political violence at large.

The basic assumption of clearly distinguishable and intrinsic natures of both rational (state-sponsored and legitimated) and irrational (sub-state and illegitimated) agents of political violence is closely related to orientalist *sexualizations* of the phenomenon. As feminist-postcolonial theorists have shown, sexualizations have always been central to practices of Othering on a global scale. This is still the case with respect to Occidentalism (Dietze, 2010). While female and male agency are explained differently, both sexes are placed in a matrix of oppressive orientalist gender relations, which are said to provide one of the central motivations for violence committed by people from and in the so-called Arab world, compared to which the sexed-gendered power relations in Western societies appear as almost naturally egalitarian, progressive, and enlightened.

The historical contexts that researchers compare contemporary events to are significant. Even though *historicizations* are made in various ways, the researchers show specific interest in certain criteria (link to religion and especially to Islam, focus on the Middle East, compatibility with an Orientalist frame), whereas others attract far less attention (state-sponsored suicide attacks in World War II, secular movements). While some of the examples are historicized as isolated cases (Sri Lanka/Tamil Elaam, Turkey/ Kurdistan, Japan), others constitute central parts of the phenomenon's generalization. First and foremost, it is the Israeli/Palestinian example that soon acquired the status of an uncontested pars pro toto. Others, such as Chechnya, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Iraq are easily linked to the implicit and explicit criteria of this generalization. One of the analogies that enable this focus is the medieval group of the so-called Assassins, who during the middle-ages carried out targeted killings of contemporary enemy leaders in

what is today Iraq, Iran and Syria. Their mythologization goes back to the writings of Marco Polo and has fascinated European travelers, merchants, clerics, and later scholars and a general European public for centuries (Brunner, 2012a). In contrast to this frequent reference, historicizations that refer to global politics during the Cold War or to contemporary power relations have not reached the potency for generalization in the process of formation of an object of suicide terrorism yet, but remain complementary.

These observations lead to the fifth mode of Occidentalist self-assertion which I call *geopoliticization*, i.e. the generalizing of both particular geopolitical foci of research (certain attacks attract more curiosity and resources) and underlying political interests (of scholarship and politics). Geopolitics can be considered "a convenient fiction, an imperfect name for a set of practices within the civil societies of the Great Powers that sought to explain the meaning of the global conditions of space, power, and technology" (Ó Tuathail, 1996, p. 237). Othering (and Selfing) are central elements of these geopolitical definitions and explanations. The authoritative object of knowledge, which we have come to quite naturally call suicide terrorism, works as a privileged signifier in that respect. It helps to separate mental and territorial spaces from each other, denying their historical entanglements and thereby reinforcing the asymmetries of power on a global scale. However, the mode of geopoliticization provides a few surprises. Some publications point towards the responsibility of Western politics and consider potential relations between the attacks and the targets they are aimed at. Such rational choice approaches (Pape, 2005) coexist with crude conceptions of radical difference (Israeli, 2003) as well as with an emphasis on causal relations "between our society's policies and actions and those of terrorist organizations and supporters" (Atran, 2003, p. 1539). Policy recommendations range from the demand for similar tactics, practices and even certain mentalities of terrorism and counter-terrorism (Atran, 2006) to the advocacy for an open confession of the imperialist nature of Western power and their respective realist politics, also with regard to issues of energy (Pape, 2005, p. 237). Another, albeit marginalized, focus lies on the warning of future suicide bombers, who might not fit the ready-made identikits and pseudo-profiles, but who seemingly resemble 'us' more than we are generally prepared to acknowledge (Khosrokhavar, 2005, pp. 230-237).

Culturalization is the most evident mode of Occidentalist self-assertion, since today's "culture talk" (Mamdani, 2005, p. 17) about political violence is easily compatible with a variety of other discourses. Their manifestations can be found in the media, in politics, in informal communications and in scholarship. As mentioned before, terrorism research has widened its gaze to encompass certain forms of political violence. Today, scholars not only look at perpetrators, their social environment, or organizations which apply certain tactics, but they also take regional, national, or international constellations into account. However, the pathologizations, irrationalizations, historicizations, sexualizations, and geopoliticizations are not overcome by that wider focus, but have rather been integrated to it. Certain forms of (sub-state) political violence are thereby excluded from the space of the political and transferred to a diffuse realm of the cultural, whereas others (perpetrated by nation states or international alliances) occupy the sphere

of politics. While Western nation states claim a quasi-naturalized legitimacy of violence for themselves, the so-called areas of instability are not even thought of as being able to produce anything but illegitimate violence; not for political reasons, but for reasons that are thought of to be deeply rooted in what is then simply framed as the cultural.

CONCLUSION

An approach to suicide terrorism that takes into account the concept of epistemic violence reminds us of the coloniality of power before, during and after political violence occurs, while at the same time it points at the coloniality of knowledge. This move challenges the narrow definitions of violence that mainstream voices consider crucial for studying (suicide) terrorism. It locates both the objects and the subjects of research into asymmetric power relations shaped by a centuries-old heritage of coloniality, and goes beyond the Euro-Atlantic consensus even of critical scholarship. It focuses on the long-term prerequisites, potentialities and consequences that enable both the committing of political violence and the definitions of research and abatement policies against it; it includes symbolic, semantic and otherwise institutionalized dimensions of epistemic violence and thinks through what the different levels of violence have to do with each other. The attempt to link the epistemic violence which is embedded in scholarly work with the political violence that experts try to analyze, explain and theorize, will not remain without controversies, however. These are part of the power relations that we as scholars, experts, and academics have to deal with when we investigate violence in all its dimensions.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A CONTESTED TERRITORY IN A SACRALIZED LANDSCAPE: THE FIGHT OF THE GICH COMMUNITY OVER SEMIEN MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Marshet Girmay[1]

ABSTRACT

Local community involvement is widely considered vital for the sustainability of heritage management projects. Yet, it is often the case that heritage-related projects lag behind in community involvement. In the Semien Mountains the creation, first, and expansion, later, of the National Park has led to several conflicts with the local communities that for centuries have been inhabiting the area. Local communities have only been passive actors in the plans to expand the park set up by UNESCO and by local decision makers. This paper investigates the causes that led the Gich community, one of the communities affected by the park's expansion, to refuse the resettlement plan offered by the authorities. Qualitative research methods were employed, including document analysis, community conference and interview of informants. The paper shows that although the local community of Gich was highly attached to the park's heritage assets, their level of involvement in the heritage management was very low due to shortcomings in the design and implementation of official policies. Therefore, their attitude towards the park's managers has been until the present day one of mistrust and opposition. The paper recommends to policy-makers a series of measures more empathetic towards local communities, such as development agencies acting as true communication facilitators and regional authorities nurturing sincere relationships with the locals.

Keywords: sustainability, World Heritage Site, Heritage Management, local communities, Semien Mountains, Gich, UNESCO

INTRODUCTION

Within the field of heritage management, community participation has long been recognized as a crucial aspect in heritage management policies. Thus, since the 1960s official policies have encouraged community participation heritage management. However, until today community participation in heritage management decisions is poor and far from what is theoretically expected (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999, p. 146). Community involvement in planning matters can vary from loosely reached informal arrangements to highly structured formal relationships. Scholars recognize four distinct forms of positive relationships between stakeholders in planning: cooperation, coordination, collaboration and partnership (Greta, 2012, p.

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45). These four categories can be imagined as moving along a continuum between low levels of involvement and high levels of decision-making power going to local communities. Community development would be found towards the partnership end of the scale of stakeholder involvement and can be described as a process of developing or building up communities to enable empowerment, self-sufficiency and control over their environment. Community development differs from community consultation, the most common method of involving local communities in heritage management, in that it achieves more active participation and an increase in overall community confidence in its capacity to take decisions (EWCA, 2014, p. 32).

Within the context of World Heritage, the empowerment of communities, as well as of other stakeholders, to facilitate management of their heritage is a form of capacity-building. In fact, capacity-building is one of the four Strategic Objectives or four 'Cs' for promoting the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, as outlined in the *Budapest Declaration on World Heritage*, adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2002 (see Cultural Institute of Macau, 2005; Op den Camp, n.d.). A fifth 'C', for Community, was added in 2007 to the already established 'Cs' of Credibility (of the World Heritage List), Conservation (of World Heritage properties), Capacity-building and Communication (increased awareness-raising, involvement and support for World Heritage; EWCA, 2014, p. 32).

A great number of the studies on community and heritage management fall short in providing an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic contexts of every particular heritage and on the low scale community participation in heritage management. Issues such as who represents the community, the manner in which the local communities should participate, the balance between varying and sometimes conflicting community interests and other processes that empower local communities are often disregarded. The intention here is to provide a study of a conflict that emerged during the implementation of a large scale heritage management project that failed to involve the affected local communities. The study focuses on the case of the Gich community that for years persisted in its refusal to the project of relocation pushed forth by the managers of Semien Mountains National Park (SMNP).

Written and oral data was collected for the study. On the one hand, documents from the office of SMNP situated at Debark and from the Begemdir Governorate General Archival center located at Gondar (today North Gondar Zone Administration Historical Archives, NGZAHA) were studied. On the other, in-depth interviews were conducted with people from Gich village. In addition, in June 2014 a workshop with the Gich community was arranged, which included about seventy four people and it lasted for half a day. The data collected was analyzed by using categorizing strategies (thematic analysis) and connecting narrative strategies (Maxwell, 2005, p. 96).

What is a local community?

The 1950s and 1960s witnessed the beginning of community-based heritage management, which was introduced as an approach to rural development (Seble, 2010, p.42). As Catley emphasized community-based heritage management is an effective method "to educate and remove stigma of charity and involve local people in decision making" (1999, p.64). Therefore, the aims of community-based heritage management lie at the core of the community. Yet, before analyzing what community-based heritage management entails, we might try to respond to the question of what does the term 'local community' actually mean? It is a combination of words often used freely in the heritage world, assuming that people living within the same area will all homogeneously fit into the same interest groups commonly referred to as a 'community' (Ibid.). It must be clear that although the term 'local community' does refer to villagers and inhabitants living within the same geographical area, the fact that there is heterogeneity, differences in interests and power conflicts within every local group need also to be taken into consideration. As Scheyvens suggests "in all communities there are inequalities which may be exacerbated by the introduction of a somewhat lucrative industry to which all will not have access" (Scheyvens, 2000, p. 16). Gender inequalities, power relations, and education levels of those belonging to the community may also affect the community's sharing of the benefits brought about by tourism and other industries.

Rural communities are more commonly found in developing countries. According to Mann "such traditional, locally based communities are breaking down in the West and the urban developing world largely due to the global economy's demand for a mobile labour force" (Mann, 2000, p. 23). Rural communities have inhabited areas of exceptional biodiversity and ecosystems for centuries, thereby they have been spurring the interest for the safeguarding of the "cultural heritage, enhancing the conservation of the natural heritage, while at the same time improving the economic benefits of the local communities" (Asker, 2010, p. 2). Unfortunately, there is often unevenness in the distribution of returns of tourism in the developing world. Thus, while tourism may provide a venue for communities and people to enhance their income or livelihood, the bulk of benefits tend to flow away from them. Additionally, the real power and decision-making is normally kept away from the local communities (Reid & Sindiga, 1999, p. 67).

There is concern with the consequences of increased accessibility and affordability of tourism on natural environments. As a result, several authors have attempted to create protocols that will help in implementing community-based heritage management projects (Mann, 2000; Mowforth & Munt, 2009; Seble, 2010). If implemented effectively, the community-based heritage management should allow the local communities to manage and sustainably use the natural resources surrounding them. This ultimately could provide capacity building for the community, promote sustainable conservation of the environment and bring economic stability. Local communities tend to put pressure on the ecosystems thus resulting in

degradation and destruction of the environment. Lack of education, poverty and the urge of basic needs such as food and water are the main factors that result in tourism having negative impacts upon the environment.

THE SEMIEN MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK: A CONTESTED AND SACRALIZED TERRITORY

The SMNP[2] (13° 11' N, 38° 04' E) is located on the Amhara plateau of northern Ethiopia. The area lies about 120 km north-east of Gondar. The Park was established in 1969 (Henze, 2005-06, p. 1), with the main goal of ensuring the survival of the highly endangered walia ibex (Ethiopian Tourism Commission, n.d; NGZAHA, Letter No. m5/5/20/66, 1974). In 1978 the Park became one of the four World Heritage sites (World Heritage Committee, 1978). Following its establishment as a protected area, the Park attracted international attention and became easily accessible to visitors, especially to researchers. Thereafter, a series of studies were conducted on the area by both local and foreign scholars on different fields. The landscape of this world heritage is one of the most breathtaking sites in the world. It includes more than 500 plant and 23 mammal species; among the mammals four of them are endemic to the region (Greta, 2012, p. 30; IUCN, 2000). In spite of the creation of the Park, the tradition of hunting walia by

Figure 1: *View of the landscape around Gich village*
Source: Photo Marshet Girmay, 2016.

2. Semien (also Simien, Samen) in Amharic means north. The origin of this time-old name could be found in Aksumite times. In a Greek inscription from the Monumentum Adulitanum a 3rd-century Aksumite ruler boasts of his conquests in “inaccessible mountains covered with snow" where "the Samene people dwell”; Munro-Hay, 1991, pp. 222-23.

local communities continued. This led Emperor Haile Sillase I to enforce a law against those threatening this species (NALA, 1968, Letter No. 1702/6/59). In parallel, the same government started to promote the Park (Ibid.,Letter No. 442/44/62). Thus, the establishment and promotion of the Park has kept the poaching somewhat under control, although illegal burning and cultivating within the Park continued to be a threat (Ethiopian Tourism Commission, n.d).

Historically, the habitat of walia ibex has coexisted with at least two villages, Sankaber, 14 km away from Ambaras, and Gich. Accordingly, it was at these two villages that the imperial government's action to promote the park started (NGZAHA, Letter No. m5/5/20/66, 1974; Community Conference with Gich villagers, 2014).

Ambaras is found on the outskirts of the national park and is approximately 14 km from Sankaber camp. The latter site has become an almost obligatory stop for most of the visitors of the Park, who often make a halt there to spend a night. The community of Ambaras provides the possibility of renting mules for trekking tours and every day twenty to thirty men walk to Sankaber Camp with the hope of finding employment. The population of Ambaras is estimated at least to be between 100 to 150 households. Gich village is found at the heart of the SMNP and it is one of the oldest communities in the region. It is the largest settlement in the Park, with approximately 400 households and a population of 1,980 individuals. Most of the trekking tours pass through this village en route to Chenek camp, the last stop before Ras Dashen peak (Greta, 2012, p. 12; Henze, 2005-06, p. 207).

The area occupied by the SMNP can be considered a sacralized landscape for the indigenous communities who have had huge and deep attachments with it. For the Gich community in particular, its identity purely emanates from this landscape. Thus, SMNP is a place the local inhabitants show reverence to because of its ability to append them with their ancestors and the spirit world; it is a space, as Kotze and Van Rensburg have emphasized, "that communicates and entrenches traditional, cultural and spiritual values espoused by the community" (Kotze & Van Rensburg, 2003). In this sense, specific places or entire landscapes might be considered as sacred irrespective of the nature and the history the place withhold. Concomitant with this, the identity of present and past societies is often closely associated with specific locations and structures in the landscape (Fowler, 2003, p. 78). These landscapes may become cultural or sacred landscapes by virtue of the symbolic interaction between people and their natural environment over space and time (UNESCO, 2008, p. 47). Sacred landscapes are, therefore, defined as geographic areas that include both cultural and natural resources and are associated with historical developments, events and activities or which exhibit cultural values (Jopela, 2011, p. 3; Ndoro, 2001, p. 72).

Yet, with hindsight it can be argued that the landscape of the SMNP is also sacralized by the national authorities, the international experts and the visitors. The conservationist bodies, whose policies can be traced back to

an ideology of nature first developed in the Christian west (see Carvalho & Steil, 2013, p. 108 et passim; Simpson, 1992, p. 557 et passim), see it as their main task to protect the natural landscape from encroachments by 'contaminating elements' and, thus, to preserve the nature in a 'wild', 'pristine' state. The tourists, on their hand, worship the natural landscape in a similar way as devout people do when they go to pilgrimage-sites: they aim at encountering an unspoiled wilderness and face this encounter as a process for "spiritual elevation, moral regeneration and an ideal of happiness" (Carvalho & Steil, 2013, p. 104). Within this mindset, indigenous groups are seen either as a 'backdrop' to the scenery and wildlife or, in the worst case, as a threat to it; thus, the need to eradicate or control them is a necessary consequence of the pretense to conserve the environment.

During the Derg regime (1974–1991) the Park suffered from neglect and poaching of wild species resumed. During this period the Park's fauna and flora were seriously affected and the habitats of some endemic species diminished dramatically. The Park became almost inaccessible and its designation as a world heritage site lost its practical meaning. Starting from 1985, following the insurgence of northern groups against the Derg, people started settling near the Park. An additional factor threatening animals' habitat was the area's strategic importance, when it became a battleground between the rebels and the government forces (Henze, 2006-06, p. 208). Roughly 2,500 Amhara people lived in the Park, but some 1,800 were forcibly evicted in 1978–79 and in 1985–86 (Berihun Tiru, 2011, p. 10; WCMC, 1992). This policy was at the time much-resented and even today it continues to spur hatred among the local people towards the government. Therefore, due to the central government's unique concern for wildlife, instead than for local communities, the initial policies to manage the Park in cooperation with local inhabitants failed (Ibid). Thus, during a community conference held in June 2014 with the Gich village locals, they complained that "the priority is given to the animals than we humans".

At the same time, the gradual growth of the local population and its associated practices (agriculture, human settlement, and overgrazing) threatened the sustainable conservation of this natural heritage. As a consequence, in 1996 the World Heritage Committee placed the heritage on the Danger List because of a serious decline in the population of walia ibex due to human settlement, grazing, and cultivation (EWCA, 1978; UNESCO, 2008).

Recognizing the ever increasing risks for the Park the government of Ethiopia, together with other groups, took an initiative aimed at bringing a solution to this rampant problem. Accordingly, a detailed plan was formulated. The plan had two main foci: on the one hand, to open the wildlife passage and connect the old and the new boundaries and, on the other, to gain the involvement of the local communities (Simien Mountains National Park, 2009). A priority of the plan was to compensate those who should be relocated. Thus, emphasis was given on how to reach a mutual understanding (Ibid). Yet, in spite of these concerns, the relocation plan was clearly focused on open passages to reach wildlife habitats with the

consequence of clearing settlements and diminishing the high human pressure in the area. Yet, without a true livelihood development plan for the communities, the 'relocation with compensation plan' was hardly to be a success (Berihun Tiru, 2011, p. 34).

As indicated above, shortly after the foundation of the SMNP, in 1979, about 700 people were displaced against their will from the lower slopes of the northern escarpment (WCMC, 1992). Thereafter, several other relocation campaigns were implemented. The more recent ones were launched after UNESCO had put the Park under the endangered list of Work Heritage Sites in 1996. The last relocation campaign to be carried out affected the Arkwasiye residents, who offered some resistance but finally gave in to the demands of the official authorities (Berihun Tiru, 2011, p. 32; Berihun Tiru, Jungmeier, & Huber, 2012). Relocating the villagers of Gich was also part of the plan. The community hosts more than 400 households who still are living with agriculture and rearing animals. The relocation of Arkwasiye residents was a difficult one and it did not count with the support of the people. People complained that they had not been fully compensated. Their experience was well noticed by those still waiting for relocation, particularly by the Gich community. So, due to the lack of a credible and generous compensation plan, all the attempts to relocate them were in vain (Semien National Park World Heritage, 2008).

