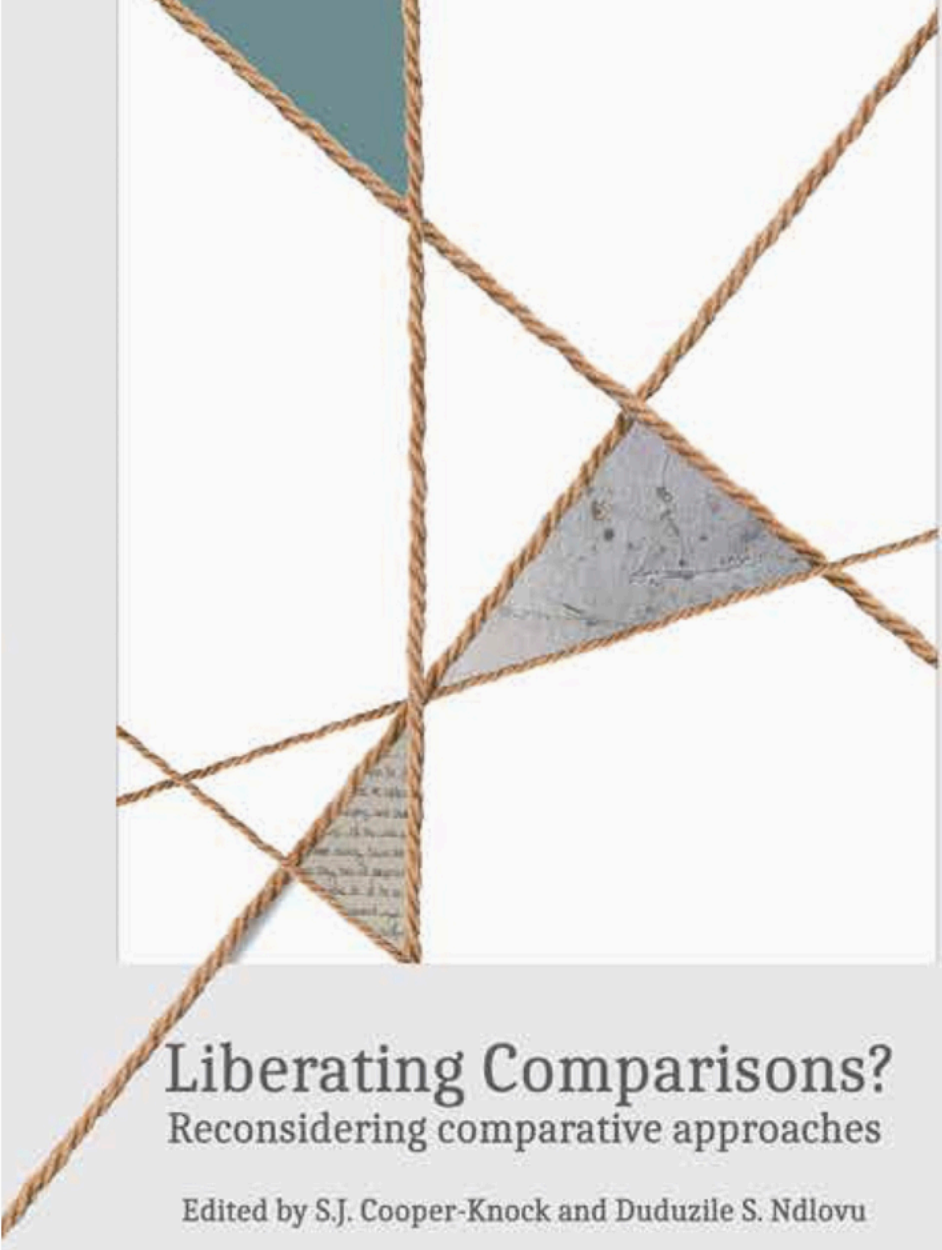

Liberating Comparisons?

Reconsidering comparative approaches

Edited by S.J. Cooper-Knock and Duduzile S. Ndlovu

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Introduction

S.J. Cooper-Knock and Duduzile S. Ndlovu

Liberating Comparisons starts from the premise that comparative approaches are a potentially powerful means of disrupting and deepening our understandings of the world, pushing us to adapt existing theories and build new ones. In order to realise this potential, however, we need to think critically about the terms of our comparisons and how we pursue them. Only then will comparative approaches be able to break out of the 'epistemic enclosure' (Munshi 2017) – the constrained ways of thinking – that they may, otherwise, reinforce.

The first workshop on Liberating Comparisons in 2017 emerged at a time of growing interest from various disciplines in consider and re embrace comparative methods. In anthropology, for example, there had been increasingly enthusiastic calls for a (re)turn to comparative ethnography, although such calls have occasionally been resisted with equal enthusiasm.[1] This was also a time when a growing number of large-scale funding opportunities had encouraged scholars to assemble vast, comparative project proposals. In the midst of these developments, the workshop was designed to create space to explore the possibilities, and limits, of comparison in practice.

