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But We Know It All!

African Perspectives on Anthropological Knowledge

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When I mention anthropology to educated Africans, I perennially receive an exasperated, and exasperating, reaction: 'But we know it all!' It is a refrain I have also heard from North Americans. But what exactly do we, or rather they, know? The majority of people usually associate anthropology with digging up bones. This is not surprising given the long history of Western involvement with Roman, Greek and Egyptian archaeology. In recent decades palaeontologists have dazzled people with their findings regarding the ancestry of modern peoples. African findings in Kenya and Ethiopia have held centre stage. But this exotic imagery, eagerly and skilfully evoked by *National Geographic* and the global media, makes it all the harder to convey an understanding of anthropology as a social science engaged with contemporary concerns and dilemmas.

African scholars currently practising anthropology feel it is time to move their discipline to the heart of the much-vaunted African Renaissance. As ever, power is key to ownership of the knowledge production process. Contemporary problems of development, health and indigenous knowledge demand that we define the theoretical agendas and practical issues that are of concern to us. Too often hitherto, we have been involved as junior partners (though some more flattered and financially rewarded than others) in research enterprises engineered by Northern scholars. At the same time, in as far as Western education is part of our history and an inescapable global force, we must be actively engaged in the research, teaching and theoretical debates developed by such scholars.

During the 1980s, when teaching with a colleague in an American university, we used to begin our introductory course on Africa with a slide show. Our aim was to problematise the tourist brochure imagery of Africa, imagery which inhibits observers from appreciating African social lives. The slides were made from the *National Geographic*, tourist brochures and Disney-style theme park advertisements. They revealed that, whereas other continents were often represented by images of people involved in social and cultural activities, Africa was always predominantly represented by nature – lush savannah with beautiful animals, stunning deserts and waterfalls.

What irritates Africans most is that when they are acknowledged as being part of the African landscape, they are represented either as nomads or pastoralists; they are depicted as either dancing or starving; and they are shown emerging from the ultimate badge of poverty – the hut. During the 1970s, as part of the outreach activities of the African Studies programme at the University of Wisconsin, aimed at increasing knowledge of Africa among Americans, African students used to be invited to talk to community groups and schools. In one such talk, to the surprise of everyone, a Nigerian student presented a slide show consisting exclusively of the skyscrapers in downtown Lagos. He insisted that he was showing the image of Africa that was never displayed.

Recently, I also took pictures of multi-storey buildings in five African cities. In all the pictures – of banks, government offices, Houses of Parliament – it was difficult to avoid images of street children, beggars, hawkers of newspapers and snacks, and ordinary people going to work. Of course there were also pictures of the *élite* emerging from their luxury cars or luxury hotels, though frequently such hotels were walled off to seclude tourists from the poor or the sight of nearby slums. That Nigerian student had wished to provide a corrective to the Western gaze that selected its African imagery, ignoring skyscrapers, a familiar part of the Western urban imagination. He could have shown beautiful indigenous architecture or naturalised non-indigenous architecture from many parts of Africa. In my view the Nigerian was seeking to articulate the voice of an African *élite* that was ashamed of the smells, flies and mud huts, images through which Africa is essentialised. His slides were seeking to show how Western banking, schooling and medical institutions – not to mention expatriate labour – made Africa part of the global community; and not the isolated, deprived and exotic other.

'Super modern man'

The 1960s were a momentous period. The majority of African countries achieved political independence and entered the development decade, dominated by Western economists and political scientists. Modernisation was the catchphrase in academic theories and public discourse. With the help of Western aid, expertise and advice, the transformation of Africa would be achieved by modernising traditional political, economic and social practices. In East Africa, in the late 1960s, a popular song introduced by the Moral Re-armament Movement¹ went as follows:

We say Yes! to the land of Africa
We need every man in Africa
We want to send from the land of Africa
SUPER MODERN MAN!

Those promoting the rapid modernisation of Africa felt that this would be achieved through the creation of a 'middle class' imbued with 'Western' values. In the early 1960s European and American foundations sponsored international travel for the educated few to expose them to the social and political milieus of the 'modernised' world. The élite became the representatives of Africanity, the face of Africa to the outside world. Meantime the majority of the people became 'the masses' to be harnessed for votes and to continue to provide the backbone of predominantly agriculture-based economies. Over-emphasis on the 'modern' African man had a profound effect upon many aspects of thinking. African cultures were reduced to the occasional wearing of batik shirts and the promotion of dance groups.