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

In the Ethiopian context local community participation in heritage management has been far from smooth. Traditionally it has been the regional government (in the present case the Amhara National Regional State or ANRS) that monopolized power and decision making on all issues related to heritage. However, concerning the world heritage sites UNESCO has had the upper hand over the regional government in monitoring and managing the sites and, at the same time, it has harmonized its policies with those of the local management plan. Currently, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development granted powers to the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) to manage the SMNP (EWCA, 2014). Until 2010, the park was being managed by the Culture, Tourism and Parks Development Bureau of ANRS based in Bahir Dar. The change from regional to federal government in the park's management has undoubtedly brought about confusion to the various stakeholders. Though since this restructuring, the shifts in park's employees, new regulations and the management schemes have been enforced, the process of implementation has been slow.

Until now, the park's management plan designed by the local authorities and based on UNESCO guidelines has been partially implemented. Some of the objectives of the plan that have been already accomplished include demarcating and extending the park's boundaries and relocating the inhabitants from the village of Arkwasiye. Informants from the office of the SMNP believe that if the management still remained in the hands of the regional authorities instead of transferring it to the federal level, more of the management's planned benchmarks would have been achieved (interviews

with Abebaw Yihun, Teshome Hailu, and Zerfu Alebachew). The same informants emphasized that the employees were already familiar with the way things worked, that the local communities had established relationships with their team, and they were involved with the park's issues at grassroots level. Although the reasoning for the change of management from regional to federal was not revealed in any of the interviews, it seems that ANRS's Cultural, Tourism and Parks Development Bureau is no longer involved in any way in the SMNP. The Bureau's role is confined to releasing regional permits and administration works, but consultancy and management is completely beyond their jurisdiction. So, a sense of frustration was expressed when discussing the matter with some of the informants in the office of SMNP situated at Debark, who had worked at the park for 7 consecutive years, (interviews with Seyoum Worku, Tazebew Abay, and Worku Melesew). With regards to the shift in the management of the park, it was mainly village elders and scouts who were aware of it and most of the local inhabitants admitted that when it comes to the legal matters of the park local communities are neither involved in the decisions nor informed on their outcome. Most elders stated that the shift in management has only detached previous relationships and that it would take time to re-establish new relationships with the new employees of the park, a fact that would affect its management process.

Appiah has argued in heritage issues that there are no legitimate or illegitimate communities (Appiah, 2006, p. 308). He is sympathetic to the view that local loyalties and allegiances are important because they determine who we are. Accordingly, he encourages the communities to embrace both local and universal loyalties and allegiances and denies that they should necessarily come into conflict with each other. The concept of the universal value of heritage has been criticized as a form of neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism whereby researchers and others exploit host communities in the name of science (Hamilton, 2000, p. 67; Watkins, 2000). Considering the need to understand the past, whether from a heritage or a local community perspective, the local communities that own and have an interest in the heritage should benefit more from the resources and should play an important role in their management and in the conduct and practice of the discipline. Community participation is one of the most effective ways of sustainably managing the heritage site including owners and stakeholders.[3]

In 2011 the Semien Mountains National Park Ecotourism Cooperative Establishment (SMNP-ECE) was inaugurated (Greta, 2014). This SMNP-ECE involved all concerned *kebele*s (i.e. districts, a term that refers to the smallest administrative unit of government in Ethiopia) of the park. In the Community Conference held in 2014 it was stated that the Cooperative was formed as a result of "situations that are creating risk to the security and benefits of the communities, as the residents of the park do not receive

3. Regarding the stakeholders, not all of them share the same features and demands towards the heritage. Some are inclined to threaten the heritage. Others have a dominant position and tend to use their legitimate right over the heritage contrary against dependent groups who lack power to execute their own legitimate rights.

equitable benefits from the tourism services". The mission of such ecotourism cooperative was "to build a strong cooperative movement, realizing the social and economic prosperity of its members and ultimately better the life of the community" (SMNP, 2008).

After the management was transferred from the region to the central level, the local officials at Debarq and Semien established a system of community development so that all communities could benefit from tourism. Yet, the system turned into a blessing in disguise (interview with Sisay Mekwonent). The park headquarters used a drawing system to distribute to the *kebele*s of the park tourism-related tasks such as serving as scouts, cooks, and porters. Thus, Gich community might be selected to cater to the tourists for the months of September and October and, then, the draw would select another village for the following months. On this basis all villages will be assigned a similar amount of time serving the tourists so that they all have the chance to benefit from this industry. Yet, although presented as even handed, the efficiency and transparency of the 'draw' is dubious. For instance, those villages that are selected for the peak seasons are likely to gain the most benefits, as the influx of tourists makes it possible to earn more generous tips and the work itself is spread throughout the day. Inversely, if a village is selected to cater to tourists in the rainy seasons (May to September), when the number of tourists dwindles to almost zero, the village may not benefit at all from tourism and must wait at least half a year in order to be placed back in the draw (Community Conference with Gich villagers, 2014).

THE RESISTANCE OF GICH COMMUNITY TO THE RESETTLEMENT PLAN

Unlike other villages of the SMNP such as Limalimo, Miligibsa, and Arkwaseye, the largest village of the area, Gich, which is found at the core of the park, is very reluctant to abide by the policy of resettlement. It bears mentioning that, as Debonnet (2006) has pointed out, "the people in Gich village are depended on food aid for 5 to 6 months a year; this clearly shows the unsustainability of the current livelihood strategy" (p. 89). Despite the fact that the living standards are becoming harder to deal with, when the inhabitants of Gich were asked about resettlement at the conference, they made it clear that it was not an option:

> We live at the heart of the park, this is our home; we know nothing better. We have heard about plans for resettlement, we have discussed with officials of the park but we oppose them, unless it promises a much better life for each and every one of us and we don't want to exercise similar life that the Arkwaseye people are entertaining but we don't mean that our desire is to be financially buoyant (Community Conference with Gich villagers, 2014).

The inhabitants of the Gich village argue that their ancestors have been living inside the park with the wild animals for many years; however, they criticize the fact that more attention is given to animals than to human beings. Daily and Ellison (2002, p. 37), together with Rosenzweig (2003, p.

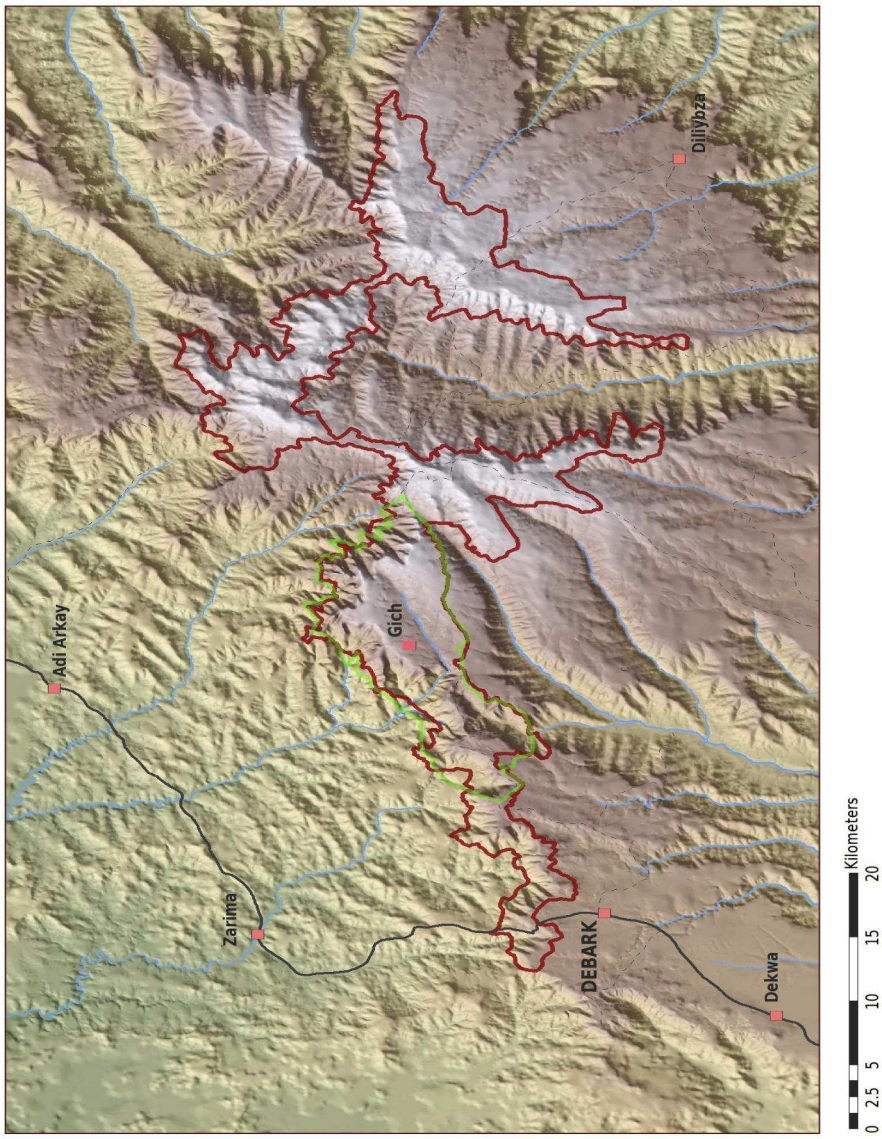

Figure 2: *Map of Semien Mountains National Park and location of Gich village; in green and red, the 1969 and 2016 boundaries, respectively*
Source: Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Gondar.

91), have emphasized that the main purpose for developing the management plan for the protected area should be the establishment of 'win-win' solutions that satisfy human needs while maintaining ecological functions. Similarly, the Gich inhabitants worry about the eventual shortage of land for their families if they abandon their homeland. Obviously, the value of this national park is not confined to the Gich community or even to the country at large since it is a world heritage. Thus, given its global value, the Gich community expects to be offered similar means of livelihood in addition to their current ones if the relocation proposal is materialized. Otherwise, they believe that they will not be able to cope up with the life outside their locality to which they have age-old attachments. This potential conflict addresses the issue of realignment of the park's boundaries, which now includes a large number of villages.

The topic of human resettlement in heritage sites these days is always a controversial one, and touches upon ethical and human right subjects. UNESCO has made it clear that if the reduction in human presence is not made, the SMNP will remain within the list of endangered sites (IUCN, 2000). When an individual in the local Semien Park office who prefers to remain anonymous was asked why this could be, he mentioned that Gich was the toughest village to deal with, as the village became aware of EWCA's plans to spend USD 8 million on a resettlement plan for the village (Anonymous, 2014; Greta, 2012). Therefore, the inhabitants of Gich want the highest compensation and will not budge if they do not get what they want.

LIMITED LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS

Historically, subsistence livestock and arable farming were the main sources of livelihood for the Gich community. Arable farming was not prohibited but is generally not viable because of the roaming of endemic wild animal populations. Despite the difficulties, the communities in the areas have resorted to producing subsistence crops. The Gich communities shared the view that they should be given the opportunity to participate in the management of the park (Community Conference with Gich villagers, 2014). The communities believed that the wildlife resources in the park had survived and even increased because of the harmonious traditional co-existence. Their argument was that communities should not be alienated from wildlife resources since they had a long history of co-existence with and dependence on wildlife based on indigenous knowledge systems.[4]

The different initiatives pushed forth to manage the park have, however, not been able to address all equity issues since not all members of the affected communities have benefited, and the Gich community did get some

4. Indigenous knowledge is defined as the local, traditional knowledge of people in a given geographic area. It is an integrated body of traditional knowledge exercised in traditional education systems and traditional institutions; Grenier, 1998.

lessons from the already relocated neighborhoods. The people of Arkwaseye and others are not as such comfortable with the relocation process. As it turned out, the post relocation life did not unfold as they had been told. It was found that the majority of participants of the community conference with Gich residents had problems with the relocation process. More than half of the participants identified specific problems which they linked to the park. They emphasized their willingness to contribute to its improved management if allowed to do so through participatory and inclusive approaches without compromising their interests.

The Gich community felt that the issue related to resettlement is a source of conflict because they were only forced to resettle without having a saying on it. Moreover, their question regarding compensation was not fully answered. Thus, they pointed out that they painfully accepted to sacrifice their historical and cultural attachment with the park's territory for the benefit of the country but officials did not applaud this as a sacrifice. Respondents also reported that their interaction with the neighboring communities for service acquisition and market access was curtailed by restricted movement. Gich residents were more concerned with being denied rights to harvest the vegetative natural resources in the park. There were also arguments that since communities were not allowed to harvest the resources they should be given other direct benefits from the park.

It should be reminded that the current livelihood strategies of the local communities living inside the park are very basic. Infrastructure, access to basic medical facilities, and education are almost absent. The dominant economic activities are agriculture, crop yielding and livestock rearing. In addition, due to the lack of family planning, the population is constantly on the rise and pressure on the land is excessive.[5] According to interviews, the prices of living amenities like food and clothing have increased over the past twenty years and the standard of living has risen considerably (Interviews with *qes* Alemu Sitotaw, *ato* Mequanint Belew, and Sitotaw Abuhay). The local communities can no longer sustain their ever-growing villages solely on crop production and trading; the dominance of poverty therefore instigates hem to theft and corruption and to the lack of distribution of benefits within the communities. The villagers are also aware of the fast short-term benefits in working as escorts, cooks, porters or mule renters. This adds to the competition, and makes it even harder to fairly distribute work opportunities. Even though tourist numbers are constantly increasing in the Semien Mountains World Heritage Site, the supply versus demand ratio is largely unbalanced. One of the members of the Gich village states, "We need help, we are poor and no matter how much we all work, under these conditions little will change. If tourism is improving the life of people in the area, we also deserve to be included – it is only right. We may not have knowledge, training or capacity at the moment, but we are willing to learn for a better future" (Ibid).

5. During my stay with the Gich community I could find out that the family size increased drastically since the last twenty years. Locals told me that they are in trouble to cope with life with the limited resources at their disposal vis-à-vis the considerable rise in the number of their family members.

Similarly, given the alternative land use options that protected areas can be put to for generating local and national income, there has also been increasing pressure to justify the economic contribution of protected areas to national development and livelihoods of communities adjacent to these areas (Salafsky & Wollenberg, 2000; see also Chirikure & Pwiti, 2008). This pressure is partly due to the under-appreciation of the role protected areas play in livelihoods of communities in their vicinity. In addition to this, the local communities adjacent to these areas have livelihood strategies that fail to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the protected areas. There is a global consensus that we need to enhance rural livelihoods, conserve biodiversity and increase productivity at a landscape level. For protected areas to succeed as venues for biodiversity conservation they need to enlist local support for conservation by addressing the livelihood needs of adjacent communities. To achieve this there is a need to understand the current impact of protected areas on the livelihood and survival strategies of the communities. This insight will enable management, together with stakeholders, to identify appropriate sustainable strategies for local communities to meet their livelihood needs and to reduce destructive practices in the heritage environment (Ibid).

It has been observed that the lack of community participation alienates communities from the park (Greta, 2012, p. 43). Local park officials understood that the exclusion of communities from the management of this heritage compromises the security of the areas; thus, there are risks associated with such injustice as forced displacement, restriction to access to livelihood resources and cultural erosion. In consequence, there is need to tap on indigenous knowledge systems for heritage management. With time, the alienated local communities became increasingly activists, demanding a stake in the management and protection of this heritage which has a worldwide significance. In addition to direct and meaningful involvement, they insisted on benefiting socially and economically from the resources of the heritage. They called for empowerment and lobbied governments and donor bodies to perform accordingly and for need policies designed to ensure fair treatment of local or indigenous peoples and the heritage itself. For them, this is uplifting the indigenous communities from a sub-standard treatment they had been experiencing so far.

CONCLUSIONS

Human communities living in and around protected areas have age-old relationships with such areas. The local communities from Gich depend on the resources of the SMNP for their livelihoods and cultural survival. These communities have, however, been excluded from the management of the park, against the co-existence principles between communities and protected areas. The exclusion of local communities, which are often better placed to conserve the resources because of their traditional indigenous knowledge systems, is inimical to natural resources conservation efforts. The establishment of protected areas was justified on the basis of existence of unique natural resources and landscape systems and relationships with local communities. The relationships embrace cultural identity, spirituality

and subsistence practices which frequently contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity. Such profound relationships have, however, been ignored by heritage officials in the study area. Exclusionary resource management practices leave communities without adequate natural resource access to support their livelihoods, resulting in over-exploitation and degradation of species and habitats in protected areas. Moreover, local communities have developed a negative outlook towards all those who uphold a firm position regarding the protection of the heritage. Left unchecked, the exclusionary approach to community participation might lead to the impoverishment of local communities, constraining the effective management of protected areas. Therefore, involving communities in the management process by exploiting their indigenous knowledge would benefit both the heritage itself and the local communities.

The inhabitants of Gich currently are unwilling to cooperate with any stakeholders on the idea of resettlement or alternatively they claim extremely high amounts of compensation for accepting resettlement. This is where development agencies can come in as communication facilitators. They can act as 'middle-men' among government officials, the park wardens and the villagers of Gich. Development programs can gain much if development agencies nurture relationships by spending time with the locals and by proving them that their intentions are positive. Thus, it is recommended that the development agencies may give only such promises which they can actually afford to offer and, thereby, help the local officials in developing the strategies to address the resettlement proposal.

Since Gich is the largest of all the villages within the SMNP, it is suggested that the smaller communities may be resettled first on a voluntary basis. This will show Gich that the smaller villages are provided for with better livelihoods and it may also create an atmosphere of trust. Resettling a village like Gich without the inhabitants' full consent is likely to be difficult, and may not be the optimal solution, considering that the locals provide for the tourism industry, which is a positive factor for the park. An alternative solution could be giving each inhabitant of Gich the choice of either staying in the park and working along with international development agencies as sustainable natural resource management contributors (i.e. training for scouts, tour guides, and small enterprise creation) or resettling outside the park voluntarily, accepting a fair compensation for their losses. Moreover, giving priority for the local people's well-being and approaching them sympathetically would help in avoiding suspicion and mistrust among the villagers.

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List of Informants

Name	Sex	Age	Date of interview	Place	Remarks
Abebaw Yihun	M	41	June 1, 2014	Debark	He is working as an expert in the Office of SMNP and he provided a great deal of information on the topic under discussion
Alemu Sito-taw, *qes*	M	67	March, 2014	Gich	A local peasant who is also an opinion leader in the community. He has also a large tract of land in the area and he rendered a great deal of information on their age-old attachment to the area.
Mequanint Belew	M	51	March 20, 2014	Gich	He is a tailor and reputed to possess knowledge of the history of the SMNP and the question of the community.
Seyoum Worku	M	39	June 2, 2014	Debark	Same as Abebaw Yihun
Sisay Mekwonent	M	43	June 2, 2014	Debark	Same as Abebaw Yihun
Sitotaw Abuhay	M	45	March 2, 2014	Gich	He is a well-known orator in the village and is well informed about the causes of the conflict between the government and the community. He has represented the community many times to address their question to the respective offices.
Tazebew Abay	M	38	July 10, 2014	Debark	He is working in the Office of the SMNP situated at Debark and was a potential informant who has provided invaluable information on the causes of the conflict between the government and the Gich community.
Teshome Hailu	M	46	July 10, 2016	Debark	Same as Tazebew Abay
Worku	M	34	July 10, 2014	Debark	Same as Tazebew Abay
Zerfu Alebachew	M	41	July 11, 2014	Debark	He provided invaluable knowledge about the management of other protected areas and their comparison with what is going on in SMNP.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE MYTH OF THE FORTY FOUR CHURCHES OF GONDAR

Andreu Martínez d'Alòs-Moner[1] and Sisay Sahile[2]

ያርባራ·ቱ ደብር እያለ· ካህና·ቱ
ለምነው በድርቡ·ሽ ጎንደር መፈታ·ቱ
"In spite of the presence of the clergy of the 44 churches
Why is the absolution of Gondar held by the Dervish?"
(traditional *qene*, Mahteme Sillase Welde Mesqel, 1961, p. 256)

ABSTRACT

Gondar is today often labelled as the city of the 'forty four churches'. Since Gondar became the royal capital of Ethiopia in the first half of the seventeenth century many churches were founded in the city and in its surroundings but this myth seems to have emerged only when the glory of the city was over, in the nineteenth century. In addition, from the mid-twentieth century onwards several different lists on the 'forty four churches' were produced. The result is that over sixty churches from Gondar city and its surroundings have been included in at least one of these lists. The paper searches the roots of this tradition on Gondar's churches. The study argues that the myth was buttressed on a number with an important symbolic meaning in highland Ethiopia that signified 'wholeness'. Moreover, its emergence can be explained by two different phenomena: on the one hand, the Gondarine society was eager to reclaim a central role for its city during a period when Gondar and its nearby provinces had become peripheral regions within the Ethiopian state; on the other, foreign travelers popularized a myth that came in handy to supply their narratives with strong, quantifiable facts.