Comparative approaches have had their place in most disciplines within the humanities and social sciences, although what has been labelled 'comparative' has varied greatly. The

1 See, for example, Englund and Yarrow (2013), Gingrich and Fox (2002), Schnegg (2014)

chapters that follow draw together scholars who explore the notion of 'liberating comparisons' from a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary backgrounds, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. They do so in the interests of analysis, not advocacy: In each account, you will find hopes and frustrations, insights and limitations, enthusiasm and critiques. The forms of comparisons that our contributors refer to are varied. Some authors invoke 'comparative gestures' – a more 'light-touch', fluid form comparison (Robinson 2016:196) – while others construct more structured comparative studies; some bring categories or phenomena into comparison while others use comparison to challenge the very order of things. Likewise, the notion of 'liberating' is understood in diverse ways. Some contributors explore the potential for scholars and scholarship comparison to free from particular pre-occupations, theories, or assumptions. Others focus on the consequences that particular forms of comparison hold for research participants and collaborators. Either way, comparative approaches are not valued merely as an intellectual exercise: the ways in which we produce knowledge and the types of knowledge that we produce are linked to broader projects of political change and progress, with material consequences (Wa Thiong'o 1992:16; Fanon 2001). What unites the contributors in this collection is the possibility of linkage between thought and action, insight and change. In their discussions, they point to different facets of comparison, which we gesture to, below.

Why do we compare?

The purposes of comparison are diverse, but what draws our contributors together is an interest in the ways that comparison can render visible and clear what might otherwise be overlooked or under-articulated. This might mean the discovery of new empirical material: as we bring cases into dialogue with one another, we might ask different questions

of the and, in doing so, bring things that were previously unnoticed into the analytical spotlight. The contribution of comparative approaches could also be theoretical, offering researchers the opportunity to revise existing theories or create 'real theoretical breaks' (Robinson 2016:194). A note of clarification may be helpful here: there can be a temptation to think of theory creation and innovation as inherently positive. We are not making that argument. What we *are* suggesting, is that comparative projects, assembled in a critical and open manner, provide us with the space to *consider* theoretical innovation. The act of creating space for theoretical discussion and development – rather than the act of theoretical change itself – is what we see as useful. Existing theories are not less valuable than new theories, nor are old theories necessarily out-dated or defunct. That said, we cannot assume the value of any theory, however well-established it may be, and space needs to be created witin projects for theories to be challenged and adapted in potentially unforeseen ways. Our contributors explore multiple situations in which comparative approaches can create that space.

What are we comparing, and how?

The units of analysis and the categories of comparison that we use in our comparative endeavours will fundamentally shape the analysis that follows. As **Hazel Gray** reminds us, 'In the answers that we receive, we cannot escape the echoes of the assumptions with which we started.'

There is nothing inherent within comparative approaches that makes them disruptive. If we want comparative projects that produce fresh, critical insights, we have to create the favourable conditions necessary for them to do so. Part of this process involves constantly questioning the definitions we devise, the categories we use, and the assumptions we hold in our work.

In her research, for example, **Hazel Gray** challenges prevailing economic assumptions by creating space within her comparative work to explore the long-running impact of economic ideas, the political projects that they spawned, and the structures that they shaped. **Bev Russell** highlights how Social Surveys Africa pushed for an adaptation of the definition of 'volunteering' to fit understandings of the concept on the ground in different countries. Meanwhile, **Kesi Mahendran** explains how giving participants the 'freedom to compare' in dialogue with one another created new ways of conceptualizing ideas like migration and mobility. The Migrant-Mobility Spectrum that she developed out of these dialogues allowed people to position themselves in much more nuanced ways than a simple migrant/non-migrant binary would allow. This spectrum also enables people to move *between* categories in different contexts and over time.

To say that we need to critique our assumptions and understandings is not to suggest that 'objective' or 'neutral' research is ever possible. We cannot remove ourselves from the research we conduct nor the knowledge we create. What we can do, however, is seek out voices that will challenge the ways in which we think about the world around us and our place within it. If we do this well, the challenges they offer us will be varied.

In the chapters that follow, several contributors focus on challenges that have been emphasized in renewed calls to decolonize the academy. We use the plural 'calls' on purpose here because calls to decolonize have been multiple and varied. At their root, however, they share a common desire to name, resist and reverse the dehumanizing hierarchies, exclusion and oppression that are the living legacy of colonialism today and which continue to shape our material realities and our thinking (e.g. Maldonado-Torres 2007, Ndlovu Gatsheni 2020). Tackling the living legacies of colonialism, of course, is not an easy task. Sometimes, they are blunt and obvious. At other times, they are subtle and pernicious. As **Anne Griffiths** shows us

they might quietly shape dominant ideas of what is 'normal' or 'standard' or, as **Zainab Ladan Mai-Bornu** highlights, they could shape the terms on which we invite people to participate in our research projects. As the second example demonstrates, decolonizing the academy is not just a thought experiment: it is equally concerned with the material relationships and realities that structure the world in which we live, work, and think (Sultana 2019). Nor is decolonizing distinct from the pursuit of academic excellence. Coloniality leads to work that is both unjust and unrigourous. As **Ini Dele-Adedeji** reminds us, critical thinking and substantive equality are pre-conditions for academic excellence. Excellence and equality go hand in hand.