Yet this had contradictory effects, particularly for gender relations. As the men became more comfortable in woollen suits and ties, censorious attitudes and, in some countries, laws deemed contemporary Western dress unsuitable for African women, who were the guardians of culture. On the whole, the modern men could nod to token aspects of this culture, and women in general were responsible for observing the rest. The cultural traditions that were being forced on women as their preserve were rural, and educated men were ashamed of them. Women in towns were portrayed in novels and popular discourse as prostitutes.

The ambivalent attitude of Anglophone African men towards Western culture was visible in the underestimation of the positive

contributions of women to African modernity. Francophone African men of the Negritude movement used poetry to innovate an aesthetic centred on women as the emblem of the African continent. The most valuable women were seen as those operating in the traditional mode and regarded as somehow closer to nature. These sentiments were in contradiction to the reality of the economic, legal and educational changes that were affecting women as well as men. In fact, élite men wanted modern women but they wanted them to accept the same old standards of male domination. It is not surprising that soon after independence it was common for élite men to abandon their 'traditional wives' to the villages, and to marry educated urban younger wives. This was true even of the intellectuals who exhorted the celebration of African culture. A case in point is Okot p'Bitek, whose unforgettable heroine Lawino excoriatingly exposed the shallow modernity of Acoli men (1968).

Anthropology, seen as the only discipline giving voice to 'non-modern' people residing predominantly in rural areas, came under fire. Educated men were embarrassed by pictures taken before people adopted Western dress, or capturing rituals that involved the stripping off of clothing.² What, it was asked, was the point of concentrating on the peasants when the élite could provide answers to any queries? Because they studied the activities and thoughts of the majority in a social or cultural group anthropologists were seen as being part of a conspiracy to discredit the modern Africans who were described in colonial policy reports as 'detrified'. The detrified Africans had been seen in colonial times as the thin end of the urbanisation wedge, the trend that would ultimately destroy the traditional ways of life. Some anthropologists, however, consistently condemned the label 'detrification', which was usually used evaluatively to suggest a 'pathology' of 'disintegration' and 'demoralisation' (Fortes 1938: 61); they suggested that this was a 'mistaken and exaggerated misapprehension of the nature of social relations' (Watson [1959] 1970: 46). In fact, they argued, being exposed to elements of Western culture in urban life was not an obstacle to settling back into traditional rural living (Schapera 1947:171; Watson 1970: 47). Gluckman's assertion is appropriate here: 'An African townsman is a townsman, an African miner is a miner' – but this does not mean that they do not have other identities (1961: 68–9).

In contrast to the many colonial whites who did not want natives to be alienated from their traditions and who probably despised those

who were, advocates of the modern African after independence saw detribalised men as the hope for the future. The 'detribalised' African was in fact the success story of the colonial educational system. The education project was to produce an élite driven by new cultural rules. The ideal sites for such a project were boarding schools, where students were removed from the rural and traditional environment and harnessed with the trappings of European schooling. Colonial education took place in Christian missionary schools. All instructions were in English and the speaking of vernacular at school was a punishable offence. In some schools students did not go home for holidays but stayed at school to catch up on their studies and perfect their English. The end result was Africans who were unable to face sitting on mats, entering smoke-filled kitchens or hoeing for hours in the sun. Manual work was despised, even by those who had not been to boarding schools and who may have had only a few years of schooling. This pattern continues today.

But what has this to do with anthropology? Plenty. The educated saw themselves as the proper representatives of Africa to the outside world and their voices as the authentic conduits of social and cultural truth. An anthropologist who has worked in Zaïre once told me of a prominent African intellectual who had become very upset when the anthropologist visited his village and stayed with his relatives. The African intellectual had received a good Jesuit missionary education and he saw his vocation as writing about African ideas. For him, fieldwork to collect empirical evidence was a waste of time. Villagers, in his mind, had no theories, let alone the luxury of philosophical thinking.

My own relatives have never understood why I go to live in my fieldwork site when I say I am doing ethnographic fieldwork. In 1989 a colleague at the Makerere Institute for Social Research admonished me: 'Why do you waste so much time in Rakai? Surely, you already know what those people are saying and could write it in your sleep.' I protested and pointed to the poor-quality reports people at the Institute were writing, with information often gleaned from coffee-break conversations. His answer was: 'Well, they are being paid by the research tourists, who have no time or language skills to do fieldwork. You and I know this stuff. Go to the village for a day but why stay there for weeks on end?'