Keywords: Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, Gondarine Kingdom, travel literature, symbolic numbers, churches

INTRODUCTION

One of the most widespread traditions about the city of Gondar in Ethiopia is the one telling about its 'forty four churches'. The tradition is today very much alive in Gondar and the visitors of this ancient capital of Ethiopia are often informed about it. For instance, an authoritative travel guide on Gondar and Lake Tana published recently, christens the city as 'The City of the 44 Christian Churches' (Chiari, 2012, p. 34; see also List of Gondarine churches, n.d.). Such a large number of temples would symbolize the strong religious identity of the city and at the same time show the strength the urbs once acquired. Indeed, no other city in Ethiopia–not even the two

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ancient capitals of Aksum and Lalibela or its present day capital Addis Abeba–could claim the number of Christian sanctuaries Gondar people do for their locality.

Significantly, this old tradition of the forty four churches of Gondar seems to have spread to other areas of the Ethiopian highlands. Thus, today officials and clergy of Lake Tana, Axum and North Shewa claim the same number of churches for their respective regions.

This paper looks into the origins of the tradition on the forty four churches of Gondar. Firstly, the paper discusses the central role that church foundations had in Ethiopian and Gondar history. Then, the paper searches into the historical literature in order to find the earliest references to this tradition. When did the tradition originate, was it during the period of Gondarine hegemony or when Gondar was replaced by other regions as the centre of the kingdom? In a final stage a 'list' of the forty four churches is proposed. This list, however, does not intend to be a canonical one, but instead is made out of four different lists that during the twentieth century Gondar intellectuals and foreign scholars have produced. While the four lists agree in a 'core' number of thirty one churches, they disagree with the rest. The result is that about sixty one churches have been mentioned at some point as being part of the famed 'forty four'. The article concludes with some hypotheses that might explain the divergences in the four lists.

The paper uses different sets of historical sources. In order to find the earliest references to the tradition of the forty four churches, local and foreign accounts are scrutinized. Nineteenth-century foreign accounts have resulted particularly informative in providing historical references to the tradition. On the contrary, Ethiopian royal chronicles are silent about this tradition. Yet, these later sources have been useful in order to reveal that the number forty four is well embedded in the local intellectual traditions and that this number (more a symbol than a real sign) might have older roots than the tradition itself of the forty four churches. Finally, the search for lists on the forty four churches, which were compiled only during the twentieth century, has brought us to read different texts compiled by Gondarine and foreign scholars.

THE FOUNDATION OF GONDAR AND ITS CHURCHES

Gondar was founded by King Fasiledes (r. 1632-1667) around 1636. Before Gondar and until the mid-sixteenth century, the Ethiopian kings who ruled the country after the restoration of the Solomonic dynasty in 1270 used to live in roving capitals.[2] Reportedly, the first semi permanent capital was founded by King Gelawdewos at a locality called Wej, in central Ethiopia (Conzelman, 1895, p. 47 [text], p. 149 [tr.]). But it was the latter's nephew,

3. The possibility has been recently raised that during medieval times the Ethiopian Solomonid rulers had a permanent capital at the site of Barara, located in what today is Entotto hill, Addis Abeba; at Entotto the ruins of what could have been an impressive medieval fortress are currently in the course of study; see Vigano, 2016.

King Sertse Dingil (r. 1563-1597), who, at Guba'e (Infraz), started a trend by Ethiopian rulers to set up their cities in the regions to the northwest of Lake Tana (Pennec, 2003, p. 203). Two short-lived successors of Sertse Dingil, Ya'ìqob (r. 1597-1603, 1605-1607) and Zedingil (r. 1603-1605), settled down in the same geographical locations. Later on, Susinyos (r. 1607-1632) founded *ketemas* (royal cities) in areas not too far from Infraz, first at Gorgora, then at Denqez and finally at Azezo. These *ketema*s included impressive structures made of mortar that represented an innovation with previous royal architecture in the region. They were founded when the kingdom fell under the influence of Jesuit missionaries, who came from Portugal, Spain and Italy. The missionaries managed to convert the king to Catholicism and in 1625 they placed a Catholic Patriarch, Afonso Mendes, as the head of the Ethiopian church. The presence of the missionaries had also a strong influence in the architectonic techniques and models that Susinyos used for the erection of his palaces and castles. So the most ambitious buildings were built with the help of Indian masons and Jesuit missionaries (Martínez d'Alòs-Moner, 2015, p. 241 et passim). In 1632, following the death of Susinyos and the succession in power of his pro-Orthodox son Fasiledes, the foreign missionaries were banished from the country. Yet, Fasiledes, like his successors, kept using a foreign–principally of Indian origin–workforce–together with local masons–to erect their palaces, castles and churches in the Gondar region. Thus, the innovations brought about under Susinyos, such as the use of limestone and the construction of monumental structures with a military character, became the trademark of the so-called Gondarine architecture (Fernández, 2016).

Concerning the history of the foundation of Gondar Ethiopian royal chronicles, which since the fourteenth century recorded the deeds of the Solomonic monarchs (Chernetsov, 2007, p. 41), are meager in details. Fasiledes himself was not 'rewarded', as his predecessors were, with a royal chronicle (Kropp, 1986) so that the task of reconstructing Gondar's foundation and earliest developments can only be attempted with much caution. Be it as it may, the choice of the site, the *amba* ('flat mount' in Amharic) overlooking the rivers of Qaha and Angereb, must have been determined both by its strategic location, at the crossroads of important trade routes, and by Fasiledes's familiarity with the area. Fasiledes grew up at the courts his father had established at Azezo (Genneta Iyesus) and Denqez, which were at a short distance from Gondar (see also Ghiorghis, 1969, p. 166). Even during his earlier years as a monarch the king spent his days at these latter *ketema*s and he was to be buried at Azezo (Perruchon, 1898, p. 84 et passim). The scant historical sources on Gondar's origin are complemented with legends that even today are vividly recounted by the population of the city and of the surrounding provinces. One of such legends, which has several variants, tells that Fasiledes's father, Susinyos, encountered a prophet who announced him that he will found several capitals whose name would start with the syllable 'go'; Gondar, indeed was preceded by royal capitals that followed this naming pattern, thus Gorgora and Gomenghe (Denqez) (on an extensive study of oral traditions related to prophecies on the origin of Gondar, see Pollera, 1936; Ramos, 2010, p. 205 et passim; Solomon, 2006, p. 1).

As it happened with the civil buildings, the churches of Gondar were only built progressively and throughout many decades. The tradition in the Christian Ethiopian highlands required every new ruler to build or endow churches (see Derat, 2003, p. 222 et passim; also Ancel, 2006, pp. 57-59). This act, besides showing the religious devotion of the ruler, served to gain the favour of the Orthodox church and it was by itself a statement of political power, for royal churches were usually sumptuous buildings that were also endowed with extensive landed states. Royally-endowed churches in the countryside, which were often placed on top of hills with a commanding view over the surrounding areas, might have had an additional function, that of territorial control. Last but not the least, churches acted as royal mausolea and several of the Gondarine rulers and members of the royal family lay buried in different Gondar sanctuaries such as Azezo Tekle Haymanot, Addebabay Tekle Haymanot, Debre Birhan Sillase, Atatami Mikael, Lideta Lemaryam and Qwesqwam.

Traditions that can be collected in the Gondar region tell that some of Gondar's famous churches were founded before the attested foundation of the city occurred, which indicates the existence of a stable population in the area prior to the arrival of Fasiledes. Among the churches to which tradition attributes a 'pre-Gondarine' foundation are Gondaroch Giyorgis, Qaha Iyesus, Aberra Giyorgis, and Arba'itu Insisa. These churches are all situated in areas peripheral to the royal citadel or 'Fasil Ghimb', the site where political power came to reside. Reportedly, the first proper Gondarine churches were those founded by King Fasiledes on the main *amba* of Gondar. To him not less than seven church foundations are attributed in central Gondar: Fit Abo, Fit Mikael, Gimjabet Maryam, Ilfign Giyorgis, Medhane Alem, and Kiddus Gabriel (Ghiorghis, 1969; on oral traditions about these foundations, see Ramos, 2010, pp. 210-212). Four of such temples, Iyesus, Maryam, Giyorgis and Medhane Alem were built in the immediate vicinity to the Fasil Ghimb, while Fit Abo, Mikael and Gabriel were situated in the extremes south and north of the city. Fasiledes's successors, Yohannis I (r. 1667–1682) and Iyasu I (r. 1682–1706), who ruled during a period of relative stability, were also actively involved in founding religious temples. Yohannis I endowed several churches but only far away from Gondar city; the closest churches he built to Gondar would have been Abba Antonyos and Tsedda Egziabher Ab, at about 5 and 13 km as the crow flies from central Gondar, respectively. In his turn, Iyasu I is associated with at least twelve church foundations throughout the Gondarine state, two of them on the main *amba* of Gondar, Adebabay Tekle Haymanot and Debre Birhan Silassie.

Following the death of Iyasu I in 1706 Gondar entered into a period of crisis: the changes in the throne were frequent and several political and religious factions destabilized the state. This period culminated in the so-called *Zemena Mesafint*, 'The Era of the Princes' (conventionally dated 1769 –1855), when power fell totally in the hand of provincial lords (see Shiferaw Bekele, 1990). Yet, even then the practice of church founding among the royalty did not stop and the town experienced a second era of glory as far as the building of sanctuaries is concerned. King Tekle Haymanot I (r. 1706 –1708), who only ruled for a short time and died assassinated, did not

found any church. His successor and uncle, Tewoflos (r. 1708–1711), endowed Hamere Noh, situated just at a close range from the royal citadel. Yostos (r. 1711–1716) founded Lideta Lemaryam, another of Gondar's most famous churches of today. Dawit III (r. 1716–1721), the son of Iyasu I is associated with Attatami Mikael, one of the three churches situated within the imperial citadel, and with Abuna Ewostatewos, the latter today disappeared. The next ruler in power, Bekaffa (r. 1721–1730), endowed the city with the church of Rufael in central Gondar and another church situated beyond the Angereb river, Defecha Kidane Mihret. The latter's son and successor, the weak Iyasu II (r. 1730–1755), endowed at least one church, Qiddus Yohannis (Yohannis Metmaq), which was actually sponsored by *ras* Wolde Le'ul. Iyasu II's powerful mother, Mintiwab (Birhan Mogesa), who ruled as regent during large part of Iyasu II's rule, founded Debre Tsehay Qwesqwam, which was part of an ambitious citadel-abbey built at the outskirts of Gondar. Nine churches were founded during the reign of Tekle Haymanot II (r. 1769-1777). King Solomon (r. 1777-1779) founded the church of St. Fasiledes reusing the building known as Fasil's Bath. The last of the royal foundations of Gondar can be considered to be the church endowed by Tekle Giyorgis I (r. intermittently between 1779 and 1800), Debre Metmaq Maryam, situated today in a central area of the city.

With the years, the churches of Gondar became essential nodes in the social and political fabric of the city. Churches became centers of learning, of refuge and of devotion. At the same time the Christian sanctuaries played an important role in the city's urban network, functioning as true centres for each of the *sefer* (quartiers) growing around them (Solomon, 2006, p. xii). The central role Gondar churches acquired is captured in the following historical *qine* which is said to have been composed during the period of Gondar's prosperity:

> መልካሙ አገር ጎንደር፣
> በተስኪያን ስሞ ለመኖር፤
> አየቀርምና መዳኘት ፣
> ከተማ ሰው መግባት።።
> The finest city Gondar
> To live acquainted with churches
> It is obvious to stand before the court
> So that the man go to the city
> (Mahteme Sillase, 1961 AM, p. 30)

As it occurs with the origin of the city and with some other royal buildings, Gondar churches have several legends associated with them. The tabot of the church of Fit Abo, allegedly the first royal Gondarine church, protected the city–at the time when it was only a small settlement–from the wild beasts that came to Gondar from the mounts and valleys surrounding it.[4] The Mahdi invasions (known locally as 'Darbush') that laid waste the Gondar region and city in 1888 and 1889 are also the origin of marvelous

4. A similar tradition was recounted to the authors on May 3, 2016, during a visit to the nearby church of Fenter Medhane Alem by the abbot of the church, *qomos* Gebre Kidan. The church is situated some 5 km to the south of downtown Gondar and in a more rural setting.

stories. One such story holds that Debre Birhan Sillase was spared destruction by the invading Muslim forces by a swarm of bees. Similarly, the inner part of the church of Medhane Alem is said by its clergy to have miraculously escaped fire and even destruction by the Mahdist forces (Chiari, 2012, p. 68).

THE EMERGENCE OF A TRADITION

The tale of the 44 churches of Gondar is well embedded within the *afa tarik* ('oral tradition') that recounts several episodes of Gondar's past. Yet, due to its orality it is difficult to date the origin of the stories told in the *afa tarik*. At the most, the story teller may remember he or she first learnt of the story a couple of generations back, thus rendering a terminus post quem for the event concerned to eighty or so years ago.

The Gondar region, however, besides having a rich oral tradition, has an impressive collection of written sources, local and foreign. Royal chronicles, hagiographical acts and foreign accounts are among the historical sources one can tap when searching information on Gondar, in particular, and on Christian Ethiopia, in general. The chronicles of the Gondarine Kingdom are written in Gi'iz language and they span from the rule of Yohannis I (Guidi, 1960) to that of Tekle Giyorgis I (the latter was not the object of a chronicle proper; see Conti Rossini, 1917) about one hundred and fifty years later. Additionally, from the nineteenth century onwards Christian Ethiopians began writing chronicles in the Amharic language. Such texts contain valuable information on Gondarine churches, particularly when the church has some direct association with the ruler and the royal family. However, no chronicle or royal account mentions as large a number as 'forty four sanctuaries'. After all, Gondar churches were only built progressively, throughout different centuries and by different rulers.

The first written reference to the legend of the forty four churches appears to date to the early nineteenth century. It is then that the number of 'forty-something churches' makes its appearance, with gusto, into the historical record. Significantly this occurs in foreign travel accounts rather than in pieces of local historiography. Early into the century, towards 1811, the British soldier William Coffin wrote that "The priests [of Gondar] are of opinion that their city is very grand, and they even call it *Cuttermer Arbar arrat Bate er Christian* [i.e. *yearbarat bete kristiyan ketema*], meaning the city of the forty four churches" (quoted in Pearce, 1831, vol. 1, p. 241). A few decades later the French Edmond Combes and Maurice Tamisier, who travelled across Ethiopia from 1835 to 1837, wrote of "Gondar village and surroundings having forty two churches" (Combes & Tamisier, 1838, vol. 3, 342). These references show that by the first half of the nineteenth century there was a trend towards associating Gondar as an urbs with a large number of Orthodox Christian temples.

By the mid-nineteenth century the tradition of the 'forty-something churches' was popular enough so as to be recounted by every foreign traveler visiting Gondar. The French explorer Arnauld d'Abbadie, who was active in the Gondar area in the 1840s and 1850s, wrote that the city had

"nineteen churches; the locals [however] say that the city has forty four churches, but [because] they count those from the areas that have been almost abandoned and all from the eastern side" (1868, p. 160). The German diplomat and traveler Theodor von Heuglin, who visited the Gondar region in the 1850s and 1860s, wrote that "according to the missionaries [those in the service of Tewodros II] Gondar has forty four churches and ca. 1200 faithful" (1868, p. 216). His fellow Henry Stern referred the same number of churches in his account *Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia* (Stern, 1968 [1862], p. 230), which was the product of his stay in the Gondar region in the 1860s. The Frenchman Achille Raffray, active in the city from 1873 to 1875, wrote in his travelogue that "the city and its surroundings are occupied by churches; we are told there are forty three, of which many were built by the Portuguese" (Raffray, 1898, p. 31). To about the same period we can date the tradition collected by the German explorer Gerhard Rohlfs. In his travelogue *Meine Mission nach Abessinien* Rohlfs wrote that "according to the locals Gondar has forty churches" (1883, p. 268). The British scholar Charles Armbruster, who was resident of Gondar from 1909 to 1912, informed that "it is said that Gondar contains no less than 44 churches" (cited in Pearson, 2004, p. 204). Finally, well into the twentieth century, the French diplomat Maurice de Coppet, who edited King Minilik II's chronicle, reported that the Gondarine people were "once proud of their forty four churches" (Guèbrè Sellassié, 1930, vol. 1, p. 561; see also Bairu Tafla, 1981, pp. 82-83).

So, until the turn of the twentieth century different numbers were provided for Gondar churches: forty (Rohlfs), forty two (Combes and Tamisier), forty three (Raffray) and forty four (Coffin, d'Abbadie, von Heuglin, Stern, Armbruster, de Coppet). Forty four was the dominating number and eventually it will become the one sanctioned by tradition and by travel guides. Yet, the slight divergences seem to indicate that during the nineteenth century the tradition had not yet fully crystallised and that it was in the process of 'negotiating'. So slightly divergent traditions claimed preminence and a consensus had not yet been reached about the exact number of Gondar churches.

Supporting the accounts by the foreign travelers above, there are pieces of *afa tarik* that have been transmitted orally among the Gondar society. One such instance is perhaps the poem that opens this text, which reflects melancholically on the devastation inflicted in the 1880s by the "Derbush", i.e. Mahdists, upon the city and on the powerlessness of its forty four sanctuaries. In addition, the *Gi'iz – Amharic dictionary* by Kidane Weld Kifle defines Gondar as follows:

> (ኦንደ ሀገረ ፤ የፋሲል ከተማ ከግራኝ በኋላ የቀናች ባለ ፵፬ ደብር፤ ዳግም ግራኝና ሣልስ ግራኝ (ቴዎ፤ደር) ተከታትለው እስኪያጠፏት ድረስ መናገሻ ታላቅ ከተማ የነበረች
> Gondar: the main city, the mother of cities; the city of Fasil established after Gragn with its forty four churches; it was the royal city until its successive destruction by the second and third Gragn, Te [wodros] and the De[rvish]
> (Kidane Weld Kifle, 1948 A.M., p. 323)

THE ROOTS OF THE NUMBER FORTY FOUR

As it was shown, most of the written sources describing Gondar in the nineteenth century converged on the number of forty four, which today has become the authorized number of the historical churches in that city. The British historian Stuart Munro-Hay plausibly suggested that the number was meant to be taken symbolically, rather than literally (Munro-Hay, 2002, p. 156). Yet, the question as to why the tradition became fixed with such a number remains unresolved. Gondar's past, in particular that related to its court life, might help to explain why this number was preferred over others.

While the idea of the forty four churches of Gondar seems to have emerged during the nineteenth century, the number forty four has older roots. Back in the late eighteenth century the Scotsman James Bruce reported a local tradition on a similar number: the "forty-five islands in the lake [Tana]" (Bruce, 1790, vol. 3, p. 387). But more significantly this number is frequently mentioned in two important corpus of texts related to the Solomonic monarchy. One of them is the *Sir'ate Mengist* ('the ordinance of government'), a series of writings concerning court rituals, hierarchy and the appointment and privileges of dignitaries (see Kropp, 2011; Nosnitsin, 2010). Another corpuses where such reference has been recorded are the royal chronicles, to which attention has already been given.