When we start to question the conventions and practices that surround our research design and practice, we create critical space for doing things differently, albeit often in tentative or incomplete ways. Sometimes, we can plan our paths in this direction, at other times they emerge with serendipity. For **Lorena Núñez Carrasco**, for example, new connections were made and new solidarities born when she met activists from South Africa during their visit to Chile. Her interest in a 'relational comparison' (Hart 2018) (see also Bridget kenny's chapter) between Chile and South Africa preceded and outlived the brief period in which the two countries became 'obvious' candidates for comparison, due to the timing of their political transitions. Fruitful comparative work must always be willing to diverge from the well-trodden paths that link particular cases or phenomena. It must also, **Tara Polzer Ngwato and Lebogang Shilakoe** argue, be willing to question the *scale* at which data is gathered and analysed. As **Lovleen Bhullar** highlights, this is not to say that established modes of comparative study or established categories of analysis cannot produce rigorous, critical outcomes, nor that unusual terms of comparison alone will help us to think differently. It is simply to say that we gain a great deal by *being willing* to move

beyond the 'usual suspects' for comparison or reappraising the terms on which they are compared.

Equally as important as the units of analysis that we choose, and the categories we engage, are the ways that we hold these in our research. **Bridget Kenny, Lorena Núñez Carrasco,** and **Mikal Woldu**, for example, work hard to explore how different phenomena unfold in particular cities or nations without thinking about these spaces as rigid, bounded, natural units of analysis that can be plucked out by an author and explored. **Mikal Woldu**, for example, encourages us to see cities as being constantly 'under construction'; likewise, the migrant communities that inhabit them shift both through time and over time. Through their work, these contributors demonstrate the importance of what Sam Okoth Opondo (2015:215) argued: 'If we want to be able to create rigorous, insightful research, we need to not only think critically about the "vantage point" from which we look at the world, but also our ways of seeing. (Ibid:215).

The limits of comparison

We started by noting that there is nothing inherently liberating about comparison. If we do not constantly question why we compare, what we are comparing and how, we can produce scholarship that reinforces or overlooks everything that we should be challenging and exploring. **Ini Dele-Adedeji**, for example, demonstrates how inappropriate comparisons between Boko Haram and international terrorist organisations have taken voice and agency away from people on the ground in north-eastern Nigeria. In this context, the comparisons being drawn are clear. At other times, problematic comparisons can persist, unacknowledged in seemingly non-comparative studies. **Anne Griffiths,** for example, argues that in legal scholarship there is still too often a tendency to compare developments across the globe to values and

practices prevalent in 'the West' as if the latter were the norm or standard against which all should be judged. This use of the West as a 'cardinal point of reference' (Donahue and Kaylan 2015:129) in scholarship means that we fail to understand developments across the world on their own terms we also overlook the extent and the importance of diversity across the globe, including 'the West'. Resisting this tendency does not mean that we should re-centre our analysis elsewhere. It means, as Shu-Mei Shih (2015:435) concludes, that we should 'scatter all centres': There is no universal experience in this world, but there are echoes and connections between all experiences that deserve our attention and analysis (Hart 2018, Bartlett and Vavrus 2017). Even if they are conducted rigorously, however, comparisons may only take us so far. As **B Camminga and Kamau Wairuri** point out, analysis can serve as a useful revelation or demonstration of power, oppression, and resistance, but the 'work of liberation' demands more.

This book explores the potential of comparative approaches in pursuing such analysis. That said, to critically harness comparative approaches is not to assert their superiority over other approaches. Indeed, there may be times when the pursuit of comparison itself may seem stifling (Munshi 2017). We should always be open to the possibility of comparative approaches mutating and combining with other approaches in 'promiscuous encounters' (Ray 2015) or stepping back and allowing other approaches to take centre stage.

What makes this collection valuable is the critical and dynamic approach that our contributors take. We encourage readers to engage with their work in this fashion, taking inspiration from this approach rather than seeking to mimic any thoughts or practices you find in the pages that follow. Our aim is not to create new canons, new prescriptions, or new rules in our work. We want, instead, to echo and extend the valuable questions and critiques that exist, urging scholars

not to 'turn... away from living thought, which engages reality and recognises its own limitations' (Gordon 2014:86). Comparative approaches are no panacea and the researchers who apply them will always be fallible. Creative, critical, constructive engagement is what we hope to encourage.

Conclusion

Comparative approaches can help us to critically reflect on our ways of thinking, uncovering empirical developments, honing existing theories and building new ones. Comparison can refine our interpretations and fuel our political imaginations. It can only do so, however, if we are already working to create the conditions in which critical thinking is possible. If we are not doing this work, our methods alone will not save us. As we have argued above, working to create the conditions for academic excellence is political work. Power does not just shape the material world around us, it also shapes how we think: the questions that we ask, the judgements that we make, and the assumptions that we hold. If we do not actively name, challenge and resist power – in its social, material and ideational forms – we will reproduce and solidify it. Challenging how we think, where we think from, and whose thinking we value, can be part of a broader project of challenging the power relations that structure our world. Our hope is that comparative work can be a small part of this bigger picture.

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Liberating Economic Comparisons

Hazel Gray

Comparative work has a long history in political economy, but the past decade has seen an explosion of research that uses country-level comparisons to explore the relationship between institutional and economic change. While much of this research reinforces conventional economic theory, in my work, I have used comparison as a means of questioning economic orthodoxies. In doing so, I have sought to improve our understanding of economic processes and the politics in which they are embedded.

In this chapter, I focus on my comparative work on Tanzania and Vietnam (Gray 2018). I show how comparative analysis can be a powerful tool to disrupt mainstream approaches to economic change and open up space for thinking about alternative economic systems. In order to do this, careful consideration needs to be given to the economic assumptions that often remain hidden in comparative case studies of political change. The unrecognized assumptions we make about the economy at the very start of a project can profoundly shape what causes and consequences we are able to see in the analysis that follows.