In the 1980s AIDS created an urgency among foreign researchers to get information out as quickly as possible. On arriving in Uganda,

foreigners went for short periods on scouting tours with hired local research assistants who were to return later, collect data and write reports. The reports of the research assistants were poor and the principal researchers were in a hurry because they were teaching or conducting projects in different countries. As a result the hypotheses that were supposed to be tested by the research exercise turned into confirmed theses. This was a case of library research and travel as bonus. Yet even under these circumstances some researchers deluded themselves that surveys could yield quantitatively meaningful results. A research assistant told me in 1990 that the principal investigators in his project did not want to hear 'gossip' until they had finished the research. The assistant accordingly kept quiet and the banal findings (minus the rich nuances) were transformed into models and hard data. Such exercises in futility defeated the expectations of those who waited impatiently for information relevant to the promotion of development or curbing the AIDS epidemic.

'We are in trouble if we stop smelling the poor'

Anthropological input was desperately needed in the early days of the AIDS epidemic but there were no anthropologists on the spot. Departments of anthropology have failed to produce anthropologists in large enough numbers to make their work relevant. Even in South Africa, which has four active departments of anthropology, the number of African anthropologists is low. It was, however, encouraging to see so many students at the 2002 annual conference of South African anthropologists at Rhodes University. Departments of anthropology were casualties of the African economic and political crises of the 1970s and 1980s. The few trained anthropologists sought work outside universities. Those with overseas anthropology degrees could only work, on returning to Africa, in departments of sociology or general social science faculties. At Makerere, anthropology slowly died as we fled into exile during the years of Amin. When political stability returned, heads of social work and psychology refused to invite anthropologists back because they claimed to be teaching the courses that would normally be listed under anthropology. In one department where I served on several occasions as external examiner, I always recommended that they hire an anthropologist. Each time one or two faculty members would say that they were anthropologists, and had obtained their degrees overseas. My point was that

there was no evidence that the students had been exposed to anthropological concepts, a lack that was reflected in the teaching syllabuses.

Once when I conducted a one-day seminar for the Ugandan students I was examining, there was great enthusiasm to understand the anthropological approach to doing research and making sense of the world out there. We discussed the anthropological project of participant observation. The tools needed for the project were looking and listening for extended lengths of time, asking for clarification and posing questions relevant to the topic of research. Being there and doing things with the people also required knowledge of the languages of the people studied. Yet there was consternation at the suggestion that even if one was a native speaker of the language, it was important to ask people what they meant rather than assume that knowledge.

Anthropologists access the world of others through the humble apprenticeship of becoming participant observers. In this way we collect data, examine how people act, what they believe and try to figure out the connections between their acts and beliefs. People are all the time interpreting the world and acting on those interpretations. The anthropologists need to access people's interpretation through participating in their world. It is only through participation that one can begin to understand people's subjective experiences and make any sense of the meanings they ascribe and the purposes they embrace in their lives. The issue here was that any anthropological study had to contend not only with the interpretations of the researcher but also with the interpretations of the people.

When a student in the seminar pointed out that the most important thing he was learning was that facts were not just sitting there waiting for them to collect them and write them up, I knew we were making progress. This was the point to discuss allowing different truths to emerge. We noted the government's neglect and even abuse of the rights of individuals when politicians regard the views of other ethnic groups or those not in power as divisive. They define the problems and assume that they are providing the right solutions. This led to the discussion of how privileged people, including students, constantly ignore and refuse to hear what ordinary people are saying. They seemed to be reluctant to engage in the time-consuming exercise of allowing other voices to emerge. Essentialising and generalising were so instinctively attractive that

deconstructing it took some time. It was pointed out that when one talks in universal terms ('We do such and such'; 'We believe') it is usually with pride and sounds positive. The next question was what happens when different people in the same group or situation insist that their way is the authentic way, or when others just keep quiet. This revealed the issues of contested truths and muted voices. It is not only non-anthropologists who are attracted to universal models of society. Ardener (1972) pointed out that for a while anthropologists were attracted to the generalised models presented by the men in the societies they studied, and that they found the women's answers based on their particularistic experiences cumbersome for constructing analytical models. Thus women's voices became muted by their own men and the anthropologists. The students stressed the need to make extra effort to hear women because when meetings take place they sit at the back; in most societies, they are socialised to speak softly, especially in the presence of men; and often, even if they have something to say, they are pressed for time to complete chores before it gets dark. This remained true despite the efforts of the Ugandan government to push for women's political involvement. Vocal women in Parliament are provoked by male colleagues, and asked who is minding their children and husbands. During election campaigns, men are seen as rightful political aspirants but women are asked whether they are married, whether they are married to foreigners, and whether they are foreigners. Most women thus avoid politics because it is rough terrain.

