About the Journal

Zoe International Journal of Social Transformation is an international, multidisciplinary, independent publication for all researchers who understand the role of knowledge production in the transformation of society. It brings together diverse disciplines to provide a knowledge repository for the transformation of humanity as a whole. The journal is devoted to all aspects of development, innovations and good practice in education in general and society in particular. This journal uses double-blind peer review; that is, throughout the review process the identities of the authors are concealed from the reviewers; and the identities of the reviewers are concealed from the authors and also from other reviewers. To facilitate the integrity of this process, authors need to ensure that their manuscripts are prepared in a manner that does not expose their identities.

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Knowledge as Power for Social Transformation

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Knowledge is power and this power is the building block for the society. Africa in particular and the world in general is in need of social transformation on every front and the academic sector is the right place to start. Transforming the education sector would be the first step towards social transformation and since education is the principal tool for training and empowering people to transform their societies, knowledge can be considered the power for social transformation. This editorial captures the essence of the articles in this issue. It sets the pace for the articles in this issue and articulate what social transformation is, as well as how knowledge makes for social transformation.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are principal centres for the creation and construction of knowledge, a process that may be influenced by the theoretical, philosophical and methodological perspectives of stake holders. Innovations produced by these institutions are motivated by the continuous search for, and application of knowledge by individuals and organizations at different social and political levels in society. The possibilities of knowledge are endless, but determining how and when to apply particular facets of knowledge is where the onus lies.

Intricate knowledge of computers, for example, gives an individual the power and means to manipulate them to manipulate them for the desired results. When one considers how the

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computer has affected the world, one needs look no further for proof that knowledge is power and that with power lies the ability to transform society.

Societal transformation in recent times has emerged as the focus of higher education programs (Harvey & Williams, 2010), as seen in quality assurance guidelines from different continents (Hopkins, 2015). Education (the pursuit of knowledge) has the potential to illuminate the individual in particular and the community in general, bringing about multi-faceted changes in the world. Although, as Davies (1994) argues, that the maxim ‘‘knowledge is power’’ is not new, at the global level this dictum is becoming increasingly true as a result of rapid advances in information technology in the Global North. Davies adds that ‘‘knowledge (including the capacity to create it) is becoming the key economic input which, at the extreme, supersedes land, capital and labour in importance’’ (p. 1). The rise of multi-billionaires like Mark Zuckerberg, and Edwardo Savarin on the platform of ideas and the manner in which these ideas have influenced social action further demonstrate the power of knowledge to transform the society. Pitsoe and Letseka (2012) argue, as does Foucault, that power is hegemonic because it is used to deny individuals access to knowledge. They add that the discourse of knowledge as power dates back to Nicholai Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes and that when individuals within a particular community are empowered with the right kind of knowledge, they take actions that bring about transformation in the society in which they leave.

Wolf (2013) advanced this debate when he points out that Foucault’s writings reveal how forms and formations of knowledge become the basis for political activity Foucault’s argument granted, knowledge, like the computer, may be manipulated for hegemonic results. Therefore, in order for society to be transformed from the grassroots, knowledge constructors need to articulate knowledge in ways that individual in every strata of society can consume. Giving every individual the opportunity to consume the knowledge constructed in different institutions is a way of sharing power: the opportunity to bring about changes not only at the level of society they occupy but at the global level.

But what is it in knowledge that gives it the power for social transformation? Fukugawa (2005) and Zhan, Tang and Zhang (2013) argue that there are several characteristics of knowledge that drive social transformation. Because ZOE International Journal of Social transformation is devoted to the construction and application of knowledge, it is appropriate here to elaborate on each of these characteristics.
The first characteristic, the paradigmatic context of knowledge, deals with the lens through which the knowledge is constructed and what that knowledge means for the society as a whole. Arguably, knowledge constructed from a positivist perspective would be different from that constructed from a critical perspective. However, the lens through which the knowledge is constructed gives credence to its value and power in the particular society.

The second characteristic, the degree to which knowledge is integrated within a paradigmatic context, demands that the knowledge constructed must remain true to the approach used in constructing it. For example, a critical or Marxist perspective must be able to contribute to Marxist ideals, while the feminist perspective must alienate gender discrimination. When knowledge is integrated within such paradigmatic contexts, then, “it has several aspects which are 'pre-understood'”; that is, its underlying machinery has generally already been thought through. Relationships between the facts provided are, therefore, more uneasily understood. The pre-existing conditions make knowledge generalizable and appropriate for effective utilisation (Palya, 2000).

The next characteristic centres on the purpose of knowledge and what this knowledge is geared to do in the society. Knowledge might aim at correcting a misconception, illuminate the society on a particular issue, or change the way a particular thing is done. The breadth of the findings or knowledge will determine the applicability of the knowledge. In Literature, for example, knowledge may cut across prose, drama and poetry or it may focus on one particular genre.

Another characteristic is the generality or degree of abstraction of knowledge. This is quite critical, especially when the knowledge is to be consumed by every individual in the society. How abstract or generalizable the knowledge is will determine the level of its consumption. In the business world, for example, the marketing strategies of a web design company cannot be generalised to a brewery company. The level of generalisability and consumption is highly dependent on the level of abstraction.

A further characteristic of knowledge concerns the types of knowledge. There are two basic types of knowledge: structural and functional knowledge. These two types of knowledge address specific issues. The one makes for knowing and the other for doing. These two types of knowledge are quite vital if for transformation since knowing precedes action, but combining the two gives knowledge the power to transform society.
Yet another characteristic of knowledge is the knowledge generation helix, and this aspect of knowledge deals with the breaking-down of a phenomenon of knowledge into its simpler elements. Assuming that social action is dependent on individual action and that individuals can only function as parts of the whole, breaking down knowledge into smaller functional units becomes vital for social transformation. By isolating the parts and by understanding their individual processes, we can best and most efficiently come to understand complex wholes. The complexity and unpredictability of wholes are due to the action of the many small processes that make up the whole. Thus the breaking knowledge into different phases, thereby producing a different helix, is vital if social transformation is the goal.

Conceptual follow-up, the last characteristic of knowledge, augurs for the continuous viability and social applicability of knowledge. Knowledge should create room for improvement of society; that is, it should provide solutions to social challenges.

On the other hand, Sveiby (1997) offers another range of characteristics of knowledge that are relevant to all spheres. Because these are equally relevant to XOE, they also deserve elaboration here. One of Sveiby’s characteristics is that knowledge is contextual and can be re-used; since knowledge is constructed in a particular context, it therefore follows that its application will also be contextual and this application can be reproduced in similar context making.

Knowledge is useless if it lacks potential for application, because it is this potential for application that makes for transformation.

Another of Sveiby’s characteristic is that the benefits of knowledge can be obtained only if it is applied. Just as a seed not sown is useless, knowledge not applied cannot yield any benefit for the individual or the society in which the knowledge is constructed. Hayek (1945) argues that the use of knowledge in the society is highly dependent on how articulate the constructs of the knowledge are and how different individuals interpret the knowledge. The usefulness of knowledge is highly dependent on its applicability, and applicability is dependent on how the degree to which individuals make sense of the knowledge.

A third characteristic is that the values of knowledge may change over time. Knowledge is therefore time bound, especially because the world keeps changing and the circumstances knowledge responds to keeps changing. In the technological world, for example, solutions to security challenges today will definitely be outdated tomorrow. What constitutes knowledge
therefore keeps changing over time and the application of this knowledge also depends on its validity.

The fourth characteristic, which logically follows from the third, is that knowledge needs to be updated constantly because it is difficult to transfer. Responding to challenges in the educational world demands constant renewal of knowledge which can speak to the increasing needs of students. Furthermore, the make-up of students keeps changing, a consequence of the challenges they are facing. Keeping up with the changing make-up of students is a formidable task, one that requires new research or knowledge construction in particular fields. Also, because of the changing make-up of the students—or any other differences that emerges within the school context—knowledge transferability becomes an equally formidable process. Still, updating the knowledge creates room for transferability even if only to a limited degree. For the same reason, knowledge can be difficult to capture and distribute.

Lastly, knowledge should facilitate ‘sense-making’, enable higher learning, and drive—and be responsive to—the development of new technologies. This process should not only happen in universities or educational institutions but should also extend to the common man and the common woman in the given society. Technology helps to advance the applicability of knowledge, especially in contexts where the application of the set knowledge is dependent on the availability of resources that can contribute to the social transformation process. Stetsenko and Arievitch (2014) argue that social transformation is the coming together of different isophormic forces to shape and reshape the society until meaningful social changes emerge. These meaningful changes—whether social, economic, political or cultural—should lead to the general improvement of society. Daszko and Sheinberg (2005, p. 1) reverberate that “transformation is the creation and change of a whole new form, function or structure. To transform is to create something new that has never existed before…Transformation is a ‘change’ in mind-set, and it centers on gaining new knowledge and taking resultant actions.”

Transforming the society, for example, requires a change in mind-set on the part of individuals within the society, upon whom the onus lies. Transformation is what society needs though there may be disagreements regarding the level to which a specific transformation agenda should be pursued, as well disagreements concerning the direction society should ultimately take. Knowledge is what gives people the power to transform their society, and this power is the core of social action. Taking away this power from the people (through language, access, or whatever means) becomes an act of epistemic violence that should be frowned on or prosecuted.
All of these characteristics of knowledge (those suggested by Sveiby as well as those suggested by Zhan, Tang, & Zhang) frame the context and elucidate the scope of *Zoe International Journal of Social Transformation*. It is our intention that this initial issue and all later issues of ZOE will vivify the relationship between knowledge and social transformation, from different perspectives and in different contexts. In this way the Journal seeks to inspire and empower the masses to take action to ensure the transformation of his or her society, a transformation that tends toward the creation of authentic cultural democracies.