Below, I begin by highlighting the importance of the economic ideas within comparative inquiry. Using the example of my work on Vietnam and Tanzania, I explore how my theoretical starting point fundamentally shaped the cases that I chose and the timelines that I explored.

The Hidden Economy: Uncovering Economic Assumptions in Comparative Political Economy

The degree to which we can create 'liberating comparisons' is often determined very early on in our studies. If we do not think critically about our initial assumptions about how economic processes work, we can unwittingly close down the space for critical thinking that we hope to nurture.

This means that we need to think carefully about the economic assumptions that pass unnoticed as 'conventional wisdom'. We can only construct comparisons that are capable of questioning widely used economic models if we are willing to question the foundational assumptions of mainstream economics. Like all disciplines, economics has changed over the years, but the foundations of mainstream economic thinking have maintained a commitment to the idea that free markets are key to promoting positive economic transformation. History shows us that this simple assumption is often wrong. The work that I have found most fruitful in rethinking economic transformation starts from the conceptual building blocks of power, institutions, and market forces and tries to consider these factors in all their complexity.

My study developed at a time when multiple economists were trying to make sense of the relationship between political systems and economic change. I was interested in exploring why economic institutions have very different outcomes depending on the broader political economies in which they are embedded. My own theoretical understandings and political commitments led me to question mainstream theories on this topic, using comparative methods to explore what other interpretations might be possible.

One influential set of debates at the time of my project emerged from New Institutional Economics. Scholars within this field had argued that economic transformation would be helped by inclusive institutions simply because these

institutions were more likely to promote stable property rights, the rule of law, and competition. All these factors, they argued, would make it less costly for people to do business. Over the past twenty years, evidence seemed to contradict these arguments: around the world there were many examples of economic transformation in relatively authoritarian systems. Interestingly, many of the same economists changed their approach and started to argue that centralized, authoritarian states might improve chances of economic transformation. Underneath these apparent shifts in ideas about political systems, the same economic model based on the supposed advantages of competitive markets remained unchanged.

At this point, the field of New Institutional Economics reached an impasse. Numerous studies produced contradictory or inconclusive outcomes. No one could definitively say what kind of political system provided the strongest basis for economic transformation. Many of the studies that were undertaken were comparative, and there is a crucial lesson for us in this impasse: it was a reminder that research design alone cannot disrupt the tenacity of social theory that maintains the status quo. In the answers that we receive, we cannot escape the echoes of the assumptions with which we started. New Institutional Economics was not making progress because it was based on a set of economic assumptions that needed to change.

In my own work, I expanded the work of Mushtaq Khan (2010), whose political settlement framework emerged as a critique of New Institutional Economics and drew on Marxist theories of socioeconomic change. In this framework political settlements emerge as an unintended consequence of the interaction between groups in society and as a result of the ways in which resources are generated and distributed. This framework pushes us to take history seriously, looking at the ways in which the distribution of power and the shape of institutions has changed over time. In doing so, we see that,

contrary to the ideas of New Institutional Economics, there is an inconsistent relationship between political stability and economic transformation. The political settlements approach also gives us a better understanding of how and why particular rules and practices might become more important than others, even when they are informal or illicit. Whereas factors like clientelism are seen in New Institutional Economics as just a product of individuals pursuing their own interests, we can see through a political settlements framework that clientelism often has deep, structural drivers.

And yet if we look at the post-colonial trajectories of countries across the world we see the fundamental importance of political ideology in shaping their political and economic trajectories. We do a disservice to the study of these countries if our comparisons do not give us the space to take political ideology seriously. We also end up with answers that hold less explanatory power. Many researchers in the social sciences argue that political ideologies are important in explaining why certain policies are adopted. My argument is different. I explore how commitments to particular political ideologies can become a potentially significant force that shapes institutions and determines who gets to have economic and political power. This has a knock-on effect on paths of economic transformation that goes beyond policy choices or elite preferences.

Taking this into account, my work sought to explore the role that socialism has played in shaping political settlements and, in doing so, influencing trajectories of economic transformation. Below, I explain how my comparative study was structured to achieve this end.

Cases for Comparison

Given my interest in exploring the impact of socialist political settlements on economic transformation, I chose to study

Vietnam and Tanzania, which are both examples of the wave of Third World Socialism that existed in the second half of the twentieth century. Socialist parties that took political control of the state in the wake of independence struggles did so within a particular global and ideological context that created common features across countries and regions. Tanzania and Vietnam were two out of a total of twenty-two countries that were recognized as third world socialist regimes by the end of the 1970s.

There are methodologically robust reasons for bringing these two case studies together. Both of these states pursued socialism over roughly the same time period, during which time they sought to consolidate and centralize political and economic power. These relative short socialist endeavors ultimately ended in the face of crisis. From the 1980s onwards, each country liberalized their economy. In some senses, their subsequent experiences mirrored that predicted by mainstream economics: their GDPs grew, and their economies transformed with a greater percentage of that GDP coming from services and industry.

There were, however, important differences between the two cases. Economic transformation can actually occur along many different paths, with varied outcomes for people's wellbeing over time. Despite some similarities in Tanzania's and Vietnam's experiences, differences in the characteristics of industrialization in the two countries had important implications for rates of poverty and inequality: in Vietnam poverty fell dramatically, while in Tanzania it remained persistently high during the 2000s.