Past and present memories

The students were asked to say something about the anthropological monographs they had read. Some carried well-thumbed copies of John Beattie's *Bunyoro*, John Middleton's *The Lugbara*, and Aidan Southall's *The Alur*. Apparently these students had gone to a lot of trouble to get these books and I noticed that they treated them like Bibles of truth about their societies. The changes that had taken place since the late 1940s when those studies were done they regarded as irrelevant and a distraction from the timeless truths these monographs represented. Reluctantly, the students agreed that societies were constantly changing as people responded to the social, political and economic situations they found themselves within. For example, I suggested for a start that religious ideas about rainmaking, social

rules about sex and marriage and reciprocal labour needed to be restudied and assessed. They were not easily convinced because, as Jones notes about colonial anthropology in Nigeria, 'any monograph written by an anthropologist on a particular tribe and accessible to its literate members becomes the tribal Bible, the charter of its traditional history and culture' (1974: 287).

It is partly because we have not reproduced ourselves by training new generations of anthropologists that monographs take on lives of their own, although we cannot deny the power of the 'shallow modernity' noted by p'Bitek. I am not denying that some monographs are classics (I for one am not willing to dismiss a century of anthropology), but they are only part of specific cultural histories, and never the last word. In 1993, George Bond talked about the strange experience he had when he returned to Zambia and found that his study was being cited in a court case by the Yombe, a ciTumbuka-speaking people of Isaka Province. Parties in the dispute used sections of his book (Bond 1976) to assert the legitimacy of their claims. Elsewhere, too, anthropological writings take on a life of their own as arbiters of cultural truths. Among most of the overseas Baganda, especially those in North America, Apolo Kagwa's *Mpisa Za Baganda* is the cultural reference book of choice when, for example, in doubt about the details of proper marriage practices. *Mpisa* was first published in 1905, reissued in 1934 and reprinted in 1952. Kagwa was John Roscoe's research assistant or, in current parlance, colleague. If Roscoe's *The Baganda* (1911) had been translated into Luganda it would also have become a cultural reference book. I remember, in my village during the late 1950s, people coming to consult my father's Luganda library on what Kagwa had to offer on twin rituals, and how to settle disputes, including rape fines. In 1992 I interviewed two diviners who had independently hired readers and memorised sections from Kagwa's *Empisa* and *Bassekabaka he Buganda*. One of the diviners liked to recite quotations that were fundamental to his practice of creating princely fetishes used in healing. I only realised that he could not read when he tried to read a book held upside down.

Kagwa recorded oral history as he heard it from those close to him. He was then the Prime Minister of Buganda. Perhaps his study was an élite view of Kiganda culture, even then.³ Perhaps society was not greatly differentiated, and cultural practices were uniform for the élite and the peasants. When the AIDS epidemic forced people to find

culturally appropriate words for education and prevention, they did not find Kagwa's Christian and sanitised language helpful. For example, *kulabagana* (to see each other) is ambiguous, and has a double meaning when asking people about having sex. After a century of exposure to Christianity, many words were consigned to the dustbin of rude cultural practices.

It has taken Uganda two decades of aggressive prevention campaigns, lots of money and the efforts of many to reach a point where there is a decline in the numbers of infected urban youths and pregnant women. UNAIDS is citing it as an example of the 'good practices' that should be followed by other countries. The delay in achieving positive change has been due primarily to ignorance and inability to address the social and economic causes fuelling the AIDS epidemic. The widespread shame and denial the educated display about the lives of the rural and urban poor does not promote awareness. From the beginning politicians who did not want to promote condoms would say that they were not opposed to condoms but that the uneducated people would not know how to use them. An urban myth, which I failed to verify with any villager, was that they would wash and reuse the condom. In my conversations people went to pains to point out their aversion to body fluids and doubted that anyone would reuse a condom. Often in fora discussing the factors that made people vulnerable to HIV transmission, the causes would be placed not only in distant geographical areas but in the distant historical past. Polygyny, the practice of having several wives, was identified as a risky practice perpetuated by village and Muslim men. The informal polygyny of elite men with several girlfriends or mistresses was not perceived as dangerous. There was much talk about rural practices associated with promiscuous behaviour that leads to HIV infection. At Makerere and at the AIDS Control Programme offices at Entebbe people cited the dangerous practice of *Kisiki*, the all-night gatherings (in the past around a log fire in the middle of the compound) for a bachelor party or a wake for a funeral. At the local level the political leadership issues half-hearted bans on *Kisiki* parties, late weddings and disco dances. Predictably, people continued to hold their parties, arguing that promiscuous people have many other opportunities to do what they want to do but most people just enjoy themselves and then go home. Remarks on the banning of discos and dances were most telling for what they revealed about colonial memories. People kept saying: 'The missionaries prevented