**References**


Stock Theft and its Economic Impact on Rural Communities in South Africa.

George W.K. Appiah* and Hamilton Sipho Simelane**


Introduction

The narratives of crime in South Africa echo throughout the capital cities and rural areas, though most of these narratives still focus on physical crimes on people. There is no doubt that such crimes are very important, but they do not define the terrain of criminal acts as a whole.

The focus on this aspect of crime peripherizes economic crime, especially in rural communities. While these crimes do not directly and immediately result in physical bodily harm, they affect people’s self-esteem and compromise their economic capabilities. This article pushes the frontiers of analysis beyond crimes of physical bodily harm, to those that subject rural...
communities to prolonged poverty and economic dislocations that often last beyond a generation. It focuses on stock theft whose occurrence and consequences have been reported in many parts of the world. For instance, in 2012 villagers in Madagascar killed sixty cattle thieves in separate attacks in the Southern part of the island (Manu, Andu, Tarla, and Agharih, 2014). At the end of 2012 it was reported that the value of cattle stolen in South Africa was R43m, a figure that created a huge dent in the country’s economy (Clack, 2013). Clearly, the economics of stock theft need some serious academic attention, especially in the present decades when rural poverty is rampant and rural economies are peripherized.

This article foregrounds the economic impact of stock theft in rural communities by reconceptualizing stock theft as a barbaric economic activity rather than a cultural practice embedded in the beliefs of a people. Stock theft is a business operating according to the capitalist ethos of profit maximization and accumulation, and some researchers have observed that there is a close relationship between the expansion of capitalist relations and stock theft (Molosiwa, 2007). Research conducted in the western states of the United States America has shown that, “increase in cattle crimes [is] linked to the slumping economy, soaring beef prices and when the market is extremely high, the bad boys come out” (Zuckman, 2011, p1). In rural communities’ Stock theft is a lucrative business that has grown in recent years and has gradually become disastrous to human settlement, as seen in some parts of East Africa (Kaimba, Njehia & Guliye, 2011).

At the moment almost no research has been conducted on the occurrence and economic impact of stock theft in rural communities in South Africa like Maluti-Matatiele. This is preposterous especially because rural communities in this region have been subjected to this crime for several decades and its impact has undermined the attempts of community members to uplift themselves economically. Stock theft in the region has continued regardless of the efforts of the government to combat it. One of these measures was the establishment of The Stock Theft Unit (STU) as an auxiliary wing of the South African Police (SAP). This article aims at closing this gap in the literature and showing the dynamics behind stock theft and its economic effect on rural communities. To achieve this, data for this article was generated using semi-structured interviews within the qualitative case study research. This method was deemed to be the most appropriate, as the necessary information had to be collected from the rural dwellers of Maluti-Matatiele. Through purposive sampling combined with snowballing, most stock farmers because of their socio-economic backgrounds were interviewed. Open-ended questions were
used to get as much detail as possible. Therefore, the analysis contained in this article is anchored on the personal experiences of people as opposed to robust theoretical inquiry.

**Livestock in the context of the rural economy of the Maluti-Matatiele region**

Through research, historians and other scholars have revealed the centrality of animal stock in the rural economy of the northern Nguni groups. The importance and dominance of cattle in the economies of south Eastern parts of Africa was already well established by the middle of the 18th century (Reader, 1970). For instance, a Portuguese sailor who was shipwrecked off the Natal coast in 1593 and who travelled through the region to Delagoa Bay wrote:

> These people are herdsmen and cultivators. Their main crop is millet which they grind between two stones or in wooden mortars to make flour. Their cattle are numerous, fat, tender, tasty, large, the pastures being very fertile. Their wealth consists mainly in their huge number of dehorned cows. They also subsist on cow’s milk and on the butter which they make from it (Boxer, 1959, p.2).

Later, Dutch seamen who likewise survived a shipwreck on the Natal coast in the 1680s reported that “the country is exceedingly fertile, and incredibly populous, and full of cattle, whence it is that lions and other ravenous animals are not apt to attack men, as they find enough tame cattle to devour” (Thompson, 1990, p. 21).

The symbiotic relationship between people and domesticated livestock seems to have reached its apotheosis during the 1680s, furthering the progenitive capacity of both groups in favoured habitats where neither could have multiplied fast without the help of the other. Livestock and the concomitant growth in human numbers were responsible for the distribution and social organization of the Bantu-speaking groups to which the residents of Mataliele-Maluti belong. Highly stratified political systems evolved directly from the ecological requirements of livestock herding, with a strong correlation between political stratification and the relative size of herds and settlements. At its simplest level, grazing requirements and the mechanics of herd management implied that owners of large numbers of livestock would have access to most land, occupy the largest settlements and hold political authority over the greatest number of people. The Swazi, the Sotho, the Tswana, the Shona, the Ndebele, the Venda, the Xhosa, and the Zulu developed economies and political systems that were founded upon the wealth of cattle, but none could depend upon cattle alone. When colonialism began to circumvent cattle raids in neighbouring communities, the leaders, in pursuit of cattle accumulation, turned to raiding communities within the same polity. The value of cattle in a region like Maluti-
Matatiele goes beyond physical wealth to become a necessary resource—they are used for pulling ploughs when tilling the soil (Simelane, 2002). This was especially the case in the first decades of the 20th century before steel ploughs began to be widely used by the indigenous population in Southern Africa.

As a result of this long historic development, one of the central features of most rural homesteads in Maluti-Matatiele is the cattle byre/kraal. Cattle have continued to play an important part in many aspects of the spiritual and material life of the rural inhabitants in the region. Spiritually, cattle is used as sacrifice to the gods and as a way of communicating to the dead. Furthermore, it is used to pay bride price or amalobolo (bride wealth) when a lady’s hand is sought for marriage. Through cattle, a man is able to accumulate more wives who eventually, together with their children, become an invaluable source of family labour. The custom of ukulobola has encouraged Swati men to consider their daughters primarily as a means of acquiring cattle, which are viewed as central to the economic security of rural homesteads.

The tendency to increase cattle numbers, even under adverse environmental conditions, is a characteristic feature of Maluti-Matatiele rural society. This has been so despite the fact that the country has serious problems of environmental degradation (Clack, 2013). It is widely believed in most rural areas of Southern Africa that cattle accumulation bestows economic security, prestige and status, and rural achievers are seen as those with large herds of cattle. Low, Kemp and Doran (1980) argue that in other Nguni tribes “cattle are a store of wealth or a savings account from which withdrawals are made only for special social or ceremonial occasions or for emergency needs such as payments for education.” Holman, Rivas, Urbina, Rivera, Giraldo, Guzman, Martinez, Medina and Ramirez (2005, p. 20) add that:

*The role of livestock keeping revolve around storing wealth, contributing to food and nutritional security, providing draught power, transportation and manure, and serving traditional social functions. In some situations, the ‘livestock ladder’ may allow the poor to progress from modest livestock holdings, such as a few poultry, to acquiring sheep and goats or pigs, or even cattle. Livestock production provides a constant flow of income and reduces the vulnerability of agricultural production.*

This is also true in the Maluti-Matatiele region, where cattle is seen as a source of wealth. It is not surprising to find that most migrants to the mines invest part of their earnings in cattle (Khoabane & Black 2009). This tendency is clearly demonstrated by the experience of the
Maluti-Matatiele region, where evidence suggests that the level of cattle accumulation has risen as a result of male labour migration to the mines. Cattle accumulation is clearly one of the priorities in decisions regarding capital investment among migrant workers. The importance of cattle in the Maluti-Matatiele region has several implications of a social and economic nature. It means that the fabric of rural Swazi society is interwoven with the issue of livestock ownership. It also means cattle ownership plays a crucial role in the economic security of rural homesteads. Any negative development in cattle ownership or in the general availability of cattle is bound to lead to important social and economic disruptions.

The Occurrence of stock theft in the Maluti-Matatiele region

Police reports indicate that stock theft is part of daily life in the Maluti-Matatiele region, as numerous cattle are reported stolen daily, not including those not reported. Some of the reasons for failure to report cases of stock theft could be ignorance and fear on the part of local stock farmers. There is a general feeling that if all the cases were reported the district would come up worse than other areas in South Africa. Statistical information gathered from the police indicates that in 2012 there was no month without reported cases of stock theft (See Table 1), with 165 cases of stock theft report. In 2013 the number increased to 204, but dropped to 179 in 2014 and again to 165 in 2015. The table also indicates a high level of efficiency on the part of the police in dealing with the cases and again the monthly variations come out as in some months all the cases are dealt with. However some of the pending cases are the ones police had difficulty in investigating and may be struck off the roll. It should be noted that dealing with the cases does not mean that the stock was recovered but only that they went through the official legal processes.