The explanation that New Institutional Economics gives to understand this divergence highlights the role of market forces and the extent to which the state is successful in generating political order, whether through inclusive or authoritarian systems. However, neither of these comparative points were relevant for Tanzania and Vietnam. Both states

used clientelism and forms of political exclusion to maintain political order while Vietnam remained *more* interventionist in markets than its counterpart.

Here, in short, was an economic puzzle that mainstream economics could not solve. This provided me with a good opportunity to utilize and extend the political settlement approach. In selecting Vietnam and Tanzania, I also enabled a comparison that crossed regional boundaries and rejected many of the ill-informed assumptions about regional differences between Asia and Africa that characterizes much of the comparative economics literature.

More broadly, these two cases provided me with an important opportunity to explore the varieties of Third World Socialism. There is, I would argue, still too little scholarship in the social sciences that sees the political ideologies of Third World Socialism as ideologically important and materially significant. This study saw them as both. While neither country was ultimately successful in creating socialism, there are lessons to be learned from how to construct alternative economic systems that remain relevant for today.

Making Time for Comparison

Our theoretical starting point does not just shape the cases we select and the questions that we ask, but it also shapes the timelines on which we focus.

My hypothesis was that socialism mattered for explaining contemporary Tanzania and Vietnam, not simply because of the institutional legacies that they left behind as the same ruling parties retained power. It was their earlier ideological commitments to creating socialism that changed which groups in society had power and could benefit from economic opportunities that opened up after liberalization.

In its fullest sense, socialism envisages a very different relationship between the distribution of power and economic

institutions to capitalism. Ultimately, it seeks collective control over productive institutions. Attempts to create socialism in the twentieth century ultimately failed to bring about sustainable economies driven by collectively owned institutions. The productive transformations within socialist economic institutions did not happen during the short periods of socialism. But the attempts to bring about this change had important socioeconomic legacies for the reordering political and economic power. With this in mind, my comparison was set up on the premise that in order to understand what happened from the 1980s within both countries, we had to understand their respective experiences of socialism.

Ultimately, the combination of a historical focus and alternative economic theory was crucial. It enabled me to see that the paths of economic transformation that emerged following market liberalization were rooted in four key factors: first, the specific experience of political organization and mobilization that brought each socialist party to power; second, differences in the degree to which a centralized authority structure was created within the state through the consolidation of power of the ruling party; third, the extent to which formal socialist collective economic institutions were established and became productive; and fourth, the extent to which attempts to construct a socialist economy led to a change in the distribution of economic power away from capitalists to new economic actors. Differences across these four aspects help to explain why economic transformation proceeded along different paths and had different consequences for poverty reduction in Tanzania and Vietnam.

Conclusion

What I hope I have shown in this chapter is that comparative methods hold a great deal of promise, but they are often constrained by the implicit assumptions that are made

about how economic systems work. Mainstream economics provides limited scope to explore economic alternatives. But comparative political studies are also limited as they have relied on faulty assumptions about economic processes that are often unrecognized and unexplored. In the work I set out above, a comparison of economic transformation in Tanzania and Vietnam could effectively challenge the assumptions at the heart of mainstream economics and provide insights into alternative political ideologies that deserve more serious study.

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Dialogical Citizens, Integration, and the Possibilities of Diffraction

Kesi Mahendran

In this chapter, my focus is on 'integration' as a key official category used within migration policy within the European Union. I explore how citizens, when given the freedom to discuss official categories, can liberate comparison from idealized starting points such as the imagined integration of non-migrants. Mikhail Bakhtin proposed that categories or stereotypical labels can never quite capture our complexity and possibility. There is always, he argued, an 'unrealised surplus of humanness' (Bakhtin, 1981, 37) that spills out this 'surplus' beyond any category that is being used in dialogue. Carefully designed research, in which citizens can explore official concepts and categories, can release this 'surplus of humanness' to create a spectrum of different positions on integration and other official categories. A process I understand as diffraction.

Integration and the European Union

Since 2004, policies on what is termed 'immigrant-integration' within the European Union (EU) have as their point of departure the Common Basic Principles (CBP). The first principle states: 'Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of EU Member States' (European Commission 2016).

It is worth considering the implicit psychological assumptions underneath this well-intended CBP: that there

are two *separate* groups, residents and immigrants; that there is a *between* which must be bridged in both directions; that this oppositional arrangement will require a process of *mutual* accommodation – that is, that some give-and-take adaptations must occur by both parties. Such categorical assumptions inform policymakers, practitioners, and integration scholars across the EU. Compare that categorization with how Marion Stuart, an Edinburgh-based teacher responds to another EU categorisation central to integration policy, the distinction between 'third-country national' and 'second-country national'.

> Kesi: What about the European Union themselves; what do you think about their making that distinction between third-country and second-country nationals?
>
> Marion Stuart: I (have) a limited understanding of how it works, but you know, the idea that (the) Turkish community, and the North African community(.) I don't think that they were always seen as third world within Europe. But then there are (…) countries that are given far more status, you know, if you're French, or possibly Swiss. A Swiss citizen is superior to a Romanian citizen, and so on, you know. So, it's very much a stereotypical thing and a hierarchy. *Marion Stuart, MMC1, Edinburgh.*[2]

Marion connects my use of the EU term 'third-country national' to 'third world'. The term 'third world', understood by Marion as constructed and stigmatizing, is carefully challenged. She understand it within a hierarchy of Europeanness, where

2 The transcription uses the following conventions: (…) denotes section of text removed, (.) small pause, (3) denotes 3 second pause before speaking again. * text* denotes laughter when talking, = denotes speaking at the same time. Participants are represented by confidential names which retain cultural features, then MMC number, then city of interview.