The text known as *Sir'ate Mengist* is of difficult dating: the German scholar Varenbergh edited it on the basis of four texts dating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but its origins might be much older (Nosnitsin, 2010, p. 634). The text mentions that among the court dignitaries administering justice there are "forty four legislators ['Gesetzgeber' in the German translation and **ይውዕሉ· በበሥርዓቶሙ·** in the Gi'iz original], each with his own rank" (Varenbergh, 1916, p. [text], p. 33 [trans.]). In its turn, in the chronicle of King Susinyos (r. 1607-1632), which was written when the ruler was in office, there is a mention of "forty four tribes" from the southern regions (Gurage?) who came to the encounter of Susinyos as his subjects (Alemu, 2005, p. 26; Pereira, ch. XV, vol. 1, p. 41[text], vol. 2, 26 [trans.]; see also Bairu Tafla, 1981, p. 84). A little less than one century later, the chronicler of Iyasu I, Susinyos's great grandson, mentioned that the office of *Tigre mekwennin* (i.e. 'ruler of Tigray') had the command over "forty four *negarit* [a kettledrum and royal insignia]" (Guidi, 1961, p. 165 [text], p. 173 [trans.]; see also Bairu, 1987, p. 81). Not directly from the same literary tradition, but probably strongly influenced by it, is the famous travelogue of James Bruce referred to above. The Scotsman, who was a host at the Gondar court from 1769 to 1771, mentioned that "forty five [kettledrums, i.e. *negarit*]... constantly go before him [the king], beating all the way while he is on his march" (Bruce, 1790, vol. 3, p. 391).

With hindsight it can be argued that it is such royal tradition that influenced the Gondarians when, in the nineteenth-century, they elaborated their own myth of the forty four churches. After all it was in Gondar and the Gondar region where most of the royal texts mentioned above were written and transmitted. Whether the number forty four

described any real fact can be doubted and it rather seems to have been used as an idiomatic expression. The Gondar intellectuals, church scholars and scribes might have considered forty four as a strong, 'perfect', number, one that, like the number forty, was synonymous, as Bairu Tafla has already suggested, for "many" or "wholeness" (Bairu, 1987, p. 84 et passim; see also Zitelmann, 2007, p. 1203). Following Bairu we may locate the roots of the symbolism of the number forty four in the biblical narrative, where the number forty is associated with prominent events (1987, p. 78).

FORTY FOUR … OR SIXTY ONE?

As it seems, it was only during the twentieth century that effort was made on identifying with precision the exact identity of the forty four churches. Until the present a few lists on the forty four churches have appeared. In Table 1 four such lists have been tabulated. The first well organized list of the forty four churches was prepared by the Italian scholar Monti della Corte (1938, pp. 99-102), who supervised archaeological surveys in Gondar during the period of the Italian occupation. After him, in chronological order, we shall situate the list preserved in a manuscript authored by *aleqa* Mengistu Nega (1960 A.M.), the former head of the church of Abun Bet Gabriel. In the 1970s a local historian, Gerima Teffera (1966 A.M.) published a third list in the municipal journal of the city. More recently a fourth list appeared in the memorial bulletin of *liqe liqawint* Menkir Mekonnen (*Liqe liqawint*, 1989 A.M.), a prominent ecclesiastic and intellectual of the city.

As it can be seen there are significant disagreements between the four lists. So, all the four lists comprised, at least sixty one churches have claimed at some point to belong to Gondar's 'golden church list'. Yet, as it can be seen when comparing the four lists, thirty one sanctuaries appear in the four lists, namely Abbajale Tekle Haymanot, Abba Abiye Egzi Kidane Mihret, Abba Antonyos, Addebabay Iyesus, Adebabay Tekle Haymanot, Arba'itu Insesa, Atatami Mikael, Ayira Mikael, Be'ata Lemaryam, Bilajig Mikael, Daregenda Ewost'atewos, Debre Birhan Sillase, Debre Mitmaq Maryam, Debre Tsehay Qwesqwam, Defecha Kidane Mihret, Fasiledes (Fasil Bath), Fit Abo, Fit Mikael, Gabriel (Abun bet Gabriel), Gondaroch Maryam, Ilfign Ghiyorgis, Lideta Lemaryam, Medhane Alem, Qaha Iyesus, Qirqos, Rufael, Selestu Mi'it (Hamere Noh), Tsedda Egziabher Ab, Worangheb Gabriel, Yohannis Mitmaq, and Yohannis Wolde Negwadgwad. A second group totalling ten churches appear in at least three lists, namely Abba Samuel (Mikael), Abera Ghiyorgis, Azezo Tekle Haymanot, Damot Giyorgis, Fenter Lideta, Ghimja Bet Maryam, Gondaroch Ghiyorgis, Hawaryat, Menzoro Tekle Haymanot, and Sehor Maryam. The churches of Chachquna Maryam and Gana Yohannis appear in two lists and a group of eighteen churches appear only once.

Table 1: *The forty four churches of Gondar according to four different lists*

No	Church name	MdC	MN	GT	MNK	Founder/refounder
1	*Abba Abiye Egzi Kidane Mihret*	x	x	x	x	Ras Gebrie
2	*Abba Antonyos*	x	x	x	x	Yohannis I
3	Abba Samuel (Mikael)	∅	x	x	x	locals/Tekle Ghiyorgis
4	*Abbajale Tekle Haymanot*	x	x	x	x	Tekle Haymanot II
5	Abera Ghiyorgis	∅	x	x	x	locals
6	*Adebabay Iyesus*	x	x	x	x	Fasiledes
7	*Addebabay Tekle Haymanot*	x	x	x	x	Iyasu I
8	*Arba'itu Insisa*	x	x	x	x	unknown
9	Amanuel	x	∅	∅	∅	unknown
10	Aroghe Lideta	x	∅	∅	∅	unknown/Yostos
11	*Atatami Mikael*	x	x	x	x	Dawit III
12	*Ayira Mikael*	x	x	x	x	unknown
13	Azezo Tekle Haymanot	x	∅	x	x	Fasiledes
14	*Be'ata Lemaryam*	x	x	x	x	Tekle Haymanot II
15	*Bilajig Mikael*	x	x	x	x	unknown
16	Brahila Qwesqwam	∅	x	∅	∅	Yohannis I
17	Chachquna Mariam	∅	∅	x	x	unknown
18	Damot Giyorgis	x	∅	x	x	unknown
19	*Daregenda Ewost'atewos**	x	x	x	x	Iyasu II
20	*Debre Birhan Sillase*	x	x	x	x	Iyasu I
21	*Debre Mitmaq Maryam*	x	x	x	x	Tekle Ghiyorgis
22	Deber Tekle Haymanot	∅	x	∅	∅	Iyasu I
23	*Debre Tsehay Qwesqwam*	x	x	x	x	Mintiwab
24	*Defecha Kidane Mihret*	x	x	x	x	Bekaffa
25	Diba Hawaryat (Diba Abo)	x	∅	∅	∅	unknown
26	Diba Kidane Mihret	∅	x	∅	∅	unknown
27	*Fasiledes (Fasil Bath)*	x	x	x	x	Solomon
28	Fenter Lideta	x	∅	x	x	Tekle Haymanot II
29	*Fit Abo*	x	x	x	x	Fasiledes
30	*Fit Mikael*	x	x	x	x	Fasiledes
31	*Gabriel (Abun bet Gabriel)*	x	x	x	x	Fasiledes

32	Gana Yohannis	∅	∅	x	x	unknown
33	Ghimja Bet Maryam	x	x	x	∅	Fasiledes
34	Gondaroch Ghiyorgis	∅	x	x	x	unknown
35	*Gondaroch Maryam*	x	x	x	x	unknown
36	Gwara Yohannis	x	∅	∅	∅	unknown
37	Hawaryat (Petroswepawlos)*	∅	x	x	x	Tekle Haymanot II
38	*Ilfign Ghiyorgis*	x	x	x	x	Fasiledes
39	Lamefeji Ghiyorgis	∅	x	∅	∅	Mintiwab
40	*Lideta Lemaryam*	x	x	x	x	Yostos
41	Loza Maryam	∅	x	∅	∅	unknown
42	Macha Ghiyorgis	∅	x	∅	∅	unknown
43	*Medhane'Alem*	x	x	x	x	Fasiledes
44	Menti Merqorewos	∅	x	∅	∅	Mintiwab
45	Minziro Tekle Haymanot	x	∅	x	x	unknown
46	*Qaha Iyesus*	x	x	x	x	unknown
47	*Qirqos*	x	x	x	x	Tekle Haymanot II
48	*Rufael*	x	x	x	x	Bekaffa
49	Seher Maryam	x	∅	x	x	Yishaq
50	*Selestu Mi'it (Hamärä Noh)*	x	x	x	x	Tewoflos
51	Seyon Maryam	x	∅	∅	∅	unknown
52	Simon Tsamdi	x	∅	∅	∅	unknown
53	Tarenseba Iyesus	∅	x	∅	∅	Mintiwab
54	*Tsedda Egziabher Ab*	x	x	x	x	Yohannis I
55	Tsedda Maryam	∅	x	∅	∅	Yohannis I
56	Wogeriet Maryam	∅	x	∅	∅	unknown
57	*Worangheb Ghiyorgis*	x	x	x	x	unknown
58	Woybla Maryam	∅	x	∅	∅	Bekaffa
59	Yibrarag Gabriel	∅	x	∅	∅	Mintiwab
60	*Yohannis Mitmaq*	x	x	x	x	Wolde Le'ul
61	*Yohannis Welde Negwadgwad*	x	x	x	x	Tekle Haymanot II

Note: MDC=Monti della Corte; MN=Mengistu Nega; GT=Gerima Teffera; MNK=*liqe liqawint* Menkir Mekonnen; X=mentioned; ∅=not mentioned. The churches in italics are those appearing in the four lists; *=church today disappeared.
Sources: Gerima Teffera, 1966 AM; *Liqe liqawint*, 1989 A.M., pp. 59-60; Mengistu Nega, 1960 A.M., pp. 7-9; Monti della Corte, 1938, pp. 99-102.

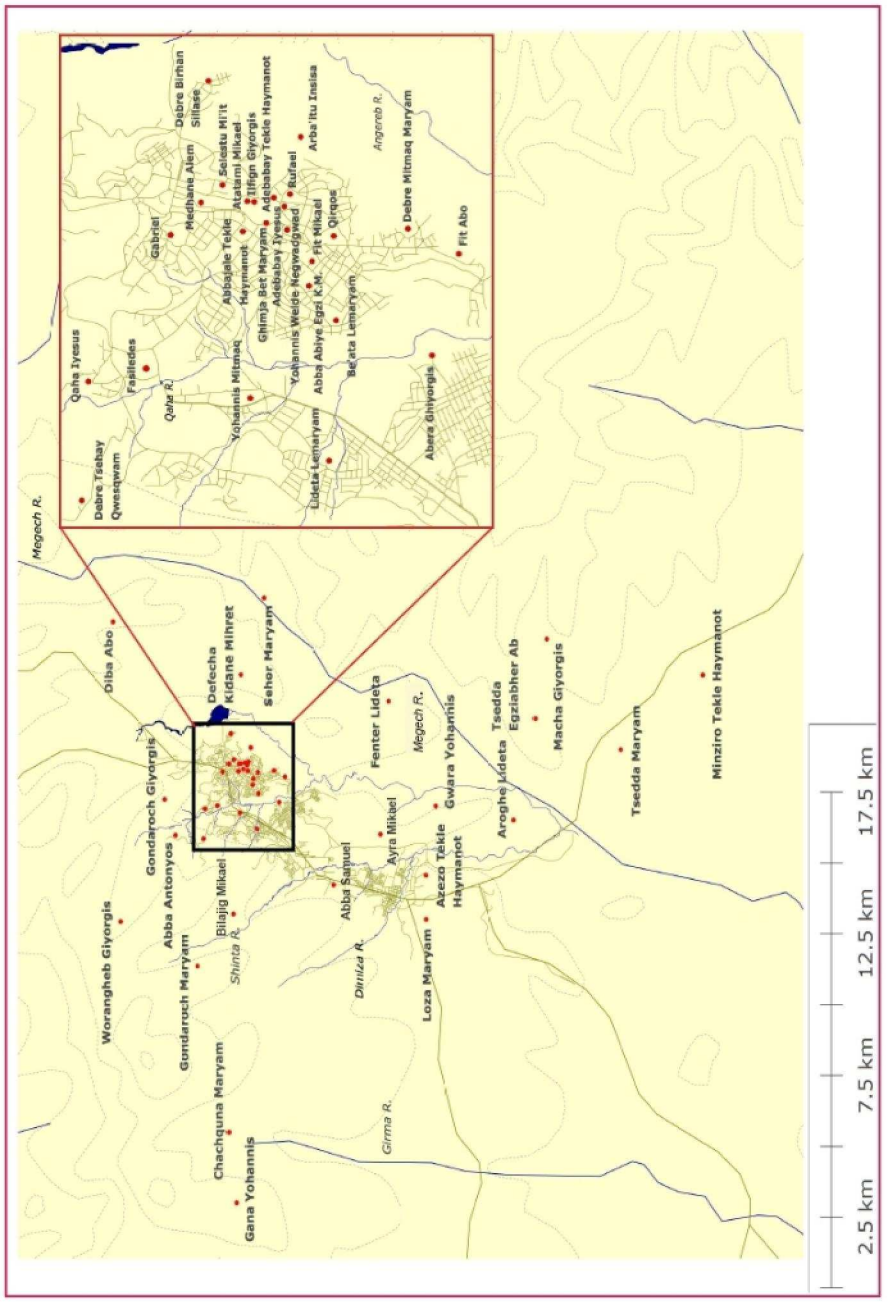

Figure 1: *The churches mentioned in Table 1* (shown only those churches whose location is known)
Source: Andreu Martínez on Global Maper

All the mentioned lists share some common features. A common characteristic shared by all the lists is the inclusion of all churches founded by the royal family in Gondar city and the exclusion of churches founded during and after the Era of the Princess, such as Lalibela and Addis Alem Egziabher Abb (both today disappeared). Contrarily, all the lists have significant differences regarding pre Gondarine foundations. For instance the lists of Monti della Corte, Gerima and Mengistu diverge concerning the pre Gondarine churches they include. Monti della Corte listed several unknown churches with unknown founders that are probably forgotten due to time interval. Similarly, the lists of Gerrima and Mengistu diverge concerning the geographical areas occupied by their churches. Mengistu seems to have given emphasis to churches situated to the east of the city while Gerrima focused on those to the west. Following this geographical bias their lists diverge in at least ten churches. Such a divergence might be due to the use of different oral sources or to the own bias of the authors. Finally, while important Gondarine foundations in the periphery of Gondar, such as Defecha Kidane Mihret and Tsedda Egziabher Ab, are included in some of the lists other equally important Gondarine churches from the point of view of their architectures, such as Dakwa Kidane Mihret or Gorenko Maryam (see Anfray, 1988-89, pp. 11-12), are ignored.

A TRADITION BETWEEN POLITICS AND MEMORY

As it was found above, the tradition of the forty four churches seems to have emerged in the nineteenth century, when Gondar's glorious days were over. But where exactly did the tradition originate and, above all, who brought it into the fore and why? To find answers to these questions we can only speculate.

It is reasonable to assume that the tradition originated where today it is more vivid, namely in the city of Gondar and its surroundings. It is after all there that most of the nineteenth century travelers recorded it. With hindsight it can be also speculated that the foreigners who recorded the tradition on the 'forty-something churches' were not mere passive receivers in the tradition but they also had their share in it. Since the publication of James Bruce's book in 1790 and the intensification of travel to tropical Africa in the first half of the nineteenth century, highland Ethiopia became the end destination of plenty of young Europeans in search of adventure, fame and purpose. Gondar in particular, with its ruined castles and imperial past, was an obliged visit for these travelers. During the nineteenth century, through dozens of descriptions and engravings produced about the city, Gondar became an exotic icon in the European imagination on Africa. The Europeans often pondered about the origin of Gondar's monumental castles and it was from their hand that the myth, still alive today, of the Portuguese as the main builders of these architectures emerged (see Martínez d'Alòs-Moner, 2007, p. 82; Id., 2015, p. 190 and note 228). A similar search into Gondar's past might have pushed these *ferenji* travelers to enquire about the city's once magnificent churches, which by the late nineteenth century, thanks to the deeds of Tewodros II, the Sudanese Mahdists and of natural decay, were a mere

shadow of their former times. It is perhaps from the interaction between inquisitive and creative Europeans and melancholic local intellectuals and clergy that the idea of a 'whole' number of churches emerged. Such a legend came in handy to the Europeans, ever eager of facts, statistics and clear-cut explanations and it equally satisfied local Gondar intellectuals, who could revel in the glory once attained by their city and kingdom.

Yet, the hypothesis can also be raised that Gondarine society fostered the tradition with clear political purposes in mind. Gondarine nobilities, for instance, might have promoted the inclusion of 'their' churches into the list in order to claim *rest*, a royal legitimacy and other symbolic benefits. But local clergy might have also benefited from having their church within the list, for it could have given them the right to claim lands formerly endowed by the royal family.

In the twentieth century the legend seems to have been refined. Thus, from the period of the Italian occupation onwards several authors have attempted to put a name on each of the 'forty four churches'. Significantly, the oldest list to date was authored by an Italian scholar, further substantiating the role foreigners might have played in shaping and popularizing the legend. Yet, total consensus has not been reached. Thirty one sanctuaries appear in the four lists this study compiled but the remaining thirteen churches have at least thirty two candidates. The caprice of the informants, the preference of the interviewee or other factors having more to do with opportunity and haphazard, could have determined the divergences between each of the lists.

As noted above, today the tradition of the forty four churches seems to have spread to other areas of the Ethiopian highlands. The peoples from Lake Tana, Axum and North Shewa claim the same or a similar number of sanctuaries for their respective regions (Dessie Qeleb, 2007 A.M., pp. 176-184; see also Munro-Hay, 2002, p. 156). Yet, considering the ethnic drift of contemporary Ethiopia, we may see this reactivation of the legend of 'forty four' less as an example of memorialization of a glorious past than as a political statement, where heritage becomes a proxy for real politics.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TRAUMA-FOCUSED COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY IN TREATING CHILDHOOD DEPRESSION AND NEGATIVE SELF ESTEEM IN POLY-VICTIMIZED, INSTITUTIONALIZED ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Numerous children throughout the world are exposed to such traumatic events as child abuse, rape, community violence, natural disaster, vehicular accidents, war and sudden death of parents. Traumatized children are at greater risk of developing higher rates of behavioral and emotional problems (such as depression) and academic failure than are non-traumatized children. A quasi-experimental nonequivalent pre-test-post-test design with intra- and inter-group comparison was employed, including narratives of individual cases of violence. Eighty-three Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) were gathered from their street life at Yenege Tesfa child care organization and comparable groups were formed from the general population. Then, thirty participants were purposely selected as a treatment group to receive Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) and the remaining thirty participants served as a control group. The research concluded that TF-CBT is potentially effective in treating symptoms of childhood trauma such as depression, based on pre-test to post-test measures in the Ethiopian context.

Keywords: depression, negative self-esteem, TF-CBT, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, Gondar.

INTRODUCTION

Children throughout the world are exposed to such traumatic events as child abuse, rape, community violence, natural disaster, vehicular accidents, war and sudden death of parents. MacMillan & Munn (2001) noted that these children manifest significantly higher rates of behavioral and emotional problems and academic failure than children who have not experienced such trauma. Common problems include: depression, anxiety, aggression, conduct disorder, sexualized behaviors, eating disorders, somatization and substance abuse (Harris, Putnam & Fairbank, 2006).