Though the number of stock have been reducing since 2014, the manner in which the crime is committed has moved from local peasant approaches to highly organized strategies with regard to, with social and economic mechanisms. Khoabane, and Black (2012) testified to this by stating that stock theft has become more organized and violent. Stock theft syndicates transport animals from one village to another, and eventually to local butcheries and market outlets in South Africa. A high ranking police officer of the Stock Theft Unit (STU) in Maluti-Matatiele region indicated that most stolen stock are transported to market outlets in far distant cities and towns such as Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Richards Bay. The aim is to conceal, or make virtually impossible, the tracking of these stolen stock.
There are two main kinds of stock thieves in the Maluti-Matatiele region. Although there is no statistical proof, a large number of the thieves are local. These are people who have in-depth knowledge about the households of the area and the security conditions of each household.

The targets of these thieves are usually vulnerable households, especially those which have absentee male heads. It must be noted, however, that there is no household that is safe from the thieves. The next set of thieves comes from across the border in Lesotho. The cross-border stock theft incidents experienced by many villages have grown significantly over the years, with catastrophic consequences to life and property (Appiah, 2009). The ‘Mail and Guardian’ newspaper (1988: 18-23) described the occurrence of cross-border stock theft in Maluti-Matatiele region in glowing terms when it stated:

They come over the mountains from Lesotho on skis every full moon, invisible in their snowsuits, lethal with their AK-47s. An experienced band of five, on a good night in the virtually perennial snow that erases their trail in seconds, they will drive off at least 100 head of stock. Now the farmers may not be so keen after the week’s border disaster in which three men in a strong Mount Fletcher cross-border recovery party died in a hail of semi-automatic rifle fire on entering Lesotho. Only two years ago, hundreds of blanket-clad Basotho poured over the hills, plundering, burning and looting. Police say 15 Transkei villages in the Maluti-Matatiele district died and those Basotho raiders who were captured, as eventually revealed in court, were killed in cold blood by frustrated police.

The above depiction shows the extent of cross-border raids taking place in the Maluti-Matatiele region. According to some participants, from time to time there is collaboration between the two sets of thieves, and this is because thieves from Lesotho are always well informed as to which homesteads are vulnerable and this can only happen with information from within the communities. The combination of the two sets of thieves complicates the issue of investigating the crimes as it is difficult to work across the border. Some of the stock are taken forcibly from the owners as was the case in Mapfontein, where 76 head of cattle were taken by force from the herd-boys in December, 2015.

Vectors of stock theft in the Maluti-Matatiele region

In order to understand the dynamics of stock theft in the Maluti-Matatiele region, there is a need to investigate the vectors of the practice. An analysis of the practice is meant to dispel the traditional discourse dominated by colonial historians who postulated that stock theft was
a product of an innate disposition to thievery in African people. This section shows that local circumstances combined with economic imperatives were the main drivers or vectors of stock theft in the Maluti-Matatiele region. It should be appreciated that no single vector can account for stock theft in the region but a combination of several dynamics

The geographical terrain of the Maluti-Matatiele region makes it ideal for stock thieves. The rugged mountain terrain and the deeply incised valleys of the Drakensberg have served as protective haven for stock thieves. It is very difficult to identify suspicious individuals and also very difficult and dangerous to track stolen stock. This gives local thieves who have good knowledge of the terrain a decisive advantage over the police whenever they try to track reported cases of theft. For example, the region boasts “fifty-seven mountain passes known for the smuggling of marijuana and livestock” (Nedbank, 2001, p. 1). The deep gorges stretching between the towering mountainous ranges are exploited by stock thieves for the concealment of stolen stock during the day. The stock is driven across the mountainous ranges during the night to different destinations where they are readily exchanged for guns, cash or dagga, depending on the type of animal that has been stolen (Nedbank, 2001, p.7).

The establishment of certain economic enterprises has had a negative effect of promoting stock theft. This is the case with the proliferation of funeral parlours whose business feeds the upsurge in stock theft. One of the participants pointing to this noted that;

Businessmen who run local funeral parlours have a close working relationship with stock theft syndicates. This symbiotic relationship ensures that business thrives through acquiring stolen stock bought at very low prices from the thieves. Stock theft syndicates are regular suppliers of animals for slaughter whose meat is used in funerals. This arises from the fact that in the Maluti-Matatiele, funeral undertakers do not only provide coffins for bereaved families, but also stock like cattle, sheep, and in some instances, goats. The animals are often slaughtered in preparation for delicacies served at such social functions, for visitors, sympathizers and well-wishers, who come from far and wide to mourn with the bereaved family members and grace the occasion.

In addition to funeral parlours, butcheries have also grown to be very strong driver for stock theft. In most instances the issue revolves around maximizing profits by achieving high levels of accumulation. While this is the cornerstone of the capitalist economic system, there is no check that the process of accumulation is pursued ethically. It has been estimated that in most
instances butchery owners make more than 100% profit out of stolen stock. Police evidence has shown that some of the animals going to local butcheries are killed in the forests and transported to butcheries as meat. Another participant further added that;

As you see, the increase of stock theft has moved simultaneously with a corresponding increase in butchery houses and funeral parlours. Both the butchery houses and funeral parlours depend largely on stolen stock to drive their business enterprises. Crucially important, they serve as ready market for stolen stock. Without a market readily available from these butcheries and funeral parlours, stock theft will vanish from our localities, or its impact will be brought to a minimum level.

The issue of stock theft being driven by capitalist enterprises is widespread and much bigger than discussed above. It is part of the larger process of the expansion of capitalist enterprises and their accompanying logic of material or financial accumulation. More significantly, it feeds on the larger problem of corruption that the South African Government and other African governments are finding difficult to control. Corruption informs the process of accumulation strongly and rural communities are not immune.

One of the strong vectors of stock theft in the Maluti-Matatiele region is its proximity to the South African-Lesotho border. Respondents in the research pointed out that the district’s geographical location has contributed to the escalation in stock theft in the region. Villages situated close to the border are particularly vulnerable and are perpetually potential victims of stock theft. Research has shown that the border is porous, allowing easy movement of all types of people, including criminals (Crush, Jeeves, & Yudelman, 1992). The nature of the border facilitates cross-border raids and makes these communities open to stock theft. Research carried out by Kynoch and Ulicki (2001, p. 30) has shown the extent of this problem: “villages close to the border typically find themselves in a difficult situation for they are targeted by both Basotho and South African stock thieves. Since 1990, 85% of stock-owners in the border villages have lost animals to thieves, as compared to 47% from non-border villages.” The reality is that the further a village is from the border, the lower its vulnerability to stock theft. Simelane, (2005) argues that research in other Southern African countries has led to the same conclusion, indicating that any innovative measures to combat stock theft should concentrate on communities along the border.
Evidence indicates that developments in the South African economy have a close relationship to levels of stock theft in the Maluti-Matatiele region. This is especially the case with sporadic job-shedding and retrenchments in those sectors in which people from the rural areas dominate. For example, the performance of the South African mining industry has impacted on the rural economy in Maluti-Matatiele, consequently raising the levels of stock theft. Since 1990, the mining industry has been experiencing structural problems accompanied by sporadic job-shedding, and retrenchment of workers. Bhorat and Kambour (2006) aver that “employment in the coal mines drastically fell from a high of 101,705 employees in 1985 to 55,219 by 1997. For gold and uranium mining, the decline was from 526,839 to 241,352 employees over the same period, while for diamond and other minerals employment declined from 199,572 in 1990 to 136,543 in 1997. It has been revealed that over 100 000 mine workers have been retrenched over the past decade, with a substantial financial loss of over R50 million in incomes for local economies (Bhorat & Kambour 2006).

The above statements demonstrate that employment levels in the mining industry have been on the decline for some time now with critical outcomes, especially in rural communities. Most areas in Southern Africa have historically been sending rural migrants as labour for the mines and consequently, job-shedding in the mining industry has had a significant effect on the economies of rural communities. Retrenchment of mine workers and the pressure to meet the bare necessities of life such as food, shelter, and clothing have shot unemployment levels to new heights in local communities in the Maluti-Matatiele region.

**Socio-economic impacts of stock theft in the Maluti-Matatiele region**

The importance of livestock in traditional African society cannot be overstated. Given the rural background of the district with its traditional customary practices and physical geographical terrain, livestock keeping is paramount in most rural communities of the region. The prestige of the African stock farmer is measured not only in monetary terms but also numerically in stock size, especially in cattle. The possession of cattle commands both social and economic status in the traditional community. The more stock an African farmer owns, the greater the level of social prestige he carries in a rural community. Stock theft has therefore depressed the social positions and status of many men in the Maluti-Matatiele region. This has been a major social dislocation whose impact has been felt in the general social rubric of the region. This is because they felt that their masculinity was challenged, leaving them with no material base for
justifying their authority in the household. For many men things are falling apart because the seat of male dominance is being weakened by stock theft.

Another important social impact of stock theft is the generation of conflict. Violence has been used by all parties and stakeholders involved in stock theft whether they are victims or perpetrators. Violent action by perpetrators of stock theft related-crimes in most instances is reciprocated with violence. This is either in the process of protecting their stock or attempting to recover stolen stock. For most communities mob justice and jungle justice synergistically become the preferred option. They are allowed to dictate outcome of events without recourse to officially prescribed legal procedures and processes. They take the law into their own hands and mercilessly deal with suspects of stock theft or perpetrators caught in the act. Testifying to this, one of the participants indicated that “a young man of about twenty-five years suspected of spearheading a campaign in favour of a stock theft syndicate. He was caught in one of the localities, given a severe beating, and he died two days later before the matter was reported to the police.” Culprits suspected of stock theft face the might of vigilante justice. Beating and, in extreme cases, murder are preferred methods of redress. Highlighting mob justice one participants highlighted that:

One man died about a week ago. He was suspected of leading a stock theft syndicate, specialising in random cross-border raids of our stock. He suffered grievous bodily harm, as a result of heavy beating. He died in our hands. His body was dumped in that shallow grave. He was merely given a puppet burial. The matter ended there. Since then calm once again has returned to our community. We know this will not last for long.