us from dancing.' One man noted 'I find it incredible that our own people are also stopping us from dancing even the modern disco.' Dancing also means having sex. In one sense the missionaries had found some of the Kiganda dances seductive and had discouraged their performances.⁴ In another sense, the missionaries' push for monogamy was an attempt to control the promiscuity of natives by limiting the number of men's sexual partners. In the late 1980s and early 1990s there was resistance to the preventive thinking coming from the élite in the capital and it took time for many young people to accept the life-saving preventive measures of safer sex. In 1986 in neighbouring Zaïre, élite urban young men constructed a metaphor from the acronym SIDA as 'an Imaginary Syndrome invented to Discourage Lovers' (Schoepf 1995: 36). Apparently, there is no telling the lengths to which white people will go in order to control blacks.

Anthropology and the study of the 'other'

While other Western disciplines initially proceeded confidently on the assumption that all non-European politics and history could be framed in relation to the activities of European colonials, anthropology established itself as a metropolitan discipline specialising in the 'other': non-Western peoples. This is no longer so: since then, anthropologists have tried to make sense of their own cultures and societies as well. The endogenous critiques⁵ within the discipline have led to a diversity of approaches. The criticisms often reached us belatedly in Africa. For example the criticism of anthropology as the handmaiden of colonialism in the late 1960s was picked up by politically motivated élites and used to rationalise their denial of their humble rural roots. Personally I think that anthropologists in general are brave and that some early ones behaved in radical ways that sometimes did not endear them to the colonial administrators. It is ironic that the colonial administrators were suspicious of anthropologists because they lived too close to the 'native', while the modern African élite resented them for keeping alive the beliefs and practices of the masses. With regard to the masses, the information in most of the early studies seems to have come from the male élite of the time in those societies. It is also important to remember that anthropologists were involved in studying people in the changed situation of labour migration to mines and cities. The colonial official view tended to confine itself to Africans as urban villagers. In the mid-

1950s the Institute of Social Research at Makerere focused on the African residential areas of Mulago, Kisenyi and Mengo because, in the words of the Urban Affairs Administrator, 'We want to know what goes on behind the bananas.'

Despite the trappings of globalisation in many aspects of urban life in Africa, local cultures still matter; they are the lived experiences of the majority of people.⁶ We need to reintroduce anthropology to the universities but before we can do so, there will have to be a drastic change of attitudes. In the first instance we have to bring anthropology to centre stage, demonstrating its vital contribution to understanding the way things 'really' work. The failure of the development decade can be blamed in part on relegating anthropology to the outhouse. Development aid made us deaf to what the masses, who were to bring about development, were saying. We did not have time to listen to them because we were no longer capable of sitting on mats or bare floor or stooping to enter smoke-filled kitchens. Ironically, the forces that had hitherto promoted 'the modern African Man' were by the late 1980s urging that instead of wasting money on higher education, it might be wise to educate Africans just to be good farmers.⁷ In 1989, President Museveni, opening the brand-new Department of Technology and Commerce, urged students not to take useless subjects like history, and generally gestured negatively in the direction of the arts and social sciences. Yet such utilitarian rhetoric is risky – a diverse training in different disciplines will produce people with a broad education to help solve Africa's problems.

Anthropology must contribute to the understanding of and solutions to development and human rights issues in Africa. Ethnographies can bear witness in contexts where the poor human rights record inhibits political and cultural criticism. It is instructive to look at the African Charter of Human and People's Rights, also known as the Banjul Charter, adopted in 1986 and by 1991 ratified by 41 of the 51 member states of the Organisation for African Unity. The charter emphasises 'second generation' economic rights as opposed to 'first generation' civil and political rights. Globally, the document is unique in its emphasis on 'third generation' collective rights; hence the inclusion of 'peoples' and 'human' in the title. However, by the 1990s the widespread abuses of human rights through dictatorial regimes, genocide and communal violence eroded the belief hitherto popular among academic and political élites that economic security

must precede the establishment of civil and political rights. Widespread poverty means that the fundamental economic rights of food, shelter, health care and basic education are denied to many. It is now widely acknowledged that political and civil rights are necessary for the protection of economic rights. Women, people living with HIV/AIDS and activists are leading the human rights movement in Africa and have argued that the Banjul Charter's stress on group rights encourages governments to ignore human rights issues.