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According to the American Psychiatric Association (2000), a growing number of studies indicate that complex trauma exposure is associated with a range of symptoms and problems that can involve, but extend beyond, criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These include low self-esteem, helplessness or hopelessness, dissociation, impulsivity, self -injurious or self-endangering behavior such as suicidality or self-mutilation, excessive or inappropriate sexual behavior, substance abuse and various difficulties involving problems with identity or self-functioning, influence regulation, and capacity to form positive relationships.

The present research investigated poly-victimized institutionalized children who have been exposed to sexual, emotional and physical abuse during their stay on the streets. As a result of this, they manifested multiple forms of trauma. Herman (1992) referred to these multiple sequelae of trauma as complex PTSD, while Kolk (2005) regarded these as developmental trauma disorder (Cohen & Mannarino, 2008).

Amaya-Jackson and DeRosa (2007) reported that there was little empirically-informed psychotherapy available for treating the psychological burdens of children and adolescents with multiple trauma issues. Instead, most currently available intervention approaches have been developed for children with less complex clinical presentations. In this regard, the most commonly studied form of trauma therapy for children is Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) (Cohen et al., 2008). Similarly, a study by Belay (2010) in the Ethiopian context, reported that TF-CBT was an effective psychological intervention package for treating PTSD symptoms and depression and for improving the self-esteem of sexually abused children as compared to their counterparts (Gobena, 1998).

Specific elements of the TF-CBT model can be applied to address these psychological burdens in children. These include, emotional expression skills, coping skills training, recognizing the relationships between thoughts, feelings and behaviors, gradual exposure (also referred to as creating the child's trauma narrative), cognitive processing of the abuse experience(s), joint child-parent sessions, psycho-education about child sexual abuse and body safety, and parent management skills (Cohen, Mannarino, Berliner & Deblinger, 2000).

Concerning the present participants, there is little or no effort made by Yenege Tesfa local non-profit organization designed to meet the needs of street children and other vulnerable populations. In consequence the psychological needs of the victims are not addressed. However, the organization provides basic necessities and covers medical and school fees for children. There are few counselors trained in the field of child counseling at the organization. So long as the problem remains untreated, these difficulties may become chronic and produce adverse effects in the academic, social and personal life that may even persist into adulthood. So far, most research in the area has only been descriptive, and intervention based studies are rarely tested to treat multi-traumatized children. Accordingly, to test the efficacy of the intervention modality and to lay the foundation for further investigations, the present researchers employed a

quasi-experimental nonequivalent group pre-test-post-test design. As a result, the goals of this study are twofold: 1) to help victims reduce the burdens they have experienced and to give them insights and motivation for their future life; and 2) to assess the effectiveness of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) in treating negative reactions (specifically, symptoms of depression and negative self-esteem).

METHODS

Research design

A quasi-experimental nonequivalent group's pre-test-post-test design with intra- and inter-group comparison was employed. Hence, comparable groups of individuals were formed and the groups were treated the same in all respects except that each group received only one level of the independent variable (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister& Zechmeister, 2003). Even though local history possibly affects the internal validity of the research, the researchers systematically controlled extraneous variables through matched random assignment of participants across groups. In addition to experimentation, the researchers also narrated individual cases in a storyline regarding the nature of abuse and how those children felt and reacted to their traumatic experiences.

Table 1: *Nonequivalent groups pre-test-post-test design*

Study groups	First observation	Treatment	Second observation
Quasi-experimental group	O1	X	O2
Nonequivalent control group	O1	–	O2

Notes: O1: First observation of both treatment and control groups; O2: Second observation of both treatment and control groups; X: Quasi-experimental independent variable; **–** : Second observation without treatment

Study groups

Participants and sampling

There were 83 Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) who were selected from their street life at Yenege Tesfa child care organization. Although this organization provides medical, educational and other basic necessities, psychosocial services are lacking. For this research, a two-stage sampling method was used in selecting study participants from the organization.

First, sixty participants were purposely selected from the general population in collaboration with the care givers and social workers based on those who were brought into the institution recently from street life and those who were exposed to different forms of severe abuse. Then, comparable groups of individuals were formed from the selected participants. Finally, participants were assigned across treatment and control groups randomly. However, treatment and control groups were

living in different *kebele* (small administrative units) so that participants in the control group did not know that participants in the treatment group were getting therapy. The groups were treated the same way in all respects except that each group received only one level of the independent variable. Ages of the participants ranged between 12 up to 18 years because children at this level are believed to have relatively matched cognitive development, and can, therefore, read and write a self-rated questionnaire independently.

Demographic profile of the participants
Of the 30 participants in the treatment group 15 were male (50%) and 15 were female (50%); in the control group (n=30), 20 were male (66.7%) and 10 were female (33.3%). The majority of participants in the treatment group had completed elementary school (n=19, 63.3 %), whereas the highest educational level of the control group was secondary school (n=14, 46%). A majority of the participants from both treatment and control groups were institutionalized because of the death of their parents (n=26, 86.7 % and n=22, 73.3 % respectively). The mean age of treatment group participants was 12.97 years, whereas the mean age of those in the control group was 14.20 years with standard deviation of 1.52 and 1.76 respectively.

A self-developed questionnaire was used to identify the types of abuse to which the participants had been exposed. In the treatment group, 9 (30%) had been emotionally abused, 10 (33%) had been sexually abused, and 11 (36.67%) had been physically abused. For participants in the control group, 15 (50%) had experienced emotional abuse, 5 (16.67%) were victims of sexual abuse, and 10 (33.33%) had been physically abused (33.33%).

Instruments

Procedure
Pre-established test measures (e.g., Beck Depression Inventory or BDI-II, and Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale) and a self- developed questionnaire for demographic data were used as data collection instruments. Before collecting the data, instruments were translated into Amharic (the local language) by the researchers and experts, and then were translated back to the English language. To check the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted with 34 street children in Gondar city. The reliability of Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient was 0.84 and 0.61 for the BDI-II and Rosenberg self-esteem scales, respectively.

Beck Depression Inventory: The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) is a 21-item, self-report rating inventory that measures characteristics, attitudes and symptoms of depression and takes about 5-10 minutes to complete (Beck, 1961, as cited in Quek, Razack, & Loh, 2001). The self-report questionnaire is rated on a four-point scale ranging from 0 (no symptoms) to 3 (severe symptoms). Scores in the range of 0–13 indicate minimal depression, 14–19 mild depression, 20–28 moderate depression, and 29–63 severe depression (Lam, Michalak & Swinson, 2005). Furthermore, internal consistency for the BDI was high for all the items of BDI, indicating a high level of homogeneity among items in the scale with alpha coefficients of .86 and .81 for psychiatric and non-psychiatric populations respectively;

Cronbach's alpha in the present study was 0.84.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: The Rosenberg self-esteem test is probably the most commonly used and best known tool for measuring self-esteem. The scale is a ten-item Likert scale with items answered on a four point scale - from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", and has demonstrated high ratings in terms of reliability (internal consistency = 0.77, and minimum coefficient of reproducibility at least 0.90). Scores are calculated for items 1, 3, 4, 7, and 10 as "strongly agree" (3), "agree" (2), "disagree" (1) and "strongly disagree" (0). Items 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9 needed to be reversed in valence, and are, therefore, calculated as follows: "strongly agree" = 0, "agree" = 1, "disagree" = 2 and "strongly disagree" = 3. The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within the normal range, and scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). Pre-testing was conducted using street children from Gondar town. Cronbach's alpha in the present study was 0.61.

Treatment procedures in TF-CBT for the present study

The researchers strictly adhered to the traditional treatment manual of TF-CBT prepared by the National Child Treatment Stress Network (2007). The therapy was given based on the procedure recommended by the treatment manual. The specific elements of the TF-CBT model used in this therapy include: feeling expression skills, coping skills training, recognizing the relationships between thoughts, feelings and behaviors, gradual exposure (also referred to as creating the child's trauma narrative), cognitive processing of the abuse experience(s), joint child-parent sessions, psycho-education about child sexual abuse and body safety, and parent management skills (Cohen, Mannarino, Berliner & Deblinger, 2000).

In the present study, female and male participants were placed in different groups so as to manage the therapeutic process and to make them feel better being with the same sex group. It is advisable to use 45 up to 80 minutes in a single treatment session which is also the recommendation of the treatment manual. For the effectiveness of the intervention, the treatment manual advises using 8 up to 12 sessions and the present study used only eight sessions. To create anecdotes and to document the frequency of abuse, some selected participants were interviewed independently.

Statistical analyses

SPSS version 20 was used to analyze the quantitative data. Accordingly, descriptive statistics were used to analyze demographic data. Moreover, various inferential statistics were employed, such as paired sample t-test to test whether there was a mean reduction in symptoms of childhood depression and negative self-esteem from pre-to-post treatment measure within treatment and control groups; independent sample t-test were conducted to decide whether there was a statistically significant mean difference in pre and post-treatment measures of both the groups across sex; and one way ANOVA was employed to decide whether a statistically

significant mean difference exists across types of abuse both in pre- and post-test measures.

Ethical consideration

Researchers followed all ethical guidelines of the University of Gondar so as to avoid harm to the participants and to protect their rights. The research was also conducted in line with the APA (American Psychological Association) ethical standards. More specifically, informed consent was obtained from all participants. The participants were also informed of the confidentiality of the research and all the benefits it could bring to them in lessening depression and negative self-esteem symptoms they were experiencing. Just after the post-test measure had been taken, participants in the control group were given the same therapy the intervention group had experienced to reduce their symptomatology.

RESULTS

Prevalence of depression and negative self-esteem

The prevalence of depression and negative self-esteem within the treatment group from pre-test to post-test measure is reported below.

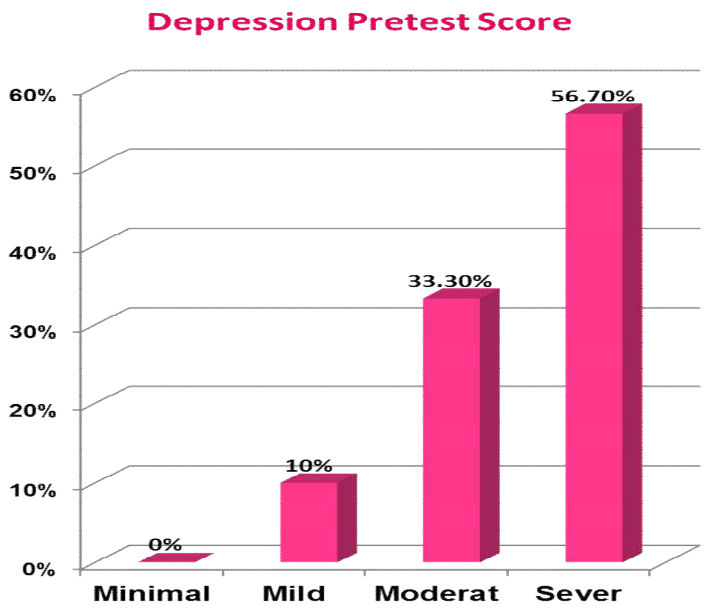

Figure1: *Prevalence of childhood trauma within treatment group*

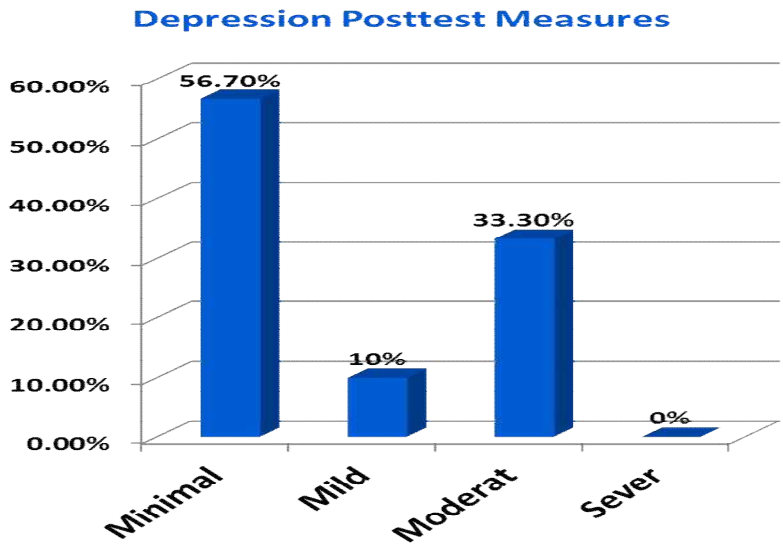

Figure 2: *Depression posttest measures*

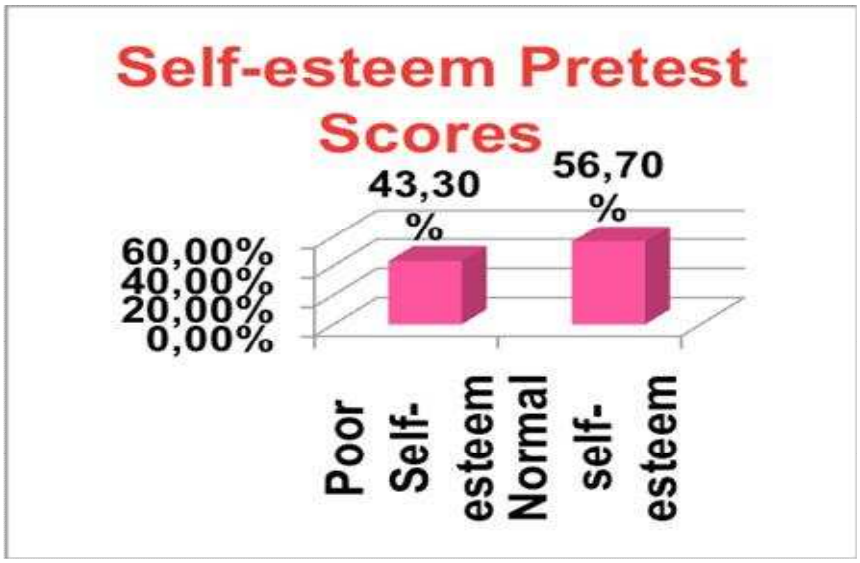

Figure 3: *Self-esteem pretest scores*

Figures 1 and 2 show that for participants in the pre-treatment measure, 10% (3) reported mild depression, 33.3 % (10) moderate depression, and 56.7% (17) severe forms of depression. However, on the post-treatment measure, 56.7% (17) reported minimal depression, 10% (3) mild depression and 33.3% (10) moderate depression. No participant in the treatment group in the post-test measure appears to have experienced severe depression.

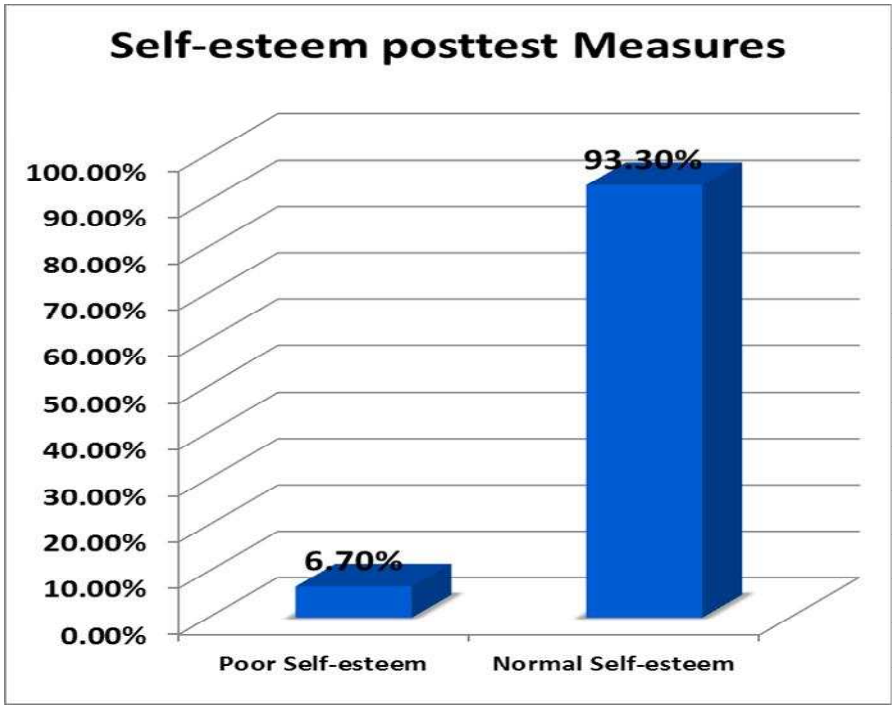

Figure 4: *Self-esteem posttest measures*

The results also show that, of the participants in the pre-test measure of self-esteem, 43.3 % (13) reported negative self-esteem and 56.7 % (17) reported positive self-esteem, whereas in the post-treatment measure, 6.7% (2) reported negative self-esteem and 93.3 % (28) reported positive self-esteem (Figures 3 and 4).

Childhood trauma symptoms before and after intervention

Paired sample t-tests were conducted to determine whether there are significant mean differences from pre-test to post-test measures of depression and self-esteem among treatment and control groups.

Table 3 shows that there is a statistically significant mean decrease in symptoms of depression within treatment group participants from pre-treatment (M=31.13, SD=10.22) to post-treatment measures (*M*=13.26, *SD*=8.10); *t* (29) =6.63, $p \leq 0.05$. The eta squared statistic based on Levine's test is 0.61, indicating a strong effect size. No depression score reduction was reported within the control group.

Results also indicate a significant mean value increment within the treatment group in terms of self-esteem from pre-treatment measure (M=14.66, SD=5.08) to post-treatment measure (M=20.36, SD=4.06); t (29) =4.71, $p \leq 0.05$. The eta squared statistic based on Levine's test is 0.32,

also indicating moderate effect size. However, there is no significant mean improvement in self-esteem among control group participants.

Table 2: *Comparative analysis of depression and self-esteem from pre- to post-test measure*

Test variables	Pre-test			Post-test				
Treatment group	M	SD	df	M	SD	t	p	L
Depression	31.13	10.22	29	13.26	8.10	6.63	.00*	0.61
Self-esteem	14.66	5.08	29	20.36	4.06	4.71	.00*	0.32
Control group								
Depression	23.70	10.49	29	21.36	10.04	1.38	.17	0.02
Self-esteem	18.20	4.88	29	18.70	4.26	.52	.60	0.05

Notes: * The mean difference is significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level (two-tailed); L= Levine's test effect size from pre-test to post-test measure.

Table 4 shows that there is no statistically significant mean sex difference among treatment group participants in terms of *pre-test* levels of depression. However, the results indicate that there is a statistically significant mean difference between male and female treatment group participants in *post-test* measures of depression. The present researchers believe that female participants were more responsive to psychotherapy than male participants, although it is evident that both showed improvement in depression over time.

Table 4 also shows that there are no statistically significant mean sex differences in self-esteem in either the treatment or control groups, both in the pre-test and post-test measures.

Childhood depression and self-esteem across types of abuse

A One-Way ANOVA was conducted to compare treatment and control groups on the pre-test and post-test measures of depression and self-esteem according to the types of abuse participants had experienced.

Table 4 shows that there is a statistically significant mean difference among treatment group participants in the post-test measure of depression, according to type of abuse ($F(2, 27) = 4.81$, $p<05$). However, there is no significant mean difference in the pre-test measures for these same participants. Post Hoc analyses using Tukey's test revealed that it was the sexually abused children who scored significantly higher in depression than the emotionally abused children ($p<0.05$).

Table 3: *Comparative analysis of depression and self-esteem across sex, N=30*

Test variables		Pre-test					Post-test			
Treatment group	Sex	M	SD	t	p	df	M	SD	t	p
Depression	M	30.6	9.89	.28	.78	28	16.46	6.92	2.32*	.02
	F	31.66	10.86			28	10.06	8.13		
Self-esteem	M	14.2	6.25	.49	.62	28	19.53	3.11	1.12	.26
	F	15.13	3.73			28	21.2	4.79		
Control group										
Depression	M	24.75	10.55	.77	.44	28	21.75	11.13	.29	.77
	F	21.60	10.58			28	20.60	7.90		
Self-esteem	M	18.55	10.58	.54	.58	28	20.15	4.18	2.97	.73
	F	17.50	3.53			28	19.80	2.74		

Notes: * The mean difference is significant at p≤ 0.05 level (two-tailed, t-value taken as equal variance assumed; Treatment group's number of males/females (M=15, F=15), Control group's number of males/females (M=16, F=14).