Shepherds and community residents who courageously challenge or intercept suspected drivers of stolen stock frequently end up either killed or maimed permanently. Stock thieves themselves most often prepare themselves for this by carrying weapons ranging from knives to riffles. The crux of the matter is that a cauldron of violence and counter violence is woven through the social dynamics surrounding stock theft. The level of violence has reached epidemic proportions in rural communities in the Maluti-Matatiele region (Khoabane, and Black, 2012). Manu, et al (2014, p. 183) add to this by arguing that “stock theft has affected relations within villages on a number of levels. The level of mistrust among villagers has reportedly increased. This mistrust is not targeted at any neighbour in particular, but manifests itself in underlying tensions among villagers.”

The tendency of communities to take the law into their own hands is motivated by the fact that rural communities in the region have lost faith in the state police. Allegations of low police
commitment to combat stock theft are widespread. The general feeling is that members of the Stock Theft Units (STUs) own large herds of cattle accumulated through illicit means. Local farmers believe that stock impounded from suspected stock thieves ultimately find their way into farms owned by some policemen in the district, while some believe some STU officers maintain close ties with stock thieves. One participant demonstrated the negative feelings against the police by pointing out that, “the police unit spends too much time in the village shebeen drinking and engaging in love affairs with the local village women.” Another local added that “instead of STUs crossing the border into Lesotho in search of our lost stock, rather they tend to engage in a desperate search for Basotho women and end up having fun with them in the border towns like Qachas Nek.” The results of stock theft on the local economy and farmers in the district is quite devastating, with some local farmers trapped in bankruptcy, unemployment, poverty and some experiencing death (Kabelo, 2015). The testimony from one of the participants pointed to this when he stated that;

I emerged as a successful stock farmer, supplying meat and milk to my neighbours and the local communities around me. I was producing 300 litters of milk a day. I have been out of work for the past 5 years, when all my stock, about 300 of them including lame ones and calves were stolen. I suffered from nervous breakdown, but I recovered. I now depend on government grants, as old age pensioner. I am now left with my farm equipment like the cans and buckets for milking, scale for measurements, plastic bottles for selling milk and several others. My milk parlour for pasteurization, built at high cost is left empty. At the moment I am nothing, I am nobody.

Through the help of the local police he managed to recover some, but not enough to enable him to sustain his business. Although there were differences in intensity, a large number of cattle farmers in the region could relate with this experience.

Conclusion

The present state of research indicates that stock theft has not yet been integrated into the academic mainstream as an important issue that merits research. This is in spite of the fact that its occurrence has been observed worldwide and that it can seriously affect the livelihoods of the victims. This neglect arises partly from the perception that stock theft is a casual phenomenon reminiscent of the sporadic raids of previous centuries. However, this article encourages a re-conceptualization that considers stock theft as a business that is undertaken for profit realization while at the same time being an economic hazard to the victims. This
approach is crucial in understanding economic relations in rural areas, particularly the developments that undermine people’s capabilities of improving the quality of their lives.

An analysis of rural economies in South Africa shows that stock is intertwined with the progress and sustenance of rural communities. The economic value of stock, especially cattle, has been highlighted in the different historical periods of the development of these societies. The most obvious implication of this is that any dislocation in stock ownership affects the economic fortunes of the homestead and the society at large. It is on the strength of such reality that stock theft should be recognized as an economic burden to rural communities everywhere in South Africa, and particularly among pastoralists.

The article has shown that the Maluti-Matatiele region is one of the areas in South Africa which has experienced numerous incidences of stock theft. Insight from participants indicated that the practice has been going on for decades and the perpetrators have formed themselves into organized syndicates that operate throughout the region. Some stock thieves are from within the borders of South Africa, while others are from across the border in Lesotho. The respondents in the research argued that the stock theft syndicates are organized in a cross-border format through the dissemination of information about characteristics of households and their vulnerabilities. Consequently, it is the rural communities that are closest to the border that are most vulnerable.

In this article, several vectors of stock theft have been identified and evidence indicates that the majority of them are of an economic nature. They range from dynamics in the rural economies themselves to changes in other economic sectors at a national level. For example, it has shown how a rural economy in which labour migrancy to the mines plays an important role can be dislocated by job shedding in the mining industry. While it closes channels of employment for young people, it offloads those who have been employed back into the rural areas, creating a huge employment deficit. There is good reason to conclude that some of them attempt to sustain themselves through stock theft.

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Community participation for social transformation: Experiences from a water by gravity project

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Article history
Community participation in rural development is considered as an important factor in promoting sustainable development. However, consumers of community projects are often regarded as passive recipients of externally crafted models of development, especially because power dynamics within the community and the role of the elites and other stakeholders affect the level of community participation. A qualitative research approach was followed whereby data was generated with the use of in-depth interview guides and observation. The participants were selected using simple random sampling and they were made up of officials of the local water committee, workers of the council and local elites. The data generated indicated low community involvement in the planning and management phase but this improved during the implementation phase, making the entire participatory process passive. Members of the community also demonstrated little or no sense of ownership due to elite control, clientilism and local politics. The findings of the study also indicated that the most effective method of social mobilization in such development initiatives was the quarter-based association (Ndakum), which served as the focal point for political and social mobilization and bonding. The results also established that ‘who’ participates in a project and ‘how’ they participate is very important since these answers determine the success or failure of the project. The paper recommends that some structural changes be instituted whereby the user population will be the focus of development projects since they better understand community needs. This will ensure the involvement of all stakeholders, including leaders of all Ndakum (men, women and youth representatives) in the planning and execution of developmental projects. Additionally, conclusions arrived at public and local meeting groups (Ndakum) concerning the project should be respected. This will enable the needs of all stakeholders to be addressed.

Introduction

Increasing community participation in rural development is considered an important element in promoting sustainable rural development. However, consumers of community projects are most often regarded as passive recipients of externally crafted models of development. The revival of the concept of community participation in the African continent was marked by the International Conference on Popular Participation in the recovery and development process in Africa held in

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Arusha in 1990. Shaw (1991, p. 20), citing Adedeji’s opening statement at Arusha in 1990, stated: “the democratization of the development process by which we mean the empowerment of the people, their involvement in decision making process, in implementation and monitoring process is a condition sine qua non for socio-economic recovery and transformation. African leadership and people should not just desire self-reliance but should will it.” This has made the concept of participation the most frequently discussed subject matter in various disciplines that have need for human input in development processes such as social policy, community planning and community development.

As noted by Koffi Annan in a UNEP report, without the fullest participation of people at all levels of society, the goal of full coverage of water supply and sanitation is unlikely to be obtained, considering the fact that water security was declared by the Second World Water Forum in the Hague Netherlands in 2000 to be the principal concern for sustainable development in the 21st C and that water, being directly related to socio-economic development, has become both a vulnerable and valuable resource. In order to find a lasting solution to water security, a new paradigm was developed at the International Conference on Water and Environment held in Dublin in 1991. This new paradigm emphasized a holistic, comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to solving water problems and the involvement of all stakeholders. The Bali Nyonga water by gravity project is an example of a self-help community development initiative aimed at improving the livelihoods of a local people. The first community water in Bali Nyonga was built in 1957 during the British colonial administration by the Native Authority under the leadership of Galega II. In 1967, the water management was given to SNEC following a 40-year concession contract in which the Cameroon government rehabilitated the entire water system, replacing the hydraulic ram with electronic motors and pumps. On the 10th of June 1994, water management was returned to the community. In 2004, the newly created water commission came up with the Koplab water by gravity project, which aimed at bringing clean and portable water to the community by gravity in order to reduce the high cost of electricity bills and water treatment on the Ngola catchment installed by the government (Ngefor, 2014). The rising importance of community involvement in development was first felt when the growth model (modernization) of development failed to bring about desired results. In the late 1970s, emphasis was diverted to ‘peoples’ participation where the ultimate objective was to involve people in the decision making processes. This idea was buttressed by the increasing importance of the concept of
decentralization which was attracting the attention of development practitioners as a strategy for ensuring peoples participation in development initiatives. The participation of local people in this project is often spoken of with much enthusiasm, but there has been little or no research to prove the extent and nature of community involvement experienced during the project. This study therefore seeks to examine the nature, extent and role of community involvement in the sustainable development and management of the Bali Nyonga water by gravity project.