Europe as an entity becomes about the relative status of nations (Chryssochoou 2000). Marion answers the question by describing hierarchies that are in use but simultaneously distancing herself from those same hierarchies. This hierarchy is reified – made concrete and rigid. To be dialogical is to bring other voices into one's own speech and to anticipate how an answer may well be received.

We find in our studies that citizens are often sceptical when brought into dialogue with official categories. They reveal an acute awareness of the performativity and optics of their usage. Marion Stuart, as a non-migrant in migration studies, would likely be asked about her social attitudes on immigration. It is unlikely she would be asked about her lived experience of integration in the same way that migrants are asked these questions. As it stands, citizens such as Marion are rarely the object of migration studies, policies, and practices.

Questions of global justice inevitably raise questions about how the world is categorised, organised, and compared. Official concepts and categories can both reflect and reinforce power relations across the globe. When concepts become concrete and rigid with hard borders, they can be understood as being 'reified'. Categories when reified become essentialized – they become fundamental and seemingly intrinsic. When categories are de-reified they become fluid, relational, contingent, and dynamic. As such, they become understood as something to be negotiated, to have many meanings according to the context of their use. Our studies show how citizens who take part in research are ideally placed to de-reify official categories which may have become reified (Mahendran, Magnusson, Howarth, and Scuzzarello 2019, on the category 'refugee'; Mahendran, English, and Nieland forthcoming, on the category 'home'). Whereas official categories push us towards a singular understanding of a particular phenomenon, citizens in dialogue often push in the opposite direction.

Methods which bring participants into dialogue with official categories can therefore create diffraction. This diffraction, in my view, has greater efficacy than appeals to pluralism or multiplicities. Diffraction refers to the process by which light can hit a prism or, indeed, an obstacle and go in many different directions. Within our studies, diffraction is adopted to show how citizens in dialogue with official categories can take seemingly oppositional categories – Global South/Global North, European national/third-country national, migrant/non-migrant – and diffract the binary into a spectrum of recognisable positions. In this sense, diffraction releases citizens from potentially stigmatising categories and into new understandings that can forge the basis of more nuanced, relevant policy.

The Dialogues of Migration, Integration and Citizenship (D-MIC) project was designed to bring citizens into dialogue with European Union statements, videos, and images (see Mahendran 2016 for a YouTube video of an image from the first study). The project was the first comparative study in an ongoing series of studies (the Placing Ourselves programme) examining categories of belonging, integration, and citizenship in relation to human mobility. This study led to the creation of the Migration-Mobility Continuum (MMC) (Mahendran 2017), a diffracting analytical prism used in all subsequent studies to move beyond the binary between migrants and non-migrants/residents. (see figure 1)

Dialogues on Migration, Citizenship, and Integration

The Dialogues on Migration, Citizenship, and Integration (D-MIC) were conducted in Stockholm and Edinburgh. Thirty-two people participated in twenty-four interviews and four focus groups. The interviews were conducted by Nicola Magnusson, a PhD student based in Stockholm, and me. Together we interviewed an equal number of women and men

who were engaged in a variety of occupations (e.g., a software engineer, a public artist, an academic, a driving instructor, and people who were unemployed). The thirty-two participants were aged between 18 and 60. Thirteen participants agreed to take part in the focus groups, of which seven had already participated in interviews. Within the focus groups, participants were able to mix with people with a different degree of migration-mobility than themselves, for example, a real estate analyst who had lived in Stockholm all his life sat beside and debated the parameters of European citizenship with a medical doctor who had arrived in Sweden as a refugee. The doctor had moved several times, transiting from refugee camp to refugee camp before settling in Stockholm (Mahendran, Magnusson, Howarth, and Scuzzarello 2019).

The D-MIC study asked both migrants and non-migrants the same questions on migration, integration, and citizenship. Engaging in dialogue on their own degree of migration, or lack of migration, and the extent to which they were integrated revealed that people did not exist as migrants and non-migrants – as proposed by the European Union's common basic principle introduced above – but rather they had degrees of migration-mobility, as well as degrees of inclusion and exclusion. One question – *are there times when you feel unacceptable or on the outside* – was a key question in diffracting the non-migrant experience. Barbara Molson, a psychologist working in a psychiatric unit, had lived in several countries before returning to Sweden.

> Kesi: Are there any times when you think (1) where you felt on the outside?
>
> Barbara: (5) erm, yes several times.
>
> Kesi: And you felt on the outside? (…)
>
> Barbara: Yes, I could find this situation now where I'm single, I don't have children, I'm not married (.) I

don't belong to the norms (…). Personally, I think it's because I had quite a lost childhood and I know how to speak to people (2) on the outside and are excluded. So I think I always feel for people not =

Kesi: = Being included in personal areas.

Barbara: Although I've never (1) I've never been (1) I have always been included with white upper-class sorts of people. I feel I don't like it, I don't feel at home at all.