Table 4: *Comparing group variance across types of abuse, N=30*

Test variables		Pre-test measure				Post-test measure			
Treatment group	Types of abuse	M	SD	F	p	M	SD	F	p
	Emotionally abused	29.77	9.58			18.77	6.90		
Depression	Sexually abused	32.80	10.40	.20	.81	8.50	6.04	4.81*	.01
	Physically abused	30.72	11.30			13.09	8.33		
	Emotionally abused	16.77	4.35			19.77	5.19		
Self-esteem	Sexually abused	15.00	5.05	1.76	.19	20.90	2.88	.17	.84
	Physically abused	12.63	5.31			20.90	4.27		
Control group									
	Emotionally abused	16.46	7.70			15.86	6.49		
Depression	Sexually abused	32.20	3.70	13.25*	.00	29.00	4.00	6.40*	.01
	Physically abused	30.30	8.96			25.80	12.16		
	Emotionally abused	18.73	4.60			19.06	4.74		
Self-esteem	Sexually abused	17.60	4.21	.17	.84	16.20	2.94	1.05	.36
	Physically abused	17.70	5.90			19.40	3.92		

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the p≤ 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Table 4 also shows a significant mean difference among control group participants both in the pre-test and post-test measures of depression ($F(2, 27) = 13.25$ and $F(2, 27) = 6.40$ respectively at the $p<05$ level. Post Hoc analyses revealed that emotionally abused children scored significantly lower in symptoms of depression than both sexually and physically abused children ($p<0.05$). Finally, the table shows that there is no statistically significant mean difference in symptoms of self-esteem in pre-test and post-test measures both in the treatment and control groups. The researchers believe that the insignificant mean difference in some variables might have emanated from the small number of participants and an interaction across types of abuse.

DISCUSSION

Effects of childhood trauma on depression and self-esteem

This research used a quasi-experimental non-equivalent group's pre-test-post-test design to determine the efficacy of interventions in treating symptoms of childhood trauma. It, therefore, investigated the effectiveness of the treatment modalities in treating symptoms of depression and negative self-esteem from pre-test to post-test measures among youth in a treatment group, and compared this to similar measures with a control group.

The research found that more than half of the total participants reported minimal to mild forms of depression in a post-test measure, whereas they had reported moderate to severe forms of depression symptoms in the pre-test measure. In line with this empirical finding, up to 15% of the participants would have improved sufficiently to lose their diagnosis of childhood trauma after treatment and monitoring of depressive symptoms. It is assumed that the CBT would result in greater improvements in symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety for the treatment group compared to those in the control (wait listed) group. Therefore, the treatment was efficacious in reducing symptoms of childhood depression in this population (Smith et al., 2007).

Furthermore, at the cut-off point of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, individuals who score below 15 are exhibiting low self-esteem. However, those who score between 16 and 25 have normal self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). The present findings revealed that more than half of the total participants in the treatment group reported negative self-esteem in the pre-test measure; however, about 90% of the participants reported normal self-esteem in the post-test measure.

This finding was also supported by previous research conducted for a 4-week symptom monitoring period, in which 24% of young people with a primary diagnosis of associated trauma improved such that they no longer met criteria for the disorder. Thus, trauma-focused CBT resulted in a significant reduction in symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety; significantly greater recovery from childhood trauma (92% compared with

42% in the WL group); and significant improvement in functioning (Smith et al., 2007).

An anecdote reported by a child who was exposed to violence illustrates the kind of abuse he experienced as a child on the streets:

> As a new child to street environments, an adult of about 35 years old came around and asked me if I was in need of help. I was starving at a time and responded happily by expecting something to be eaten. Consequently, he came with a small vehicle and grabbed me to the edge of the city. As we reached a corner of the city; however, he shouted to me to take off my clothes. I tried to resist, of course. Meanwhile he showed me a knife and positioned me on the ground and warned me angrily. I thought I was going to be murdered. I tried to shout for help but nobody came around. That guy threatened me with a sharp knife and ab*used me sexually.*

While narrating the abusing scene, this child had difficulty in expressing his emotions and the conversation was interrupted several times. Of course, he was not the only child who had been exposed to this kind of abuse. There were many other participants who had experienced similar or other forms of abuse.

Childhood trauma before and after intervention

The present study found that members of the treatment group show a significant mean reduction in symptoms of depression from pre-test to post-test measures; however, as expected, there is no significant mean reduction in symptoms of depression among control group youth from pre -test to post-test measure. The effect size based on Levine's test is reportedly strong. Therefore, the present researchers argue that participants' levels of depression were not changed due to the mere passage of time, but rather it was the effectiveness of psychological interventions that significantly reduced the symptoms of depression.

This conclusion also gains support from a study conducted by Bolton et al. (2007). The authors reported that participants receiving group interpersonal psychotherapy showed substantial and significant improvement in depression symptoms compared with controls (12.61 points; 95% CI, 2.09-23.14). On the other hand, another investigation conducted by Kovacs (1983) to determine the effectiveness of CBT with children, reported that although treatment groups had better outcomes with respect to scores for depression than the control groups, there was no statistically significant difference for overall behavior problems or sexualized behavior (as cited in Ramchandani & Jones, 2003).

It is expected that TF-CBGT can significantly improve the negative self-esteem of multi-traumatized children at different points in time. The present study found a significant mean enhancement of self-esteem among treatment group youth from a pre-test to post-treatment measure.

However, there is no statistically significant mean difference among control group participants from pre-test to post-test measure.

A substantial body of work also provides support for the efficacy of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) for children with PTSD and other symptoms following multiple forms of abuse. For example, a study (Cohen, 2004) demonstrated that TF-CBT (which included anxiety management components such as coping skills training and joint work with parents) with children 3 up to 16 years of age was effective in reducing symptoms of PTSD and improved self-esteem symptoms relative to waitlist groups.

Depression and self-esteem among males and females

As the baseline data indicated, there is no statistically significant mean difference between boys and girls in the treatment group on the pre-test measure of depression. However, female participants in the post-test measure reported better recovery from depressive symptoms than their male counterparts. This might be due to the fact that female participants are more responsive to psychotherapy than their male counterparts.

In agreement with the present study, Bolton et al. (2007) revealed that participants receiving group interpersonal psychotherapy showed substantial and significant improvement in depression symptoms compared with controls. A study conducted by Lanktree, Briere, Godbout, Hodges, Chen, Trimm, …Freed (2011) also confirmed the potential effectiveness of TF-CBT in a sample of inner-city, socially marginalized children and adolescents in the symptoms of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress. However, they reported that average pre–post change scores did not vary as a function of client gender, age, or number of traumas experienced.

In the present study, although the treatment group's self-esteem before therapy was almost comparable across sex, after therapy the levels of self-esteem had improved for both males and females. However; this was not seen among control group participants. Therefore, the present researchers argue that the therapy enhances both male and female participants' self-esteem in the same way. A study conducted by Cohen and Mannarino (1998) comparing CBT with non-directive supportive therapy in children aged 7–14 years also supported the current finding that children in the CBT group had better outcomes with respect to scores for depression and self-esteem (as cited in Ramchandani & Jones, 2003).

Childhood trauma across types of abuse

The present study investigated whether there was a significant mean difference among treatment and control groups across types of abuse on pre-test and post-treatment measures. As reported, most children in the current institution were gathered from street life and from families that adopted them. Thus, the present study found a statistically significant mean difference among treatment group youth in both pre-test and post-test measures of depression, depending upon the type of abuse they had experienced. Further analysis of the present results indicated that

emotionally abused children in the pre-test measure reported lower levels of symptoms of depression as compared to those who were either sexually or physically abused. However, in the post-test measure of depression, emotionally abused children reported the highest degree of positive symptoms of depression when compared to both physically and sexually abused children. This might result from the fact that emotionally abused children were less likely responsive or resistant for psychotherapy than both sexually and physically abused ones.

Earlier research findings in the area revealed that although the relationship between post-trauma symptoms, such as PTSD and depression (Andrews et al., 2000; Feiring, Taska & Lewis, 2002), has been well documented for children who have suffered sexual abuse, research examining these relationships for the physical abuse population is very limited (Deblinger & Runyon, 2005). The present study revealed that there is no statistically significant mean difference between sexually and physically abused children, although emotionally abused children are less likely respond to psychotherapy as compared to both sexually and physically abused children. Clinical data collected at the New Jersey Child Abuse Research Education and Service (CARES) institute indicate that children who suffered physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse often report clinically significant levels of shame as well as negative internal attributions, PTSD, behavior problems, and depression prior to their participation in treatment.

Some researchers in this area have argued that the main effect (e.g., reduction of childhood trauma in this case) represents the overall performance at each levels of a particular independent variable collapsed across (averaged over) the levels of the other independent variable (Shaughnessy et al., 2003). Therefore, the current researchers believe that the insignificant mean difference in some test variables may have resulted from an interaction across types of abuse; i.e., the effect of each independent variable depends on the levels of other independent variables.

CONCLUSION

The present study reported that more than half of the total treatment participants manifested moderate to severe forms of depression in the pre-test measure. However, only one third of the total participants reported moderate to severe forms of depression in the post-test measure. More than half of the total participants reported normal self-esteem in the post-test measure while they were reporting negative self-esteem in pre-test measure. A different body of research indicates that the treatment and control groups may not be necessarily have been exposed to equal levels of traumatic experiences, rather what matters is the changes in outcomes following treatment. Therefore, the present research reveals that when comparing the control group participants to those in the treatment group, the latter revealed more severe forms of childhood trauma on the pretest measure. However, treatment group members showed a significant mean reduction in post-test measures, which was not seen among control group youth.

Although sex differences do exist, the present research found that there was no significant mean difference in symptoms of childhood trauma across male and female participants both in pre- and post-test measures, with the exception of post-test measures of depression. Therefore, TF-CBT can potentially be used to reduce symptoms of depression and to improve self-esteem in similar populations, particularly within the Ethiopian or comparable contexts.

LIMITATIONS

Matching treatment and control groups at the start of experimentation helps to rule out the mere effect of passage of time in reducing symptoms of depression and negative self-esteem in both groups. In the present study, treatment and control groups were matched according to the nature of abuse and living conditions. However, participants did not manifest an equal degree of both depression and self-esteem symptoms in the pre-test measures, although they did report clinically significant scores of childhood trauma; this might be considered a limitation of the study. Further investigations should, therefore, take this into account in an effort to expand the populations being studied and to match the participants in various ways. In addition, the time at which the post-test measure occurred is another limitation, as it was collected just after the last day of the intervention. Therefore, the present research did not consider symptoms of childhood trauma in a follow-up measure, which could provide important information about the durability of these treatment effects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Child care organizations, as part of providing basic necessities and covering medical and school expenses, should allow mental health professionals to work on the psycho-social burdens of traumatized children. They should also be aware of the potential existence of trauma among institutionalized children.

Since the post-test measure was taken soon after the last intervention, it is impossible to determine whether childhood trauma symptomatologies might change in later follow-up measures. Therefore, the present researchers strongly recommend other researchers to assess the outcome of such interventions in a follow-up measure as the youth progress through school and other developmental milestones.

The researchers believe that the insignificant results across sex and types of abuse could result from using a limited number of participants. Therefore, increasing the number of the participants in the research sample could increase the likelihood of revealing important differences across the variables.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Mastewal Abawa contributed to problem identification, first proposal preparation and presentation, data collection, conducting therapy sessions, performing statistical analysis and final report writing and presentation. Daniel Tsehay gave advice regarding the methods section, study design and analyses, and drafting and editing of the manuscript. Gebeyehu Begashaw consulted the team regarding methodology, study design and analyses, and helped to edit the manuscript. Yemataw Wondie provided guidance regarding the entire investigation, (problem identification, proposal preparation, assisting the actual research process, and editing the manuscript). Lynne Sanford Koester advised in the methods employed and edited the final manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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BOOK REVIEWS

አብዮቱና ትዝታዬ (*Abyotunna təzətaye*, 'The Revolution and My Memories'). By Fisseha Desta. Addis Ababa: Tsehai Publishers, 2008 A.M. Pp. x + 598; 53 images. ISBN: 978-1-59-907108-4. 250.00 ETB.

The history of Ethiopian revolution has attracted a great deal of attention and the scholarly studies on this period are numerous. However, often the studies have lacked insight and the interpretations on the origins, the course and the collapse of the Derg regime have appeared as conventional when not fully satisfactory. Many studies have relied on secondary or published literature and a few are based on extensive archival work and on the reading of primary sources. As a consequence many an academic has embraced superficial explanations to account for the emergence, development and collapse of the Derg (for an overview, old but still valuable, on the historiography on the Derg, see Henze, 1989). The book under review, however, is different from the previous literature. The author was one of the Derg's top officials and, therefore, his narrative, while not completely objective, provides information that can shed light onto some of the Derg's most important episodes.

Fisseha Desta was born on April 21, 1941, into a family of the petty Tigrayan nobility in 'Adwa; his father was rewarded with the title of *blatta* by *ras* Seyoum Mengesha. After graduating at the prestigious Hayle Sillase I Military Academy in Harar, Fisseha started his professional career in the Imperial Bodyguard. Yet, with the outbreak of the revolution he joined the rebels and subsequently served in prominent positions during the ill-fated Derg regime; he was vice secretary of the Derg (p. 354), vice chair man of council of ministers (pp. 334, 433) and vice president of PDRE (Peoples' Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) (p. 380). Besides, he was in command of the army's third division, defined by an expert on the Derg's military as "one of the oldest army units in the country" (Fantahun, 2015, p. 46).

The Revolution and My Memories opens with an apology where the author begs the Ethiopian people for forgiveness for what bad things the Derg, knowingly or unknowingly, did. The central part of the apology reads as follows: "… as I am happy with good deeds of the Derg, I want to take responsibility for the wrong deeds by the Derg, knowingly or unknowingly and ask apology from the people of Ethiopia on my side (inside of cover page).

The main text is divided into five parts and fifteen chapters. In Part One the political situation of Ethiopia before the revolution is discussed. Chapter One elaborates on discontents and revolts during the imperial regime (pp. 9 -13), on the history of Ethiopian Army (pp. 31-34) and provides a discussion of the Ethiopian Students' movement at home and abroad (pp. 45-54). Chapter Two focuses on the revolution properly and provides some insights on the events of September 12, 1974 (p. 100), when Emperor Hayle Sillase was deposed. In Chapter Three the narrative deals with internal episodes

on the formation of the Derg ('committee' in Amharic), including disagreements among its members (pp. 105, 107, 114-122, 131-132). The next chapter gives insights into the famed 'Land to the Tiller' policy (p. 143). In Part Two (chapters five to eight) Fisseha discusses the formation of opposition parties such as EPRP (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party) and MEISON (All Ethiopian Socialist Movement), the episodes known as the Red and White Terrors and on the issue of nations and nationalities. In Part Three the book focuses on the aspects of foreign policy (Ethio-Soviet relations) and on the two main war fronts faced by Ethiopia, the Ethio-Somali war and the Eritrean conflict. Under Part Four (chapters ten to thirteen) the author describes aspects of internal politics, such as the formation of WPE (Workers' Party of Ethiopia), the creation of the PDRE (Peoples' Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) and the 1984/85 famine. Later in Part Four the book focuses on the different conflicts in the north that eventually brought about the end of the Derg dictatorship: the emergence of TPLF (Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front) and the Red Star operation in Eritrea. In the last section, Part Five, a detailed account of May 16, 1989 coup d'état against Mengistu Haile Mariam is given (Chapter Thirteen). The book concludes (Chapter Fifteen) with the beginning of peace agreements, the proclamation of the mixed economy policy and the final defeat of the Derg army (p. 503).

The book also includes an annex 1 with a list of all members of the military men who established the Derg, including their full names, rank and army unit. This appears as an important contribution as previous scholars incurred in confusion concerning the identity and number of the Derg founders. Thus, Bahru stated the number was less than 110 (Bahru, 2002, p. 234) while Gennet Ayele pointed to 109 Derg members, the same number given by Fisseha, but without providing any source (1994 E. C).

In a book of this kind, there are strengths and shortcomings. Among the first is the historiographic effort made by the author, who provides plausible explanations to important chapters in the Derg's history. Fisseha strives to emphasize the reliability of his own account by blaming some well-known historiographic works on the Derg such as ምስክርነት (Tesfaye, 2001 A.M., p. 583) and ነበር (Zenebe, 1996 A.M., p. 4) of being more interested in reaching a wide readership than in seeking truthfulness. In some aspects we might concede Fisseha's plea to be justified. For instance, concerning the famous summary execution of sixty generals of the imperial period by the Derg, there have been contradictory views: some authors have stated that the execution was the result of study conducted by a commission of investigators, while others have said that it was the result of an anonymous decision by the general assembly of the Derg. Yet, Fisseha convincingly explains that the ultimate decision was taken by Mengistu Haile Mariam, a day before the assembly formally met, in order to clear his way to power; in support of this the author provides an execution letter signed and sealed by the dictator (p. 130). Another famous episode that might have been shed light onto is the coup attempt of May 16, 1989, which is the object of a detailed description.

Yet, other episodes of the Derg are less convincingly explained. For instance, the author tries to describe in detail the operation Red Star by the

Derg against Eritrean fighters but does not provide a plausible military explanation to account for the failure of this operation (p. 432; for a more comprehensive narrative on the operation, see Fantahun, 2014, conclusions). At the end of Chapter Two (p. 104), the author discusses the downfall and the death of Emperor Haile Sillase I yet without providing relevant details, such as the reasons why the ruler was killed and where his burial place was.

Moreover, Fisseha claims that he was not involved in some of the darkest episodes of the Derg, but this is difficult to accept considering he was one of the regime's top commanders; such is the case with the murder of the journalist Bealu Girma (p. 442) or that of Tariku Ayinie, commander of Ethiopian army during the fall of Afabet (p. 445). Concerning the latter case, Fisseha explains his own personal issues with General Tariku and even insults him as ትዕቢተኛ ('man of misconduct') (p. 448), which seems to cast a shadow on the author's own plea for innocence. Moreover, although the author emphasizes that he has presented only those facts for which he has substantial sources (Seifu Fantahun Show, 2015), and this is not the case and, indeed, he presents most of his views without the necessary documentary evidence. Last but not the least, some technical limitations ought to be noted, such as the alternative use of two dating systems, the Gregorian calendar, which is used at the beginning of the book (see e.g. pp. 8-12), and the Ethiopian calendar, used in the rest of the text.

Abyotunna təzətaye is a book of memories by one of the Derg's top officials. The book covers the main chapters of the military dictatorship that devastated Ethiopia and concluded in a murderous civil war from the point of view of one of its principal actors. So, while shedding light on some episodes, it leaves others in the shadows. Similarly, while the author might have answered satisfactorily to some questions concerning his involvement in the Derg's murderous machinery, he is less convincing in some prominent cases: was Fisseha actually as oblivious, as he claims to be, of the murder of Derg's political opponents? This notwithstanding, *Abyotunna təzətaye* is an important contribution to the history of the Derg. The book stands out as more authentic than many previous literature published on the same topic. With its insights into the Derg's development and internal organization, the book makes an indispensable read for historians of the Derg regime, in particular, and, more in general, for scholars focusing on the role of the military in contemporary African societies.

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Negotiating the Lion's Share of Freedom: Adventures of an Idealist Caught up in the Ethiopian Civil War. By Makonnen Araya. Addis Abeba: AAU Printing Press, 2014 (1st ed. 2010). Pp. viii + 355; 2 maps. ISBN: 978-0-578-14678-2. 150.00 ETB.