**Conceptualizing community participation**
The concept of community participation in development gained prominence in development discourse in the 1970s. According to Winder (1981), it owed its influence to Paolo Freire’s work on the concept of conscientisation and his analysis of the structural obstacles to development. He argued that people should be the subject and not the object of development. Oakley (1991) described community participation as an end and as an empowering process for individuals and communities in terms of acquiring skills, knowledge and experience, leading to greater self-reliance and sustainable rural Development. Dale (2004), adding to this, viewed participation as contribution which is one of the primary elements in the implementation of programs and projects or in the operation and maintenance of created facilities. The contribution may be entirely voluntary, induced to various extents, or even enforced. It may be provided in the form of ideas, judgments, money, or materials. Brett (2003), on the other hand, regarded participation as an empowering process in which people in partnership with each other and those able to assist them identify problems and needs, mobilize resources and assume responsibility to plan, manage, control and assess the individual and collective actions that they themselves decide upon. As a process of empowerment, participation is concerned with development of skills and abilities to enable rural people to manage better: to have a say in or negotiate with existing development systems (Oakley, 1991). Eade and Roulands (2003) add that powerlessness is a central element of poverty and any focus on poverty, inequality, injustice or exclusion involves analysis of and/or challenging or changing power relations. Participation as a tool for empowerment helps to amplify unacknowledged voices by enabling the rural people to decide upon and take the actions which they believe are essential to their development (Oakley 1991; Slocum et al, 1995).
According to shepherd (1998), gender analysis comprises information to access and have control over resources to men and women, division of labour within the community, and the participation of men and women in public decision-making and organization. Despite the importance placed on community participation in development initiatives, many agencies still experience poor participation of women, (Guitz and Shah, 1998; World Bank, 1996). According to Slocum (1995), many participatory approaches such as participatory rural development do not explicitly address issues of social relations, including gender. Rarely do these methodologies take into account gender analysis, gender based differences in labour allocation and gender differences in access to and control over resources and their benefits. Gender is usually hidden in seemingly inclusive terms such as “the community”, while in most cases what is referred to as community actually means “male community” (Guijt & Shah, 1998). Assaduzzaman (2008) examined community participation from a different perspective, by arguing that people’s participation in development was and still is an elusive golden deer. Assaduzzaman emphasized that clientilism, which came as a result of the undemocratic set up of the administrative system is a major threat to participation. This relates to the work of Khan (1999), who identified corruption and class bias as a major hindrance to people’s participation. The complicated nature of community participation makes the analysis of the same a herculean task. To effectively make sense of community participation, the Cohen and Uphoff model (1980) model of community participation was chosen as the theoretical lens upon which the analysis will be built.

The Cohen and Uphoff model (1980), which was revised by Ichwaga (2004), identified four approaches to community participation: participation in decision making, implementation, benefits and evaluation. This model can be summarized to answer three distinctive questions: 1) What were they participating in? 2) Who participated? 3) How did they participate?
This model gives a new thrust to old community development approach. It identified four approaches to community participation: decision making, implementations, benefits and evaluation. Cohen and Uphoff developed a model which sought to clarify the notion of rural development participation in relation to externally and/or internally implemented development projects. They argue that to understand participation in any given situation, it is necessary to be specific and they see rural development participation not as quantifiable and measurable but as a framework or a rubric under which a number of clearly definable goals can be assembled.

**Research Methodology**

The research made use of the case study design as it focused on a limited subject (community participation) and on a single community. Primary data was generated through the use of interview and observation. The study made use of purposive sampling and the sample included workers of the water commission/council and local elites. The researcher obtained a list of community members who had in-depth knowledge of issues relating to water supply and water
management in the community. This list was regarded as the sample frame from which the final sample was drawn. The participants included men and women from 30 years upward, who participated in the water project and had the ability to remember the events concretely. After data generation, analysis was done as follows: description of the sample size, an in-depth description of the study population in terms of age, gender, occupation, and educational status was done. We next did ordering and coding in which labels were used that enabled us to remove less essential details from the data generated. The data was further summarized under different objectives, and themes were generated under which the different opinions were analysed. Narrative text was used to explain the figures and tables used and also present the findings.

This study was carried out in Bali Nyonga, which is located in the North West Region of Cameroon, lying about 20km south of the North West Regional capital Bamenda. It is the home of about 30,000 residents in 17 villages and the mainstay of its economy is agriculture (Bali council, 2014). Figure 3 below shows Map of Bali Nyonga Showing Water Catchment Areas
Results and Discussion

Age-Sex distribution

Out of the 30 participants, 35%, 23%, 32% and 12% were aged 30-39, 40-50, 55-60 and greater than 60 years respectively. On further probing, respondents indicated that issues of community development are concentrated mainly within the older generation, who attend meetings frequently and are most often considered as the custodians of the community. The findings indicated a positive correlation between age and community participation. Of the thirty people interviewed, 39% were women while 61% were men. Although the study aimed at a well-balanced gender representation, this goal could not be attained. However, the proportion of the women that took part in this study does not reflect those that participated during the implementation of the water development project. It was reported by one of the respondents that even more women than men participated in the
implementation phase of the project. An intriguing fact about the entire process was the nature of community participation, which focused on labour giving and material resources. The elites regarded community participation as communal work, i.e., collective action under the guidance of the dominant authority to bring change or development. This reflects the Bafut experience described by Yenshu (1990), where emphasis was on collective action to get work done, not on community involvement from need assessment through decision making to implementation phase, as proposed by proponents of the participatory development approach.

**Nature of Participation**

The nature of community participation in the Bali Nyonga Water by Gravity Project can be described as essentially material. This is a situation where the receiving community gives or contributes materials to support the project conceived and coordinated by the elites or government. This was the case in the Bali Water by Gravity Project, where the local population participated only by giving money and labour to support the idea conceived by a few powerful elites. The people’s participation in the project was limited to digging pipelines, manual transportation of pipes and other materials to and on the site, clearing the catchment site and filling the holes and trenches. As reported by one of the respondents;

Circulars were sent by BANDECA to churches, Njangi houses, and the various Ndakum; and the town crier came out on a market day (Njifung) to sensitize the community about the project. We were told that our labour will be needed to dig a pipeline from Koplab (catchment site) to Jamjam (water tank), as our contribution to the water project.

**Potential of the community**

For rural communities to play an active role in rural development projects or any other rural development project initiative, it is necessary for their members to have access to resources. These resources include adequate funding, expertise (technical skills, labour), and support to the initiatives. When a community lacks these resources, this impacts the project negatively as it reduces community ability to effectively influence and develop policies for the project. Looking at the human resource potential of the community, the 2004 census carried out by the Bali Council estimated the immediate population at 30,000 inhabitants (Dohvoma 2015). This number supplied both skilled and unskilled labour needed in the project, with the assistance of the Bali Nyonga elites in the diaspora. The skilled labour was
used for managerial and technical aspects of the project, while the unskilled labour provided by the local community was used to meet the labour needs of the project (digging of pipelines, manual transportation of materials to and on the construction site, and clearing the catchment site). In terms of financial resources, the water project had many sources of financial aid. The project was supported with large resources by BANDECA (Bali Nyonga Development and Cultural Association), the Cameroon government and members of the local community, who contributed financially by meeting their obligations levied at the various assembly (Ndakum) quarters as well as youth, men and women’s groups. Political willingness and volunteerism emerged as a great asset. The willingness of the local community to come together to support this cause was a positive push to the entire process. One of the respondents had this to say about the potential of the community to support the water project.

It will be unfair for the elites or people in authority to blame the failure of the water project on lack of resources. It will be an abuse to the strength of a Bali man. We had and still have enough resources to generate water that can supply the entire community. Looking at the natural resources, the water at koplab has the potential to supply the entire population. The project was also supported financially by our brothers, sisters and children in the diaspora. Talking about labour, our people are strong, united and they know how to support a cause. At the time of the project when I was the quarter head of this place, the people participated massively, the young and the old alike. The old people did not go to the site because of strength, but because of the passion they had for the project and their presence was to act as a motivation to the young people.”

Favouritism and Elite Control

According to Miriam Webster Dictionary (1828) favouritism is the act of giving favours to some people at the expense of others. At the start of the project, people were given positions in the water commission not on the basis of merits but on the basis of favouritism (man know man), thereby placing the water project in incompetent hands. Technicians who knew very little about hydraulic engineering and water management were appointed because they knew somebody at the top, either in the development association or the Traditional Council. As accounted by one of the respondents, “of the 8 (eight) people who have been managers of the water commission only one had sufficient knowledge in hydraulic engineering and water
management. Technical inefficiency is at the centre of the water crisis that the community is facing now, as the authorities failed to put a square peck in a square hole.” The project was associated directly or indirectly with the scheme of power relations in Bali Nyonga. Only certain people influenced the decisions of the water commission economically and socio-politically. This is common amongst the local, national and diaspora elites, who contribute huge sums of money for the development of the community and put the local people in a fix, thereby limiting their choices in the project. This is better explained by the theory of gifts and counter-gifts and reciprocity elaborated upon by Mauss (2007), Polanyi (1994) and Sabourin (2005). This theory holds that charity is meant to be a free gift, an unrequited surrender of resources. They argue that gifts in themselves are not wrong; rather, it is the donor’s intention in giving the gift (the exchange of gifts and the obligation to reciprocate) which is often full of ulterior motives. Reciprocity seems to be a driving force in community organizations and development in most communities. The decisive element of reciprocity is the people’s recognition that most of their own needs cannot be satisfied efficiently based on their own capacities and resources. As De Benoist (2004) puts it, imagining an individual free of community ties is imagining a being with no depth and no personality. The interacting partners in a community therefore establish forms of cooperation based on ‘exchange’ of gifts and counter-gifts that are beneficial to all actors involved (Mauss 2004; Polanyi, 1944).