Kesi: And if you could magically redesign Stockholm what would you do?

Barbara: I'd bring in different nationalities, different sorts of people all ages. *Barbara Molson, MMC4, Stockholm.*

A generational non-migrant who has moved abroad (MMC4), Barbara Molson combines being included in the white upper classes with being on the outside. She indicates that in this inclusion she does not feel at home at all. Strikingly, Barbara's sense of being on the outside and empathy towards others on the outside were capacities found in other participants who all had one thing in common. They had moved and lived abroad for a period and returned. One example was a stonemason, also around 40 years old, Niall Anderson.

Kesi: Would you say you feel a part of the city?
Niall: Not really. I was born here, I went to school here, but I guess, I mean, like you said, I could have chosen not to come back to Edinburgh. I could have gone on from London to live somewhere else. You know, I quite like (the) city, there's a lot of things happening.

Kesi: So why is it that you say you don't feel part of the city?

> Niall: (4) I don't really feel a part of anything other than living on this planet. (KM: That's interesting) (3) I've got family ties here. Memories probably, and going to work and, I suppose maybe my trip to South America I had a bit of culture (shock) going there for six months. Coming back to and during my time in South America I realized there was another equally beautifully culture somewhere else in the world, and I suppose every country has its own beauty and its own culture. I certainly felt the atmosphere in Chile and enjoyed it, enjoyed being in another culture. Someone thought I was Chilean because I lived like other people. *Niall Anderson, MMC4, Edinburgh.*

This capacity to stand on the outside is a central feature of position MMC4. In Extract 4, Niall moves across the Migration-Mobility Continuum, starting from MMC1 (he was born in Edinburgh) then moving into MMC5 (internal migrants, unsettled, his move to London). He takes up the position of global citizen when he discusses beautiful countries in the world (see Mahendran 2017 on 'one-world' narrative). Niall then takes up a MMC7 position, speaking in our interview about how, from his point of view, he was a migrant who appears so settled/assimilated that he is taken as a Chilean.

Ten Positions along the Migration-Mobility Continuum

Two key steps in the D-MIC study led to the diffraction that created the MMC positions set out in Figure 1. First, we asked all our participants the same six mobility questions. These included questions about how long they have lived in the city, whether they had moved, whether they felt integrated or on the outside at all, and whether they were settled or would move again/for the first time. This framing allowed integration to be discussed fully across migrants and non-migrants rather

than integration acting as an imagined ideal which migrants were measured against. Second, we analysed how citizens engaged in a dialogue with the official categories such as 'third-country national' and principles such as 'integration as a two-way process'. In that approach, we did not do what many emancipatory approaches do and create alternative categories from a study of people's lived realities.

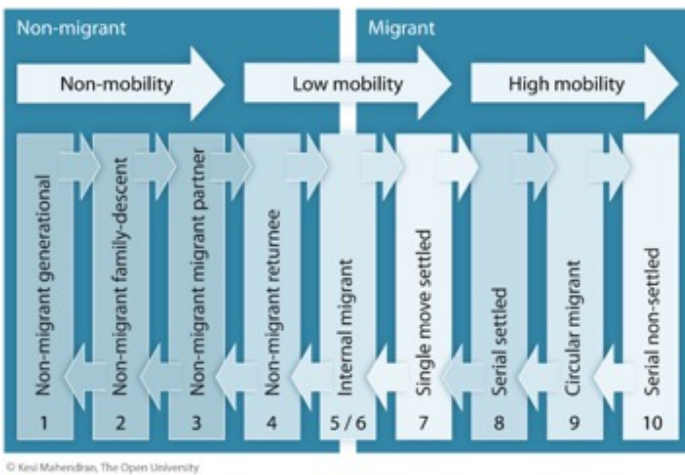

Figure 1. The 10-point migration-mobility continuum (Mahendran, 2017)

Citizens' degrees of migration-mobility are diffracted here into ten positions. In MMC1, position 1, the citizen, alongside their parents/grandparents are from the city and have not moved – generational non-mobility. In position 2, the citizen is born in the city, and their parents or grandparents are migrants. In position 3, a non-migrant is married/in a relationship with a migrant, which we found to influence views on integration and citizenship. Position 4 is the returnee position taken by Barbara and Niall.

The higher mobility positions (7–10) relate to the key question of *are you settled, or do you think you will move again/move for the first time*. In position 7, people had moved once and described themselves as settled at the time of the interview. In position 8, they had moved several times and were now settled. Finally, some migrants intended to return to their country of origin (position 9) or move onwards to a new place (position 10). Those who were placed in position 10 are referred to as serial migrants. The MMC should not be understood as a static typology or rigid taxonomy but as analytical prism which diffracts to reveal our capacity to take up a variety of relational positions when we are in dialogue privately or with others. Ten positions are currently articulated, but, logically of course, there are further positions. Furthermore, citizens can change position over time as Niall and Barbara illustrate.