The Derg period has been one of the most devastating episodes in the history of modern Ethiopia: hundreds of thousands of people were killed, mostly for political reasons, entire village communities were forcefully resettled and thousands of youth were pushed towards the exile. Among those who survived and found a new home in the exile a few have, during the last years, gone into writing the memories of their past experiences. From the comfort of their American or Australian homes, these 'diaspora habasha' have started memorializing a life long abandoned, full of struggles, uncertainties and risks. Their recollections add up new perspectives to those opened by prominent members of the Derg regime who have also started memorializing their life within the regime's machinery of terror (see this issue, Book reviews).

Makonnen Araya's *Negotiating the Lion's Share of Freedom* is one of a few books written by exiles of Derg's Ethiopia that have recently reached the book market. First published in 2010 it now appears in a second, revised and updated edition. The new edition includes a glossary, an afterword and two maps. The author is a Christian Orthodox born in Harar at the eve of the liberation of Ethiopia from the Italians who, during his youth, joined the ill-fated EPRP (Ethiopia's People Revolutionary Party, 'Ihapa' in Amharic) at a moment when this movement led a brutal war against the Derg government. His is a personal chronicle from his first days as a young recruit of Ihapa's military arm, EPRA (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Army), in 1977, until his escape, in 1980, from a struggle he no longer believed in

and from a murderous regime that had achieved its peak of power and destruction.

As it happened to many of his generation Makonnen found himself immersed in the web of political activism that sprang up in the 1970s during Hayle Sillase I's final years and that came to be known as the EMU (Ethiopian Student Movement; see Andargachew, 1993, p. 135 et passim). Later, when the Derg came to power, his ideological inclinations and the government's repressive drive pushed him to join EPRA (p. vii). Thereafter, as a young soldier of EPRA Makonnen started a thrilling, hazardous adventure that for over three years took him across some of Ethiopia's most breathtaking regions. The narrative leads us in the footsteps of the author's journey, from his flee from Addis Abeba and arrival at the contact place in Mekele, capital of Tigray, to his initiation in guerrilla warfare in the *talim* (EPRA's training camp) of Senegede, in the same regional state (p. 57, 87). The narrative continues to other regions of Tigray (Alitena, Gortello, Adigrat, and Tembien), where clashes with TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front; p. 46) were frequent. Then, when the TPLF forces destroyed EPRA's main base in Asimba in May 1978 (an episode, however, which does not feature in the book), Makonnen moved with his troop to the Agaw-inhabited areas of north Wello (Wag and Sekota). The last theatre of operations that features in the book is that of Semien mountains, probably the only one EPRA could have claimed to have held some form of dominion upon. There EPRA's energies were largely focused on establishing peasant associations and the author leads us to several remote areas and villages, including Mekane Birhan, Hawaza, Dembello, Tselemt, and Beyeda. The adventure comes to an abrupt end when Makonnen, as it seems without a reason, is accused by EPRA's High Command of being a member of an *anja*, an underground splinter group (pp. 258-59). This is, in the author's own words, his "fall from grace" and the prelude to his flight to Sudan. Since this is the last part of the book and it is full of suspense moments, I will let to the reader to find by herself or himself what happened.

Throughout Makonnen's journey we learn of the precarious lifestyle of the guerrilla soldier, his frugal diet prone to diseases like *kirkar* (i.e. constipation, pp. 97-98), and the serious logistic problems of the troop, which is equipped with out-dated nineteenth-century rifles (p. 262). The passages showing the internal functioning of the guerrilla are enthralling: from the rules of conduct kept among the soldiery (pp. 114, 158) to the EPRA's rather unfruitful and naïve propaganda campaigns (pp. 128, 185, 193, 199) and the latter's strategies to gain the support of the local peasantry (e.g., the improvised rural 'courts', p. 145). The part of the book that is dedicated to the guerrilla in Semien, where Makonnen lived for about a year (early 1978 to early 1979), includes passages of historical and ethnographical value. Among such passages there are the portrait of the petty ruler *balambaras* Ajire (p. 194 et passim) who carried on with an archaic lifestyle typical of the times of Hayle Sillase I, the story on *balambaras* K (sic) (p. 208) and the clashes between the Semien National Park rangers and the guerrilla (p. 216-17). The description of the blood feuds among Christian and Muslim communities in northeast Semien (p. 200 et passim) is noteworthy, as well as those on the social life of Agaw communities (p. 223) and on the

harsh life conditions in the *dega* (the highest inhabited areas in Ethiopia, ranging from altitudes between 2,300 to 3,200 m) (p. 226 et passim). Other relevant ethnographic passages include those on the condition of peasant women in Beyeda (pp. 237-40), whose lives are described in a vivid and poignant way, on the widespread beliefs in spirits (*koles, wotete*) (p. 240 et passim, 253, 309) and the mourning practices among women (pp. 243-44).

One has to praise this book for the sober style of the narrative and the humbleness with which Makonnen describes his guerrilla years. Accordingly, the protagonist rarely appears as a hero. Instead, he is portrayed as a rather clumsy, incompetent soldier and quite ill at ease in the rural environment in which he was obliged to live. Instances of this are the scene where he is unable to pack his gear (p. 69), another scene where he shows to be unfit to keep a guard (pp. 120-21) and even the accident that occurred January 1978 that left him seriously injured and invalid for military life (p. 179, 188). More positively perhaps, he also appears as a sharp ethnographer and a skilled observer while presenting the life conditions of the peasant communities whom he has encountered. From the point of view of the forging of the narrative the reader would have wished a few words on how Makonnen recollected his memories: did he keep a journal during his wandering guerrilla years? Or did he rather recollect those memories retrospectively, once settled in the U.S.?

For a book of this kind that presumably did not count with professional proof reading the editing is fairly good. A couple of layout problems could be mentioned, such as several pages without block justification (pp. 151, 169-173), a missed indentation and a chapter title that has fallen to the bottom of the page (p. 342). The English style is also fine and only a few typos ought to be noted: “my being shot” for “me being shot” (p. 5), “purpose distributing” for “purpose of distributing” (p. 24), “Adigat” for “Adigrat” (p. 136), “hyle” for “half” (p. 149), “of of” for “of” (178), “us eaten” for “us had eaten” (p. 257), and “took took” for “took” (p. 335).

Negotiating the Lion’s Share of Freedom is the passionate, sincere chronicle of a survivor during a period that saw no rest in Ethiopia, in its cities, villages, and valleys; it is the chronicle of a man who survived the repressive hand of a murderous regime, a civil war fought in remote mountains, the purges of a paranoiac guerrilla, a hazardous fall from a cliff and the greed of the head-hunters from the Ethio-Sudanese lowlands. This well-written book makes for a pleasant reading, with its moments of suspense, its detailed descriptions of guerrilla campaigns and its setting in scenic landscapes. But more than its aesthetic values its worth lays in the history and ethnography hidden behind that. The narrative transports us across some moments that dramatically changed the fabric of Ethiopia’s state and societies: the repression of the Derg, the emergence of TPLF, the indoctrination of traditional peasant societies by self-assertive urbanites, and the mass migration of Ethiopia’s youth to the exile. Moreover, it contains ethnographic passages that provide precious information on the social and cultural life of the societies inhabiting the Semien mountains. Makonnen Araya’s work, having a place half way between travel writing and historical chronicle or ethnographic survey, is, thus, called to appeal to a broad readership.

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Wore Negari. A Memoir of an Ethiopian Youth in the Turbulent 70s. By Mohamed Yimam. [N.p.]: Xlivris, 2013. Pp. 222. ISBN: 978-1-4836-9896-0. 60.00 ETB.

If Makonnen Araya's *Negotiating the Lion's Share of Freedom* (see this issue, Book reviews) is a personal chronicle of the rural struggle of EPRP (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, better known by its Amharic acronym 'Ihapa') against the Derg in the remote mountains of northern Ethiopia, Mohamed Yimam's *Wore Negari* ('Story Teller' in Amharic) is about the EPRP's urban war against the same regime, which had its main theatre of action in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Abeba. Like Makonnen Araya, Mohamed Yimam was caught in the political activism of the 1970s and came to join the largest student organisation of the time, Ihapa, ultimately, taking the same way of exile to the U.S. His book documents from his 'dispassionate' entrance into the EPRP, to his clandestine activities up to his disenchantment from the organisation and the eventual exile to Djibouti and, then, to the U.S.

The book opens with a Preface and an Author's Note. The Preface gives an informative sketch on the socio-political situation of Ethiopia around 1974, the backdrop against which the Derg regime emerged. The Author's Note clarifies key aspects of the book. Firstly, it explains how the text came into being: the manuscript was largely written in 1992 during a time of personal crisis (p. 13; however, the statement later in the Postscript, p. 213, that the book came in reaction to Mezy's tragic murder in 1988 in the U.S. seems contradictory). Then it gives the profile of the protagonists, who are therein described neither as heroes nor as main political actors. Finally, the author explains that his book is unlike other books written on the Derg that have their main focoi on important political actors: "My book, declares Mohamed, is different; it is only meant to be a human-interest story about a group of individuals, who in a generic sense, represent all the typical leftist youth of Ethiopia in that period" (p. 15).

The narrative is divided into three parts. Part I bears the significant title "Genesis of Radicalization: Ideological Seduction" and as it can be deduced the focus here is on the political coming of age of Mohamed. Therein, we see him moving away from a humble upbringing in a Muslim family from Dese (northeast Ethiopia) and beginning his political activism, first at the famous

Woizero Sihin ("Siheen" in the book; p. 22) Mikael Secondary School of Dese and, later, at the Jimma Teacher Training Institute. The Woizero Sihin and Jimma Institutes, like many other centres of modern education opened during the last years of Hayle Sillase I's regime, became the arena for the rapid spread of revolutionary ideologies freshly-arrived from Europe, China and America (p. 28) and a sort of jumping off points for many young Ethiopians into radical politics. Then, in the 1973-1974 academic year, "the eve of the most fateful year in Ethiopia" (p. 42), Mohamed joins Haile Sillase I University. Mohamed captures the zeitgeist in this venerable institution: "The university that I came to was a hotbed of revolutionary activity, filled with firebrands and aspiring revolutionaries who saw it more and more as a breeding ground for revolutionaries than as an academic institution" (p. 43). Thereafter he will join an EPRP cell lead by 'Mesfin' and 'Birhanu' established in Addis and his revolutionary career will be occupied mostly in journalism (writing for *Goh* and *Lab Ader* magazines; p. 75 et passim, 97), the distribution of propaganda leaflets and the indoctrination of workers (p. 67 et passim).

If Part I covers the, relatively peaceful, spring of revolutionary activism, from about 1974 to late 1976, Part II ("Swept Away by the Whirlwind") covers its autumn, with the outbreak of full-scale war between the military dictatorship and the left wing parties. This is the period that Prof. Andargachew Tiruneh has described as one that "led to the most horrifying carnage in the history of the country" (Andargachew, 1993, p. 211). As it is well known, the EPRP did not survive the onslaught of the military government. Mohamed describes these crucial months when the EPRP was the target of the brutal *asesa* ('search and destroy operations'; p. 115, 128) vividly, with the hindsight of the perspective of a survivor. His narrative shows us a group poorly organized, increasingly isolated, whose fame (largely created by the Derg propaganda machine itself, p. 115) exceeded its actual military might and led by false expectations based on a dreamt of powerful rural guerrilla and imagined urban 'elite' commandos (p. 118, 147). Progressively, we see Mohamed's political and social circle disappear, from Jale Bia to Wolde Ab, to Birhanu to Tesfaye and Arabu.

In Part III ("Prison, Escape and Freedom") we see the protagonist experiencing prison but managing to escape. Thereafter, he flees to Dese where for a few months he will live the life of a Muslim peasant in the area of Gragn Meda. Later, by using his family circles and by taking the route to Asaita and Afambo, he successfully reaches Djibouti, French territory, which together with Khartoum became one of the main destinations of the Ethiopian exiles.

The chronicle of the White and Red Terrors from an insider's perspective makes *Wore Negari* worth reading. The book covers interesting aspects from this brief but dramatic chapter in the history of contemporary Ethiopia: the dynamic publishing life during the times of the 'White Terror' (p. 61 et passim), the dreadful *asesa* (p. 87), the rivalry between Meison and EPRP (p. 90), the experiences of second rank urban revolutionaries (pp. 189-90) and even the life of Ethiopian exiles in Djibouti (p. 200 et passim). Some shortcomings, however, ought to be noted. While the narrative is easy and un-

complicated the book suffers from poor editing: the English style is at moments clumsy and there are several instances of repeated statements in the same paragraph (e.g. pp. 22-23, 44, 74, 146, 176, 178, 205). Moreover, the text includes alternative spellings of Ethiopic terms (Harawcha and Harawecha, p. 37; Ormo and Oromo, p. 37; Abe Gubegna and Abe Gobena, p. 63; Yohannese and Yohannes, p. 90; Wolde Ab and Wolde Abe p. 166; Affambo and Afambo, pp. 201-02) and a few typos ("in in", p. 24; "fill" for "feel", p. 49). The index is by far very meagre and it only contains a handful of the names mentioned in the text.

Yet, what appears more puzzling from this narrative of revolution and discontent is the author's own self-portrait, the way Mohamed the Yale graduate has come to depict Mohamed the revolutionary. This portrait is unambiguously provided in several passages from the book. Therein emerges the image of a reluctant revolutionary, a hesitant fighter, and a passive actor (see another review of the same book, Haile Tolla, 2013). For instance, in the Author's Note Mohamed says of himself and of his peer: "We followed orders, completed our assignments, participated in committees, and were passive actors" (p. 14). Later, in a chapter explicitly entitled "Membership in a Cell: A Reluctant Revolutionary", the author describes his entrance into an EPRP revolutionary cell in 1974 as the product of sheer manipulation by Birhanu, a revolutionary cadre that is dubbed "the hidden hand behind our transformations" (p. 52, also 55). Whilst working as a CELU (Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Union) cadre in Wonji Sugar factory he has a moment of doubt:

> As I lay down on the floor, staring at the ceiling, I wondered to myself if I had what it takes to take up arms. I instinctively reacted negatively to the concept of armed struggle. I did not really want to commit my life for the cause, not yet (p. 72).

But with hindsight it can be asked, how could Mohamed, in 1992, remember so vividly that minute of doubt experienced during a summer night back in 1975?

The narrative also includes several moments when Mohamed the Yale graduate delves on the life of Mohamed the revolutionary. The tone is always judgemental, yet at the same time it appears as apologetic for the person and accusatory against the political organisation. This is exemplified in the following passage:

> To this day, I have never been able to clearly say why I did what I did. It was a life of deceit, but I was doing that to myself and not to anyone else. I must have had an inner urge to prove my courage and gain recognition, so much so that I was willing to engage in actions that were incredibly stupid. (p. 121)

Or another one:

> After I left Ethiopia, I often felt that I had come out of my past connections with EPRP relatively guiltless. I had never recruited anyone to

join the party; I have never caused the death of anyone. (p. 155)

The party was a monster ("Most of its members were good and noble, but the party was bad and dysfunctional", p. 216), the individual a pawn trapped within a murderous, abstract, structure.

We may understand why Mohamed has crafted the narrative as he did: after his failed revolution he started a new life in the U.S., achieving a respectable position professionally and socially (p. 211, 215). The narrative thus has a sort of cathartic function, scourging a past life full of mistakes and deceit and embracing a new one deemed righteous and successful. But while serving such a personal purpose can be deemed lawful, in doing so the *wore negari* fails to comply with his chief aim, that of telling a veracious history: Is the book a product of truthful memorizing or is it rather a place where fiction, hopes and memories are too much intertwined for us to know who Mohamed the revolutionary really was?

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የሌትናንት ኮሎኔል መንግሥቱ ኃ/ማርያም ትዝታዎች (*Yəletənant kolonel Məngəśtu Ḫaylä-Maryam təzətawoč* 'Memories of Lt. Colonel Mengistu Haile-Mariam'). By Gennet Ayele. [N.p.]: Alpha Publishing, 2002 A.M. (Vol. 1, 2nd edition). Pp. iv + III + 394. 70.90 ETB.

The age of dictators is long over in the African continent but yet their memory is still present in today's African societies. The horrors these figures provoked still daunt their victims as well as the younger generations. Moreover, some of their legacies, in one way or the other have also survived the collapse of their regimes. In the case of Ethiopia the crimes of the past dictatorship received due trial only recently: in 2006 a court of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia found Mengistu–himself tried in absentia–and dozens of Derg officials guilty of genocide. That Mengistu's rule is widely discussed in today's Ethiopia is attested by the book under review, which was first published in 1994 A.M. and it has recently reached its third edition.

Gennet Ayele is a journalist with a long track record. From 1993 to 1997

she directed Gennet Enterprise, the publisher of such magazines as *Gennat* and *Beza*. Since 1997, from her home in Paris she has been writing for different media, including *Novel De Addis*. The book under review, written in Amharic, is based on interviews made by Gennet herself to Mengistu Haile-Mariam and to other top officials of the Derg regime. Gennet met Mengistu during the latter's exile in Zimbabwe and she interviewed the Derg officials in the Ethiopian prisons where they are confined in. Hers is thus a pioneer contribution to one of the most controversial periods in modern Ethiopian history.

Yəlätənant kolonel Məngəśtu Ḫaylä-Maryam təzətawoč focuses on the Ethiopian Revolution, from its genesis and eruption till its end, thus comprehending a seventeen-year long dramatic period that is today remembered by the bloodshed it provoked as well as by the humanitarian and political crises that punctuated its development. The text is divided into two parts. The first part, entitled "Interviews of officials", deals with the most important chapters of the Derg through the eyes of some of its officials: from the dawn of the Revolution up to its demise, including the genesis of the Derg, the dethronement of Emperor Haile Sillase I, the summary execution of sixty government officials, the period of Red Terror and the coup de d'état. The second part, which covers more than three quarters of the book, is an exhaustive interview to Mengistu Haile-Mariam during his exile in Harare.

As indicated in the prelude of the book, Gennet's central concern is "to investigate and display the various secret issues for the sake of the readers" (p. II). The breadth of her interviews is commendable. Her book elucidates some hidden enigmas of the Derg, such as the burial place of Emperor Hayle Sillase. Mengistu and other top figures confirm that the corpse was buried in secret in the Addis Ababa Be'ata church. The book also shows the frail ground on which Mengistu built his regime, where the top figures had a very poor knowledge of the very socialist theories they were embracing. Besides, the work confirms a common feature of Ethiopian political culture, which is the unwillingness of its leaders to hold responsibility for their mistakes.

Yet, several problems punctuate the work. Firstly, the book suffers from a poor editing. An obvious example of this is the lack of table of contents. In addition, some of the titles of the chapters or subchapters do not correspond with the content of the text they present. Thus, in the preface the author puts the following words of Mengistu as a subtitle "the TPLF cannot capture me even my corpse body" (p. i), but the ensuing text is not correlated with it. A sub-title is dedicated to the execution of sixty influential figures, but the paragraph (p. 146) deals about another issue, the last meeting of the National 'Shengo'.

More importantly, however, the book fails to shed light onto some crucial chapters of the Derg history and sometimes focuses on irrelevant topics.

Thus, the author tries to enquire into the personality of Prof. Mesfin Wolde-Mariam through interviews with Derg officials (pp. 66-68) but without it being clear why this excurse is important for the topic covered in the book. Yet, when the narrative focuses on the withdrawal from Ethiopia of the Ethiopian Jews, the Beta Esrael (pp. 98-99), the author fails to push Mengistu to explain how such a crucial episode as the Moses campaign was carried out. This gap, however, was corrected with the publication of the second volume. There, Mengistu explains Gennet that while Operation Solomon was conducted without he being informed of it, Operation Moses was formally organized with his direct approval. This statement by Mengistu is all the more surprising since he sent his special envoy to the London Conference with EPDRF in order, among other issues, to negotiate on the fate of the Ethiopian Jews. At some point in the book it also becomes clear that Gennet had problems in making Mengistu answer to her questions. Thus, when the dictator is asked about the Ethio-Somalian war (pp. 240-243), he shifts the topic to talk about the crises in the north of the country Eritrea and Tigray. Another interesting episode at the dusk of the Derg, the flight of Mengistu and his family to Zimbabwe, which probably happened with the help of the United States ("US admits helping Mengistu escape", 1999), remains uncommented.