Practically, reciprocity implies a dialectical relationship between material and social goods and these social goods are of high importance for every community. As such, a lot of investments are being made by community leaders and elites in terms of time, energy, material and financial resources in the social network of the community in order to get counter-gifts and social prestige. It is in this light that De Benoist (2004) defines community as a “privileged place where reciprocal recognition (inter-subjectivity) and self-esteem have a chance to develop.” This therefore reveals that preventive use of power relations is a limitation to institutional thinking. Local elites are capable of mobilizing, accumulating and investing their political, social and economic capital to hijack and manipulate projects to their advantage. A respondent mentioned that: “Since the initiation and implementation of the Koplab water by gravity project, the water committee has been run by different cliques.”
Technical Issues

A lot of miscalculations were made at the beginning of the project. The Koplab source which consists of 5 spring catchments and 2 streams were poorly constructed, with a biological treatment unit and a slow sand filtration component functioning at 50% of its capacity. As a result, the water supplied by the Koplab catchment became insufficient, with a yield of 3.21/5 (276.5m3/day), which could supply only 5,529 people at 50 litters per day (Dohvoma, 2015). This constituted a dilemma for the entire community, who were made to believe that the Koplab water by gravity project was going to mean that Bali would have plenty of water free of charge. Another misconception in the project was the impression that the water source could supply the entire population. The estimation done by the development association focused on Bali Nyonga Centre to the exclusion of the interior villages and other dependent chiefdoms like Bossa, Bawock, Gungong. One of the respondents reported that ‘‘the ‘people’ told us that there was more than enough water in Koplab to supply the entire community and the neighbouring villages and that if we joined our brothers and sisters in the diaspora who were ready to support the project financially, the water crisis in the community will become history.’’ In addition to this was the fact that the spring yield tests were conducted during the rainy season, when the water table was high. The quantity of water and variations in seasons were not taken into consideration; as such, the water engineers gave a faulty report about the capacity of the Koplab source and its ability to supply the entire community, falsely raising the expectations of the people (Dohvoma, 2015).

Another misconception was at the level of the population count. The population was estimated at 20,000 instead of 30,000 inhabitants in 2004 (Bali Council, 2004). The classification of Bali as a rural community led to the use of 30 litters of water for the calculations per capita/day consumption instead of 50liters as the norms for townships (Dohvoma, 2015). This underestimation of the population and inability to project future population growth rates was to inevitably lead to a crisis. Water crisis seemed to be inevitable as rapid population increase has added pressure on the water resources, making it difficult for the water needs of the people to be adequately met. Added to this is the fact that at the time when the project was conceived, just a few houses had the water system design, but now things have changed and more and more people now live in modern houses with water systems. There has also been a marked increase in economic and social activities like
the community’s nearness to the Regional capital Bamenda, which makes commuting possible. The presence of a university in the community has also increased the water needs of the community.

According to Dohvoma (2015), the daily water demand at present in the community stands at 2500m$^3$/day while the daily production from the Ngola stream (water by electricity) is 537m$^3$/day. We therefore have a deficit of -1963m$^3$/day. There is need to increase the quantity of water per capita/day from 30liters to 50liters. Due to these shortages in water supply, people tend to develop and use other subsidiary sources for survival. The pictures below show the main subsidiary sources of water used by the community.

![Figure 4: subsidiary sources of water in the community](image)

**Leadership**

Community participation in public development projects depends on how people are led. The level of democratic governance has a direct relationship with people’s participation in a development initiative and with the eventual success of the initiative. We found out that more than 95% of the leaders of the water commission were appointed by the executive board of the development association and not democratically elected by the local community. The leadership style used in the water project was the traditional top-bottom approach, as opposed to the bottom-top approach as emphasized by development experts such as Richardson (1983), Oakley (1989) chambers (1992) etc. The elites spent time telling the people what to do and how to do it, without listening to the opinions of the local community. The elites failed to include the local people in the entire process. The findings of the study also pointed out that the centralized nature of the leadership in both the water committee and
the development association does not create a levelling platform to accommodate the local people and also inhibits the flow of information. This explains why members of the local community see the development association as belonging to a particular group of people and therefore stay away from the General Assembly meetings because they do not see themselves as part of it.

**Conflicting development initiatives and projects**

Conflicts in developmental objectives occur when, in an attempt to achieve an objective, another objective is sacrificed. When the Cameroon government announced the construction of the second access road into Bamenda city designed to connect Akum-Mile 8 (on the Bamenda-Bafousam high way) to Bali (on the Bamenda-Mamfe high way), the entire population was very excited. They boasted that the new road was going to open up untold avenues for development in their sub-division. Hardly had the road construction started than troubles arose and generated a dramatic water crisis. When the road construction started, the tractors and other road construction vehicles used on the road destroyed pipes connecting the spring at Ngola to the main tank at JamJam. This situation became worse when the commission for compensation of property destroyed on the second access road to Bamenda city forgot to enclose its report on water and electricity when submitting the report to the Ministry of State Property in Yaoundé (Dohvoma, 2015). Another setback was the road construction project to the Cameroon Christian University (CCU), which disconnected Njenka from the main tank at JamJam. These road construction projects have posed a big threat to water security in the community as nothing has been done so far to reinstall the pipes and reconnect the people to the water. It would, however, be biased to lay blames entirely on the construction project as a main cause of the water since the community had already been experiencing water crisis long before the project was launched.

**Conclusion**

Full community participation/involvement was not really implemented or integrated in the project, partly because the idea of stakeholder participation is still fairly recent and because much of it remain in books rather than practical implementation. However, this study shows that in order to ensure a more sustainable water supply, the beneficiaries (local community) have to be involved from the planning phase to the implementation phase.

In order to ensure maximum community involvement and participation in community
development projects, some structural changes need to be instituted where the local elites will no longer be at the centre of development projects but, rather, the focus will be on the user population who are the most affected by such development initiatives. By this, the local population will not only be involved at the implementation phase of the development project but will be able to take part in decision-making, planning, evaluation, monitoring and control, thereby increasing the chances for sustainable water development and management in rural areas. Most elites and local development administrators lack adequate knowledge on the benefits of maximum community participation in a project. This lack of knowledge has contributed to the misunderstanding of the concept of participatory development. Workshop sessions should be held at the level of the development association to train the executives on the nature and extent of community involvement in a project that can bring about sustainable development. To ensure the involvement of all stakeholders, conclusions from public meetings and local meeting groups (Ndakum) concerning the project should be respected, and leaders of all Ndakum (men, women and youth representatives) should be present at all levels of decisions and meetings regarding the project. This will ensure that the needs of all stakeholders are met and will eventually lead to social transformation.

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Community participation for social transformation: Experiences from a water by gravity project. K. N. Jabosun


Historicity and Postcoloniality in Cameroon Poetry

Nemkul Lackbuin Samuel


Introduction

Historicity and Colonialism have greatly influenced the Cameroon literary landscape in general and Cameroon Poetry in particular. Cameroon Poetry dates as far back as the Oral tradition, with the traditional poet whose role was to be a keen observer of societal happenings and who had as specific task to inform, educate, entertain and transform society through oral performances. The advent of modern African (written) Literature, which relegated the traditional poet to the marginal spheres, affected Cameroon Oral Poetry. This paper seeks to exhibit the historical trends that have shaped Cameroon Poetry in a bid to clearly demonstrate the impact that colonialism has had on
the Cameroonian poet and populace. The paper draws inspiration from generational Cameroonian writers [poets] to enhance the historical and postcolonial dissection of Cameroon’s poetic discourse.

The study intimates that the different historical periods of Cameroon’s history have indelibly shaped its poetic discourse. Hence, this critical journey adapts a descriptive, historical and retrospective approach to assess how far Cameroon Poetry has come, in order to make projections about the unthreaded paths of this sensitive genre.

This paper hopes to answer the following critical questions generated from the contentions above:

- What is Cameroonian Poetry?
- What are the features of African (Cameroonian) Poetry?
- What are the historical trends that have shaped Cameroonian Poetry?
- How has Post-colonialism influenced Cameroonian Poetry?
- How committed are Cameroonian poets in the discharge of their roles as writers in politics?
- What are the different thematic concerns addressed by poets of the different historical moments?

Operational Definition of Key Terms

For purposes of clarity and comprehension, the terms “Cameroonian Poetry”, “Historicity” and “Postcolonial poetics” are worth defining to situate the backdrop against which the arguments will be generated:

**Cameroon Poetry** is poetry which is written by someone who is Cameroonian by nationality or naturalization and which focuses on issues of real life experiences of Cameroonians. Such poetry aims to ‘conscientize”, educate, entertain, and, above all, transform Cameroonian society.

**Historicity** is defined as the historical actuality of persons and events, as opposed to historical association with myth, legend or fiction. Historicity focuses on the truth value of claims about the past and denotes historical actuality, authenticity and factuality.

**Postcolonial Poetics** could be viewed here as a critical, “prismal” and multi-layered discourse which emanates from the remnants of colonialism—that is, a discourse which views the strengths and weaknesses of the colonial system vis-à-vis its effects on the colonial masses.
**Historicity and Postcoloniality in Cameroon Poetry Nemkul, L. S.**

**Characteristics of Cameroonian Poetry**

African (Cameroonian) Poetry exists in two forms: oral and written. The corpus of this paper rests on the written. Written Literature has features which include: terseness and conciseness in language, rhythm, and obscurity in meaning, expression of feelings and emotions, tone, stress pattern and punctuation devices, imagery through figures of speech.