No topic lies outside the potential remit of the discipline. It is not possible to understand African development without knowledge of the culture of foreign aid and how it props up corrupt dictators and encourages kleptocracy. In nearly all African countries since independence different waves of élites have acquired great wealth for themselves while denying economic opportunities to those not in power. It is undeniable that colonial policies underdeveloped African entrepreneurial and industrial capacities (Rodney 1972), but this argument sounds false today when even the peasants know that politicians are corrupt, that they are underpaid for cash and food crops, and that all investments go to the state-owned prestige projects run and milked by politicians. The African economic crises have been partly due to the highly competitive world markets that our export-oriented agriculture encountered. The challenge to the much-talked-about African Renaissance is to eat 'humble pie', and to base policies on well-grounded, in-depth research that will promote the ownership of African development by all sectors of the population. This is, in fact, an admission that industrialisation projects failed because we lacked expertise, infrastructure and technology.

Anthropology is still the best way to get at the opportunities and constraints that influence people's actions and thus give shape to the design for living which we call culture. Some problems are indeed intractable and anthropology may not always provide answers, but much can be learned in the process of asking questions about them. This is because culture is the result of human actions and thoughts. It acts as a catalyst for further action as people debate, contest and reinterpret previous actions. Anthropology is time-consuming, frustrating and an imperfect art. Yet if we stick with the project we meet philosophers who elucidate for us ideas about religion, how time and space are embodied in memories of places and things,⁸ about the social construction of individuals,⁹ surviving wars¹⁰ and other misfortunes,¹¹ and even about evil.¹²

The anthropological project of intensive and extensive participatory research is still the best way to study individuals in groups and organisations, and to teach the students the necessity of humility before 'facts'. First we must arm African anthropology students with these skills; without them the present malaise will continue. Development agencies and non-governmental organisations since the 1970s have employed African university graduates to do policy-oriented, short-term research projects. Often carried out in multiple sites, these exercises have often been described as collaborative and applied. However, the collaboration has been mostly in name, as the employees have not been empowered or given analytical or grounded research skills. Many social science graduates can claim to be able to do anthropological research because 'what people do is so self-evident that it does not take much to understand it'. However, this mere declaration of 'understanding' inhibits us from translating everyday, as well as extraordinary, information into knowledge. The African Renaissance will be bogus without a grounded anthropological base.

Notes

- 1 This secular morality preaching movement began in Switzerland but was exported and popularised in Africa by Americans.
- 2 The revival of breast-exposing rituals among the Zulu and Swazi is interesting. In recent decades women in Kenya have used stripping as an effective public protest. The practice has been reported all over Africa at different times.
- 3 See note 4.
- 4 Melodious singing of hymns replaced dancing for the Christians. An eighty-year-old woman told me in 1974 that her mother had been a singer/dancer at the king's palace at the turn of the century. There is no mention of such professional women or of the mother, despite the fact that Kagwa fostered her young girl at his home with the intention of marrying her to his son, who was abroad. As it turned out he violated her at age twelve and added her to his collection of women. They had three children who are still alive.
- 5 See, for example, Fabian 1991.
- 6 Sometimes anthropologists are so focused on their research speciality that they deny the experiences of other local realities. Once I attended a conference in which the Zambians present time and again reported that in their research and personal experiences people valued and depended on rural links. Each time, these rural-urban linkages were denied and ridiculed by an expert on Zambia. I think that it is one thing to say that

a high percentage of Zambians live in towns but to take at face value the words of informants alienated from the rural areas seems strange. Even in Zambia the rural serve as the ultimate safety net for many urban problems.

- 7 See World Bank 1995.
- 8 See, for example, Griaule 1965 (1970); Caplan 1997; Stoller 1997; Parkin 1991.
- 9 See, for example, La Fontaine 1985; Lienhardt 1985; Heald 1999.
- 10 Hutchinson 1996.
- 11 Whyte 1997.
- 12 Parkin 1985; Willis 1985.

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