Some contradictions and historically dubious facts also punctuate the text. Thus, while Mengistu (p. 25) informs that the total figure of the founders of the Derg on June 28, 1974 was of 120, the author brings that number down to 109 (pp. 100-105), without providing evidence for such a divergence. Similarly, Mengistu speaks of the massacre of sixty Imperial figures as if it had been decided by a meeting of the Derg Committee (p. 162) but this episode is well known to have been decided at the Meskel Flower Hotel and only by a bunch of Derg members, and then submitted to Derg members (Zenebe, 1996, p. 100). Some contradictions may also reflect the wavering personality of Mengistu. Thus, in vol. 1 (p. 168) Mengistu informs Gennet that the death of Hayle Sillase was a motive of joy for the Derg members but in vol. 2 (p. 21) he changes his statement and says they were vexed by this event. Similarly, in vol. 1 the exiled dictator praises Michael Aman Andom as a great military hero (whom he refers to by his nickname "Nr. 1"; p. 141) but in the second volume he underrates the same figure (p. 86).

Some contradictions, however, cannot be attributed to Gennet's historical shortcomings but to the grievances that have been nurtured throughout the years between Mengistu and his former officials. Thus, some important officials now in Ethiopian jails blame the defeat of the Ethiopian army directly on Mengistu, who is accused of favouring quantity over quality and they use the metaphor "the fish starts its spoil from brain" (p. 40). But Mengistu defends his role and enumerates internal (his army commanders) and external (the USSR and USA) factors to account for the downfall of his dictatorship (pp. 219-238).

Last but not the least, the author could be partially blamed for missing a precious opportunity to cast light on some of the most sinister episodes of the Derg, which had–partially–already been discussed by such writers as Riccardo Orizio (2002), Addis Hiwot (1975), and Andargachew Tiruneh (1993). So, what about the killer of the novelist Bealu Girma? The officials interviewed put the blame on Mengistu and on the executioners Shimels Mazengia and Tesfaye Wolde-Sillase (p. 59). Mengistu, in his turn, denies any involvement in the crime and even insists he heard of it weeks after it had been committed. A similar thing occurs when facing the case of Haile Fida: two controversial ideas emerge from the book, without the author letting the readers know which one is correct. Gennet focuses much effort in shedding light on the Red Terror but forgets about the so-called White Terror. But even concerning the Red Terror central episodes are not commented, such as the Hawzen massacre, the last meeting of the National Shengo or even the sheer number of victims that it provoked; Mengistu is able to remember all the victims of the White Terror (p. 206) but he is oblivious about the fate of those who fell under the Red Terror, and he repeatedly answers to Gennet with the same sentence, "I cannot remember" (but he has vivid memories from his early childhood, e.g. vol. 2, p. 12).

All in all, the book suffers from a lack in historical depth. One is inclined to argue, with hindsight, that the journalistic background of the author prevented her from acquiring a grasp of the economical, political and religious context that witnessed the emergence of the Derg and of its main political figures. Yet, it is regrettable that primary sources and secondary literature (e.g. Andargachew Tiruneh, 1990; Clapham 1988) were not used to cross check the interviews.

Yəlätəna kolonel Məngəśtu Ḫaylä-Maryam Təzətawoč is an ambitious work but yet one that fails in its goals. Neither the personality of Mengistu comes clearer to the reader nor his *təzətawoč* help in clarifying the Derg's tortuous history. One is inclined here to paraphrase the judgement made in *The Independent* over Orizio's famous *Talk of the Devil* (Smith, 2003): Self-delusion and the capacity to draw others into their fantasies are two of the most striking attributes shared by dictators. But sadly Gennet has not been a consistently tough or challenging interrogator of Mengistu Haile-Mariam not to let him win the upper hand. Her book, like Orizio's, is thus "a testament to the limitations of this kind of journalism, which mingles reportage and personal anecdotes with interviews that are often decidedly anti-climactic" (ibid.). Therefore, such a book should be read with utmost care. The reading should be done with the help of other historical studies where personal memories of historical figures are buttressed on sound archival work.

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Manacled – Poems. By Assefa Alemu. Addis Ababa: Yodahe Printing Press, 2012. Pp. 60. 20.00 ETB.

Manacled, the debut of Assefa Alemu, is a collection of 49 poems selected from those poems written during the first decade of his poetic career, from 2002 to 2012. They are his attempts to 'shape his feelings and observations into poems', as the poet says in the Introduction. They 'carry marks of experiences' of the poet, giving the readers not only the thrills of pleasure but also the stir for contemplation.

Assefa Alemu is teaching at the Department of English Language and Literature in the University of Gondar, Ethiopia. 'Manacled', as his debut to the publishing world, deserves praise and appreciation. As Yohannes Asfaw, one of his reviewers says, Assefa's poems, 'imbued with the potion that rips our consciousness open' (quoted from the blurb) are written in subtle but touching language. A few poems in the collection are genuine 'sobs and sighs' coming out from the depth of the poet's heart that they move the readers' hearts to tears.

Ethiopian literature in English, especially the genre of poetry, is undoubtedly making its glorious return, after a set back of a few decades following

the fall of monarchy. It is very hopeful and encouraging to see young writers come out with a rejuvenated spirit to enrich the field of English literature. Poets like Solomon Deressa, Tokola Hagos, Fekade Azeze, Wossen Mulatu, Lulit Kebede, Assefa Alemu and a number of others tried to enrich this genre with their valuable contributions.

The poems in this collection have no specific coordinating theme but are on varying themes like patriotism, love, death, identity crisis, moral indignation, frustrations in life, self-conflicts and so on. The hangover of the bygone days of slavery and bondage is reflected in many of the poems of Assefa Alemu. However, the titular poem seems to be expressing the dominating theme of the sense of being manacled, as the poet says: The field to run is vast / The possibilities to become infinite / The sky to fly is wide / The freedom to enjoy absolute / But we are manacled horses in an open land (p. 10). The lines remind us Rousseau who said, "Man is born free but everywhere he is in chains."

There are a few poems on 'death' which evoke a feel of reading the poems of Emily Dickinson. While the American poetess, in a sarcastic tone, welcomes death as a bridegroom, the poet of 'Not Yet' shuns away from the untimely death, like a hesitant bridegroom, saying, "Look! It is still noon for me / Too early to go to bed / I ain't tired yet / I have a desert to cross / a mountain to climb / an ocean to swim / Before I retired to my rest" (p. 44). The poet expresses his concern over the brevity of 'A Life Span' which is "Like your shadow / Taller at the morn / Stands short / Under your feet at noon / Trodden over / With the dust your feet picked / Then, covered" (p. 59).

The conflict within the self is evident in most of the poems of Assefa Alemu. Even the first poem in the collection begins with the line, "I am my own worst enemy." However, the poet later realizes that his 'enemy that stood high above' him 'was not my enemy / But me, yes, it was me" (The Colossus pp. 30-31). At times the conflict even leads to a sort of reconciliation and resolution, as the speaker in 'Getting Old' says, "I cannot be of confident or certain / Of anything I neither experienced nor seen" (p. 49), whether it is Heaven or Hell.

'Mob Politics' is a poem that clearly presents the moral indignation of the poet against the fights between 'Brothers on the left; and brothers on the right', where the common man stands in a dilemma without knowing which is left and which is right, or to whom to support. In many of his poems, the poet employs objects from nature, like the sun, the moon, the wind and the clouds as powerful symbols of the forces of nature that control human life on this planet. This may be an old technique of expressing the 'feelings recollected' of a poet, but Assefa Alemu did it in a natural way without any artificiality in expressions. In some of his poems, he cleverly utilized even the scope of graphics (Yearning of Heart) and its effect cannot be explained but should be experienced.

Despite all limitations in language competence confessed by the poet in his Introduction, the poems in this anthology give us an enjoyable reading. Assefa's sincere efforts to give vent to his poetic talent, especially through a

foreign language, are highly appreciable. I wish all the best for the poet and his work.

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ACADEMIC NEWS

Culture and Development in Ethiopia: National Research Conference, June 15-16, 2016, University of Gondar. Organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism & College of Social Sciences and the Humanities, University of Gondar.

In June 15-16, 2016 the National Research on "Conference Culture and Development in Ethiopia" was held in Gondar University. The conference was organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the College of Social Sciences and the Humanities. The main objective of the conference was to investigate the contribution that culture, including the tangible and intangible heritage, can bring for the development of Ethiopia.

During the two-day conference a total of ten papers were presented. The papers covered different topics and academic disciplines, from media studies, to education, political science, folklore and social anthropology.

Three papers focused on the media and their role in promoting certain cultural values. Rukya Hussen (Wello University), with a paper on "The Role of Media in Promoting Indigenous Cultural Values: Critical Discourse Analysis", analyzed the threat to local cultural values by the global dominating media. Ayyele Addis (Weldya University) presented a paper in Amharic on የመገናኛ ብዙኃን ሚና ለባህል እሴቶች ልማት እና የባህል ብዝሀነት በኢትዮጵያ ብሮድካስቲንግ ኮርፖሬሽን የሬዲዮ ፤ የቴሌቪዥን እና የጋዜጣ ሽፋን ("The Role of Mass Media for the development of cultural values and of multiculturalism: The case of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation and its coverage of radio, TV and press"). Bedesta Kasa (Ministry of Culture) spoke on የብዝሃ ባህላዊ አመለካከት መዳበር ለአገራዊ አንድነትና ለዘላቂ ልማት ያለው ፈይዳ ("The value of promoting multiculturalism for the national unity and the sustainable development").

Within the fields of folklore and social anthropology five papers were presented. Two papers focused on indigenous medical systems: "Medicinal use of fauna in the indigenous medicine system of Metema woreda, North Gondar" by Mezgebu Belay (Addis Ababa University) and "Indigenous herbal medicinal knowledge and healing system among the Sinasha" by Abraham Genet (Gondar University). "Craft art industry in Gondar city: Weaving and pottery-making in retrospect and prospect" by Ebrahim Damtew (Gondar University) studied the position of weaving and pottery-making in Gondar. Additionally, there were two papers that focused on the role of indigenous institutions in local governance: Getu Ambaye's (Gondar University) "The role of indigenous association for promoting local development: A case study of indigenous association among Agaws in Awi zone of Amhara Regional State" and Endalkachew Birhan's (Madawalabu University) "The role of indigenous institution in local governance: The case of Gada system of Borana Oromo, the pastoralist community of Ethiopia".

Within the field of education Teferi Teklu (Gondar University) presented the paper on በኢትዮጵያ የባሕል ሙያ ትምህርቶች ሥልጠና አስፈላጊነትና አፈጻጸም በተፈሪ ተኩሉ ("The need

and the actual application of cultural training and cultural education in Ethiopia").

Finally, in his paper "Managing Socio-cultural and ethnic diversity: Implications for local interactions and development efforts", Dawit Yosef (Gondar University) analyzed the 'social engineering' mechanisms applied in order to address Ethiopia's socio-cultural diversity throughout history.

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The 26th Annual Research, Community Engagement and Technology Transfer Conference of Gondar University, June 24-25, 2016.

The 26th Annual Research, Community Engagement and Technology Transfer Conference of Gondar University was held on June 24-25, 2016 at the Science Amba campus.

On Friday, June 24, after the opening remarks by Dr. Desalegn Mengesha, President of the university, the conference opened with the plenary sessions, which included five speeches. The first was delivered by Dr Tefera Waluwa and he focused on "Space Science Development in Ethiopia". The second plenary speech was presented by Feseha Yetagesu with the topic on "Science, technology and innovation in Ethiopia: Its status-quo and future opportunities". Then followed a communication by Prof. Oveta Fulle on "Towards HIV/AIDS Elimination: Equipping Local Trusted Messengers to Address a Virus Pandemic". The fourth plenary was given by Prof. Eiman Mahmoud on "Descriptive Analysis of Cervical Cancer Cases at Jimma University Hospital in Southwestern Ethiopia". The fifth and last plenary communication came from Dr. Patricia Daley with a focus on "Knowledge Production and Publication".

The same day afternoon different panel sessions started. Divided by the area of study, the following community service and technology transfer projects were presented during the two days of the conference:

Clinical psychology

"Prevalence and associated factors of anxiety and depression among chronic illness patients in Amhara Regional state referral hospital, Ethiopia", by Gebeyehu B., Suleman S., Hone M., Geta W., Bizuneh T., Selamawit W., Niguse B., Yosef T., and Mengesha E.

Education

"Current practices and challenges of preschool education in Amhara Regional State: Implication for quality and intervention", by Sisay Haile, Ebabush Yirdaw, Habtamu Genet, Meseret Getatchew, Yoseph Megebu, Yifter Melese, Derib Abiew, Mesafint Muchie, Zelalem Alemayehu, and Hana Shewamoltot.

"Re-thinking Ethiopian education system: Some experiences from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in North and South Gondar zones", by Adugna Abebe, Tebaber Chanie, Bekele Melese, Semalegn Kendie, Ajanaw Alemie, Girma Tayachew, Marshet Girmay, and Ebrahim Damtew

Human geography

"Analyzing vulnerability to drought using remote sensing indices", by Menberu Teshome, Abel Markos, Aysheshem Terfe, Derje Amen, Belet Gelanew, Geberananeya Gebru, and Abebech Chekol.

"Do household gardens impact children's heights and weights? An evaluation of the Kossoye Development Program's School Vegetable Seed Distribution", by Andrew J. Carlson, Amsalu Feleke, Hone Mandefro, and Solomon Admasu.

"Rural households' preference for food security interventions in North West Ethiopia: A case study of Dabat woreda, North Gondar", by Addisu Baye, Amlaku Alemu, Assefa Dinku, Brehanu Matebe, Kumela Gudeta, Mikias Amar, Muluken Adane, Tadesse Negash, and Tewodros Getnet.

Population studies/sociology

"Analyzing social change in North and South Gondar zones since 1974: Implications for policy", by Adera Getaneh, Kassahun Tegegne, Dereje Workayehu, Gerum Taye, and Getasew Nigussie.

"Migration and development in Amhara region: A multi-dimensional analysis", by Kassahun Tegegne, Adera Getaneh, Setegn Ali, Mulusew Birhanu, Mastewal Abawa, Getasew Nigussie, Dereje Workayehu, Tesfaye Tafere, and Gerum Taye.

"Socio-economic problems of metropolitan urban centres in Amhara region", by Mikyas A., Meseret K., Seid J., Kelemu F., Geberananeya G., Endashaw A., Samuel S., Bizuayehu M., Nigussie A., and Mihret A.

Social anthropology

"The economic and socio-cultural sources, consequences and intervention mechanisms of revenge in Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia", by Getu Ambaye, Abebe Alemu, Belay Shibeshe, Bitowed Admassu, Meseret Assefa, Mezegebu Belay, and Worku Tekleyes.

ሀግረሰባዊ የለቅሶ ስርዓት በአማራ ክልል የተመረጡ ዞኖች ("Traditional mourning forms in the selected zones of Amhara state"), by Samirawit Zewdu, Muluken Zemene, Ageññehu Tesfa, Melaku Alemnew, Melshew Mittiku, Abbeba Hussen, Dessalegn Bizuneh, Abeselom Nek'atibeb, Ebnet Abbebe, Werke Mene, and Habtamu Akanaw.

Tourism

"The practices, challenges and opportunities of the tourism industry in Amhara Regional State: The world heritage sites in focus", by Derb A., Sisay A., Satya K., Tewodros A., Tewodros L., Yared D., and Mollalign B.

In addition to these group projects, the following individual projects were presented:

"Confusions, tensions, challenges and prospects of Ethiopian nationalism: Tsegaye Gebre Medhin historical play in focus", by Haimanot Wassie Aklau.

"Cultural and socio-economic values of moringa stenopetala among the Konso in southwestern Ethiopia", by Tebaber Chanie.

The community service projects implemented during the 2015-2016 academic year by the College of Social Sciences and the Humanities are the following ones:

Nr.	Title	Principal investigator
1	Income generation and business support for women entrepreneurs and Women Entrepreneurs Association in Dembiya Woreda with particular emphasis of micro and small enterprises	Aysheshum Terefe
2	A University-community partnership project for positive youth development in Gondar town: Youth focused community-based project	Ajamaw Alemie
3	Identity, history and heritage management: Intervention on the identification, preservation and promotion of tangible and intangible heritages in North and South Gondar	Debash Yimam
4	Psychological counseling and training to address multidimensional needs of people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in three woredas of North Gondar Administrative Zone	Semalign Kindie
5	Developing the speaking skills, communication abilities and the respective methodological aspects required to teach English subject in English language for teachers working in general elementary schools (7 and 8 grades) in Gondar city	Yoseph Mezgebu
6	Training on integration of population variables into development planning for sectoral planners in North Gondar: The application of spectrum software of policy models	Bizunesh Muluneh
7	Addressing the needs of adolescence and youth through psychological counseling: Community counseling service (Phase II)	Riyah Mohammed
8	Improving sexual and reproductive health practices of young girls in Dembiya *woreda* through training of girls in the school and mainstreaming sexual and reproductive activities in the school	Belete Debebe
9	Entrepreneurship training for rural youth in Dera *woreda*, south Gondar	Mezgebu Belay

Since a few years now, the College of Social Sciences and Humanities has also been actively participating in the Science and Technology Transfer Programme of the University. The mission of this programme is to contribute to the sustainable socioeconomic development of the country by producing vibrant, compassionate and responsible citizens through societal needs tailored curricula; conducting problem-solving research; and strengthening community engagement and technology transfer. The projects undertaken within this programme by the College for the 2015-2016 academic year are:

Nr	Title	Principal investigator	Investigators
1	Heritage Triangle of Ethiopia, Gondar–Lalibela–Aksum: A web-based GIS tourist information system	Kurma Satyanarayana	Abel Markos, Andreu Martínez Rahwa Youssuf Belay Abera Gebrenaenya Gebru
2	Transfering asset-based community development as grassroots model for socioeconomic change of rural subsistent farming communities in Ethiopia	Semalegne Kendie	Senthil Kumar, Shambel Desale, Suleyman Shikur, Endeshaw Aynetu

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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

POLICY OF THE JOURNAL

The *Ethiopian Renaissance Journal of Social Sciences and the Humanities* (*ERJSSH*) is an official biannual publication of the College of Social Sciences and the Humanities, University of Gondar. The *ERJSSH* publishes original scholarly articles, reviews, discussions, synopses of major research, technical notes, and case reports within the Social and Behavioural Sciences, the Humanities and other related fields. Manuscripts to be published in *ERJSSH* are required to meet the standards of international academic journals, be original and not published or submitted for publication elsewhere.

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If the manuscript does not meet the requirements and/or the thematic scope of the Journal the editors reserve the right to reject it.

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Manuscript Preparation
Articles are to be written either in English or, in cases when the thematic

requires it, in Amharic. The file format should be supported by OpenOffice and Microsoft Word and files should be submitted in both doc/docx (alternatively also rtf or opd) and pdf formats. Contributions may not exceed 20 typed pages, or 7,000 words, including footnotes and references.

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Acknowledgements

At the end of the manuscript the author should acknowledge briefly: (a) contributions that need acknowledging but do not justify authorship; (b) acknowledgements of technical help received by the author; (c) acknowledgements of financial and material support received by the author, specifying the nature of support; and (d) study subjects and others who contributed in the design, data collection, and analysis of the study.

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