The above features are all encompassing, as expounded by Boynton and Mack (1992, p. 3):

> The subject of a poem may be anything whatever. The subject matter of Poetry is as broad as itself..., it includes every kind of mood, problem and experience that human beings know: terror, hatred, madness and despair, love, hope, compassion, joy, birth and death, sex and marriage, youth and age; city, country, animal, machine, the ugly, the beautiful, the brutal, the tender, the solemn, the humorous.

The above quote emphasises the elastic nature of poetry, its service to mankind. It argues that poetry is not limited to given topics, but spreads across all imaginable thoughts. Some of the most prominent stylistic devices employed in poetry include: sarcasm (satire), repetition (used for emphasis), rhyme scheme and parallelism. Today, language continues to play a very sensitive role in modern African (Cameroonian) Literature. African/Cameroonian Poetry projects myriad languages that are African/Cameroonian and informs the Cameroonian cultural/traditional worldview. The modern Cameroonian (contemporary) poet projects his/her culture and tradition through Oral Literature: proverbs, tales, symbols and much more.

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Ngugi wa Thiong’o postulates:

> Literature does not grow or even develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape direction and even area of concern by social, political, and economic forces in a particular society. The relationship between creative Literature and those of other forces cannot be ignored, especially in Africa, where modern Literature has grown against the gory background of European imperialism and its changing manifestations: slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Our culture over the last hundred years has developed against
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the same stunting dwarfing background. (Ngugi, 1972). Ngugi’s intimation above vividly captures the thrust of this paper. Historicity is evident through “slavery”, “colonialism” and “neo-colonialism”. Moreover, his stance that Literature doesn’t emanate from the blues but is given impetus, shape and direction by socio-political and economic forces in a particular society justifies the notion that History and Literature have a symbiotic relationship.

New historicist critics argue that every artistic piece must be interpreted at two levels. On the one hand, the analysis should seek to show the influence which the writer’s background has on his/her work; in this regard, a writer is considered as prototype—that is, as a reflection of the collective experience of a particular society. On the other hand, the literary interpretation views an artistic piece not just as a reflection of specific societal realities but also as common human experiences. This section engages in a historical review of Cameroon Poetry and blends it with the Postcolonial trajectories which have prevailed thus far.

It is worth noting at this juncture that Cameroon Poetry is sub-divided into two categories: Francophone Cameroon Poetry and Anglophone Cameroon Poetry; a literary status which clearly reflects Cameroon’s history and the remnants of colonialism. This discussion dwells more on Anglophone Cameroon Poets, whose “historicultural” backgrounds are similar to the writer’s. Having been groomed in the Anglophone Educational System, this critic/author is most comfortable with analyzing/appreciating poetry which reflects his own lived experiences.

In the early 80s, Nalova Lyonga and Bole Butake were of the view that Cameroon Literature in English was only in the budding stage: still experimental in the main (Lyonga, N., Butake, B., & Breitinger, E., 1993). But today, it seems writers from this class of Cameroonian literature is gradually becoming the most vibrant and famous in the nation. A journey back to memory lane to examine the historical and postcolonial impacts on Cameroonian Poetry will clearly demonstrate the growth experienced in the Anglophone Cameroonian literary world. This historical and postcolonial review of Cameroon Poetry considers different perspectives, as will be illustrated below:

**Pre-Colonial Cameroonian Poetry (1930s-1950s)**

The pre-colonial era of Cameroonian Poetry experienced a great paucity of literary creativity. The absence of publishing houses, lack of sponsors and the low educational level of Cameroonians at
the time are all factors that account for such paucity. However, Oral Literature (Poetry) enjoyed
great impetus through the impeccable role of the traditional artist. Hence, it will not be surprising
to note that this literary period witnessed very few poets on stage, primarily because many more
writers preferred to try their hands in Prose and Drama. Nevertheless, general thematic concerns
were:

- Lavishly praising the gods of the land
- Hailing the African/Cameroonian culture
- Upholding the African/Cameroonian traditional religion
- Expressing love for nature and its beauty
- Expressing nostalgic feelings of regret and the longing for better days ahead
- Reflecting slavery and praising the Whiteman

Poets like Bernard Fonlon ("Lovely Vekovy"), Mbella Sonne Dipoko (Black and White in Love)
and Bongasu-Tanla Kishani (Konglanjo) are often referred to as first Generation writers. These
writers seem to have had very little or no burning social or political concerns; hence, much time
was spent glorifying nature, expressing feelings of nostalgia, and contemplating personal emotions.

For example, Fonlon’s poetry is engrossed with the overwhelming love for nature and the
expression of nostalgic feelings about home—“Lovely Vekovy”—which are exhibited by Lainjo,
who leaves Vekovy village for Yaoundé and is astonished by the shocks of city life. This shock
pushes him to reminisce about life in the village and accounts for his longing to be home again. In
this poem we digest a Fonlonian philosophy which corroborates that of Yvonne Shaka Shaka’s
legendary “There is no place like home; home sweet home” song. As suggested by the title of
another poem “The Fear for Future Years,” the poet showcases feelings of sadness via his
disappointment about the outcome of his youthful life: the cheerless condition of his soul.

Similarly, Dipoko’s collection of poems like “Compassion”, “Boy and Girl” and “Two Girls”
recounts his experiences in Europe (especially with his white girl friend), the beauty of the West,
poverty, colonial barriers to the Black African enlightenment and much more. It must be pointed
out that, generally speaking, the poets of this period are regarded as Western poets because they
were not committed to the daily experiences of their society. One can justifiably argue that much
of the poetry the pre-colonial era poets exhibited the poets’ concern with art for art’s sake. The
advent of colonialism would render art for art sake as obsolete.
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Colonial Cameroonian Poetry (1950s – 1970s)

This period falls within the context of European exploration and the advent of colonialism. Even though by 1970 Cameroon had already declared independence, the colonizer still exerted utmost control of political and economic activities. Writers (poets) of this period play the role of a “watchdog”, a keen observer of societal happenings and a “crusader” for change. They seize the opportunities of the moment to exploit literary corridors to the fullest.

Cameroonian poets (writers) who wrote during the colonial era are often referred to as second Generation writers. Their poetry expresses thematic concerns that ranged from exploration, slavery, colonialism, assimilation, to neo-colonialism. Due to their ability to courageously decry the amoral practices of colonial masters through the exposure of hidden truths, they are referred to as critical realist writers/poets. The principal theme here was culture-contact-conflict, and the aim was to lament the torture, pain, oppression, anger and the exploitation perpetrated by colonizers on the colonized.

Unlike Bernard Fonlon, Sankie Maimo’s thematic preoccupation ranges from social malaise and insecurity to politics, personal issues/affirmation, cultural conflict and political victimization. In his poems “Fortitude”, “I Keep My Peace”, “The Harvest”, “Frustration” and “Black Martyr’s Consolation,” Maimo poeticizes a multi-layered conflict of a post-colonial society located in the binary opposites of the ruler and the ruled, the oppressed and the oppressor, and the margin and the centre within the Cameroonian context.

“Fortitude” was written two years after Southern Cameroons achieved her independence via reunification in 1961, and in 1963 Maimo pounced firmly. The poem captures the new breed of Cameroonian politicians who had already made corruption an institution. The violation/abuse of human rights was being staged with reckless abandonment. The poet showcases the political and moral degeneracy with stunning realism. In “Black Martyr’s Consolation”, the poet laments: ‘‘When I pray for bread/Often the powers reached me stone/Had I begged for stone/Would they have reached me bread? (Maimo, 1979)

Here the alternate rhyme scheme and the repetition of “bread” and “stone” artistically reinforce the theme of political marginalization and the insensitivity of the ruling class—each time the masses clamour for bread, they are given stone. Unfortunately, the poet’s tone is consolatory rather than radical. Instead of Maimo reacting to push the masses to action, his solution is “I Keep My Peace”: 
an indication of defeat. It is worth stressing that Maimo, like all other critical realist poets/writers, is known for giving a faithful image of reality without suggesting a way forward. Dzekashu (2014, p. 2) sees the historical moments as phases (specifically for Anglophone Cameroon Literature with ties with Cameroon Poetry): “the first phase’ deals with the encounter with Europe or a clash of cultures and covers the period from 1959 to 1984”. He argues further that “the books written during this period are mostly a reaction to colonialism and the changes imposed on the people in the name of colonialism and religion”. Writers here included: Kenjo Jumbam, Joseph Ngonwikuo, Jedida Asheri, Linus T. Asong, Nsanda Eba, Azanwi Nchami and Sankie Maimo. Dzekashu’s (2014) appraisal projects mostly authors of narratives (novelists) to ascertain the view that all three genres of Literature follow(ed) the same trajectories in the different literary eras.

A comparative analysis of the pre-colonial and colonial periods above reveals that the “literary pot” had now thickened by a complete shift from art for art sake to arts for change and posterity. History recounts that colonialism was an experience that the colonized would never wish to relive. Independence salvaged the situation in a way, but African leaders who took over from the white man had learned the ropes better and had inflicted more pain, torture and suffering than did the colonial masters on the masses. This grotesque and inhumane treatment catalysed new poetic perspectives.

**Post-Colonial Cameroonian Poetry (1980s to Present)**

This period is also known as the Revolutionary Era, or “Avant-gardist” Literature. Writers/poets in this era use(d) satire, sarcasm, symbolism, sustained metaphor and imagery to explore thematic concerns such as moral decadence, corruption, exploitation, bribery, tribalism, marginalization, feminism, political inequality, the infelicities of globalization, and the abuse of natural resources which lead to natural disasters such as global warming, deforestation and much more. Writers/poets who fall under this category are referred to as poets/writers with an alternative vision or as revolutionary poets. Most recently, this group of writers has been labelled as Socialist Realist writers/poets. Gorky (2001) opines that socialist realist art advocates a creative attitude to reality which glorifies labour, intensifies the will to live and advocates the adoption of a new approach to life that evinces hatred of the old world. This old world happens to be a capitalist world, a world which critical realist writers/poets sought to change/modify to no avail. In pursuit of this mission, Ngugi has called on African writers/poets and intellectuals to join the fight against capitalism and cultural imperialism. He said—and this is still relevant today—“I believe that African intellectuals
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must arm themselves with the struggle of the African masses for a meaningful national ideal. For we must strive for a form of social organization…” (Ngugi, 1972, p. 50). Poets in this category include: Nol Alembong, Emmanuel Fru Doh, Bate Besong, and Gahlia Gwangwa’a amongst others.

The “Game” (Alembong, 2013) is one of Alembong’s widely quoted poems. Lyonga, Butake, and Breitinger (1993) argue that Alembong’s poem comes before the rise of an organized political opposition and its ensuing repression by the CPDM Government. The poem is written before the highly contested Presidential Elections in October 1992. “The Game” expresses the feelings of “Anglophoos” in Cameroon and captures the deception, intrigues, manipulations and election rigging of this period when the ruling party is both referee and player. Consequently, elections are seldom free and fair. The poet thinks that the opposition won the flood Presidential Election of 1992 but also that this election was rigged by the government. The opposition party believes that the rules of the game were clearly spelled out, and they respected the rules to the letter, not knowing that it was all a scheme to permanently keep them far from power.

The abuse/misuse of power is a fundamental theme highlighted in this poem. The absence of social justice and political fairness is once more re-echoed by the poet: “I kicked the ball/And made a goal/In the ground of play/But it was denied me/In the ground of play” (Alembong, 2013, p. 26). One glaring message which the poet seems to project here is that a political party should gain its strength from the masses and not from a particular ethnic or tribal group. In other words, the masses should form the backbone of any political party, and the living condition and welfare of the masses should be paramount in everything that the political leaders do. Thus, the absence of a real democracy in Cameroon in particular and Africa in general can be deduced.

Doh’s (2009) “Bamenda Chop Fire” seems to be a coincidental sequel to Alembong’s “The Game”. The poem unravels the consequences of the flood 1992 Presidential Elections. As a result of the lack of fair play in the “game” of politics, the opposition cried foul and cursed the ruling party for rigging elections, and the government reacted with mass brutality. Bamenda, the capital of the then North West Province and present day North West Region and the birthplace of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), became a battle ground between the protesting masses and the “army of occupation”. In the poem the people of Bamenda suffered one of the worst humiliations and military brutality ever recorded in Cameroon’s history. Law enforcement officers before the very eyes of fathers and husbands respectively raped daughters and mothers: “The rape of daughters and mothers/Before parents, husbands and children/Brothers and sisters alike.” The poet in a very
succinct and optimistic tone insists: “…if your bastard mentor could go/Then you will surely go
too/Time is the ultimate judge” (Doh, 2009, p.15).

Artistically, “Bamenda Chop Fire” is rich a pidgin expression which reflects the masses’ readiness to fight against injustice and political dishonesty. Above all, the title of the poem enforces the socialist vision of the poet. Bamenda people against all odds braved the teargas, grenades and gun shots. The repetition of this pidgin expression in each stanza emphasizes the confrontation between the protesting masses and the security operatives in Bamenda.

Gwangwa’a (1995) in “If An Anglophone Must Die” displays conscientiousness and revolt. The poem views the marginalization of the Anglophones as a failure of leadership. The poem exploits a revolting tone to exhort the minority Anglophones, who are marginalized, to fight back. The repetition of “If an Anglophone Must Die” emphasizes the conditionality of their struggle; that is, if they have to be brutally killed by the forces of neo-colonialism, they must put up a brave and spectacular show, their number notwithstanding. “Dogs” and “frogs” are some of the animal images exploited by the poet. He likens the plight of the oppressed to that of a dog but cautions them not to take it the way dogs would. Gwangwa’a was influenced by Claude McKay’s poem “If We Must Die” (1919), which was occasioned by the discrimination and hate crimes perpetuated upon African Americans in the United States at the time. Drawing from the experiences of others, Gwangwa’a is aiming for a Cameroonian society where everyone is free and marginalisation of any kind is a thing of the past.

The relationship between the two Cameroons (Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon) has been the nexus of creativity for a long time, and herein lies the ‘second phase’, which Nfah-Abbenyi (2012) describes as a reflective of the “Postcolonial malaise of a union that never was and therefore in need of dissolution; a union that for others is fragile, diseased, in dire need of healing and reconciliation.” Nfah-Abbenyi goes on to say that “Anglophone Cameroon Literature is as such obsessed with what is known as ‘The Anglophone Problem’, for it showcases the anxieties of a marginalized group of people that is required to assimilate and often deprived of the rights of full citizenship (2012, p. I).

In describing this phase, writer and critic Labang (2012, p.3) opines that “the very basis of this union has been questioned by writers who think that the terms of the union have been violated and that one part – Anglophone Cameroon – is being marginalized”. Lyonga (1993) describes this
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period as being marked by the “aesthetics of victimization”. Nevertheless, this phase is not entirely limited to ‘horizontal’ colonialism, especially given that postcolonial themes abound, some of which include gender, hybridity, class and otherness. Some representative texts include: Bole Butake’s plays And palm wine will flow (1990), Shoes and four men in arms (1999); Bate Besong’s plays Beast of no nation (1990), Requiem for the last kaiser (1991); Victor Epie Ngome’s play What God has put asunder (1992) and Babila Mutia’s play Before this time, yesterday (1995) (Lyonga, 1993).

Ngeh (2011) submits that “Anglophone Cameroonian Poetry has evolved from the critical realist tradition to the socialist realist perspective.” Ngeh further describes Anglophone Cameroonian writers as illustrative of the critical realist or socialist realist perspective. He maintains that “poets like Benard Fonlon, Mbella S. Dipoko and Bongasu-Tanla Kishani fall within the first generation and are critical realist, and Bate Besong, Emmanuel Fru Doh, Nol Alembong and Gahlia Gwangwa’a fall within the second generation and are socialist realist” (p. 40). Ngeh (2011) further adds that Anglophone Cameroonian Poetry is dynamic as it has moved from mere criticism to activism. Ngeh concludes that “while critics like Omafume Onoge, Ernest Fisher, Maxim Gorky and George Lukacs have used the two concepts (critical and socialist realisms) to “periodise” Literature, the two concepts can also be used as interpretive tools” (Ngeh, 2011, p. 50). Simply put, the poems of this period mostly tell of the Anglophone existence and dramatizes the question of the Anglophone identity in Cameroon’s social, political and economic settings. The poets openly bring to limelight the marginalisation of Anglophones by Francophones, This marginalisation is often referred to as the Anglophone problem, which unfortunately is at its apex today.

Conclusion

The thrust of the above discussion has been to demonstrate the influence which historicity and post colonialism have had on Cameroon Poetry. The pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial perspectives reflected above stem from the pre-textual, textual and the post-textual analytic framework. The generational approach employed in this study unveils the major preoccupations of poets who wrote during the distinct eras. The first generation of poets was committed in glorifying nature, expressing feelings of nostalgia and praising the black culture amongst others. The second generation, who are referred to as socialist realist writers, braved the odds, outrightly condemning the ills of colonialism and assimilation while resisting the exploitative moves of the colonizer. Neo-colonialism, corruption, marginalization, embezzlement and dictatorship have been their major thematic concerns. It is worth stating that the author’s generational classification is synonymous
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with the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras, for Ohaegbu, (2000, p. 10) was right when he argued that “there is no doubt that all literatures express the life-ways of a people and are influenced by time and space, and even temperament.”

To wrap up this poetic discourse, one can boldly opine that historicity and postcoloniality have exerted great influence on Cameroon Literature in general, and on Anglophone Cameroon Poetry in particular. This influence is clearly evident in the arguments projected above. Fandio (2004, p. 8) makes one of the most salient arguments when he declares:

Anglophone Cameroon Literature is there to awaken us from our usual torpor. It testifies to the undiminished intellectual life of the homeland. Every homeland – as you’ll recall – always needs a voice in writing and print; and Anglophone literature, created in the service of Humanity, shuns the concerns of the fragmentary, neo-colonial elite and deals with the experiences of the marginalized in Cameroonian society; workers, the urban and rural masses.

To borrow from BB, “The writer in Cameroon is saddled with numerous problems that include the personal, the social, the economic and the political – but the only solution is to continue writing in spite of these impediments” (Fandio, 2004, p. 12). Hence, Cameroonian writers/poets continue to have reason to execute BB’s literary prophecy as they seize every opportunity of the moment to exploit literary corridors for posterity.

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