Understanding the Public as Dialogical Citizens

The Placing Ourselves research programme works with the dialogical self (Bakhtin 1981; Marková 2003; Mahendran 2017). This conceptual outlook proposes that human beings conceive, create, and communicate about the world via a multiplicity of *I*-positions. Some *I*-positions are external and relate to recognisable roles (e.g., *I*-carpenter, *I*-Swedish, *I*-son), and others are internal relating to orientations (e.g., *I*-pacifist, *I*-adventurer). Studies into migration, citizenship, and belonging generally tend to ask participants to tell their story; these biographical narratives create enlightening knowledge which increases understanding and mobilization towards more attuned policies. Rather than ask our participants to tell their stories, we asked them about their worldviews and what they thought of existing policies. The studies give participants the freedom to compare to promote an *I*-citizen position. We showed participants films, small EU

statements such as the first principle of the European Union Common Basic Principles above.

Studies which rely on official categories as the basis of comparison would categorize Marion, Barbara, and Niall in the same category – non-migrants holding liberal pro-migration, pro-multiculturalism attitudes. However, when their positions become diffracted along the MMC, we can see that they hold distinct positions: Marion's sense of being at home rooted in her children being born in Edinburgh, the *I*-mother position; Niall's ability to recast himself as once a migrant; and Barbara's feeling of not quite being at home in the country where she was born. In our studies, we understand positions not as fixed but as relational dynamic positions, which move according to how a strategic or tactical game is being played – rather like an *I*-centre-forward position may change quickly to an *I*-defender position if a game of football requires a player to head back to their own goal. Critically, the dialogical self relates to the three components proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin: I-for-myself, I-for-the-Other, Other-for-me (Bakhtin, 1981; Mahendran 2017). To work with participants within research studies as dialogical citizens acknowledges that our sense of who we are and how we are placed in the world develops through our engagement with others. So-called non-migrants, such as Marion, Barbara, and Niall, articulate their sense of integration not simply via a two-way process of mutual accommodation (returning to the CBP above) but rather through expressing that their very sense of themselves exists in a relational dialogue with their own migrations and their empathy with an *I*-migrant position.

Conclusion: Destabilizing 'Integration' as an Official Category

Comparative studies have the potential to create knowledge that works towards global justice. This chapter has concentrated

on diffracting the non-migrant end of the MMC by drawing attention to the degrees of migration-mobility and the various *I*-positions possible. All citizens, irrespective of their degree of migration, ask existential questions and engage in a reflexive process in order to integrate – notwithstanding the structural challenges or sedimented conditions experienced by migrants and black and brown-skinned non-migrants when integration is under discussion. The question of the role of racialisation and its conflation with migration is inevitably a chapter in itself. By asking all citizens, irrespective of their degree of migration-mobility, the same questions on integration, we begin to see that the vexed concept is integration itself rather than whether any given individual is integrating.

When citizens are given the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with official concepts and categories, they are likely to demonstrate the dialogical capacity to destabilize and diffract official categories. These diffracted positions, such as those along the MMC, reveal commonalities which transcend the usual comparative lines. It is these commonalities, which form the basis of solidarities and understanding. They can support the development of European Union policies that are more attuned to people's migration experiences with the recognition that people have migration experiences along the MMC. This understanding is the royal road towards liberating comparisons in migration and mobility studies. It is our human creative and comparative capacity that has the potential to de-reify existing powerful juxtaposed oppositional categorisation in relation to migration and the contested concept of integration. The challenge for comparative researchers and practitioners is to design studies which articulate those dialogical capacities.

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How to Remain Globally Relevant When Conducting Comparative Development Research in the 'Global South'

Bev Russell

The terms 'Global South' and 'Global North' gained ascendance in the 1990s with the end of the Cold War. As with all grand terms that seek to map the world, the meaning of these terms is contested. In some contexts, the term 'Global South' is used as a 'shorthand' for 'developing countries collectively' and 'rests on the fact that all of the world's industrially developed countries (with the exception of Australia and New Zealand) lie to the north of its developing countries' (UNDP 2004). For others, the term is 'not a geographical concept' (Santos 2016:18): whilst the 'great majority' of those in the Global South live in the Southern Hemisphere, the term is actually a 'metaphor of the human suffering caused by capitalism and colonialism at the global level, and a metaphor as well of the resistance to overcome or minimise such suffering' (Santos 2016:18).

Struggles over knowledge have been an integral part of these broader relations of oppression and resistance. Today, activists, practitioners, and scholars from the South assert their right to be heard as they develop theories and concepts that centre the voices, lives, hopes, and philosophies of those in the South. In doing so, they are drawing on long histories of resistance. This resistance opposes the imposition of concepts developed in the North on the South as if the particular experiences of the North should be seen as a universal or an

ideal. It also reminds us of the diversity within the Global South.

Despite this resistance, numerous studies continue to assume that the realities and thinking of those in the Global South has little to offer in the development of global comparative studies. This premise not only undermines the legitimacy of such studies but fails to explore the enormous contribution that an openness to all global contexts, including the South, would bring. In this chapter, I demonstrate the limitations of imposed normative definitions and methodologies by exploring research on civil society organisations (CSOs) and on volunteering in South Africa. Next, I share Social Survey Africa's approach to this research as we sought to be true to the local context while still remaining globally relevant. Ultimately, the aim is to expose the wealth of knowledge that can be gained from opening up definitions to be more inclusive of a southern context and, in doing so, also addressing the power imbalances that still too frequently dominate global comparative research.

Resisting Conceptual Creep from the Global North

As with any other concept, definitions relating to what a civil society organisation is differs widely by context and country as is also true for the notion of what is considered to be voluntary. However, for globally comparative research into these two areas to be successful a common definition is critical. In both instances, the globally accepted definitions of 'CSOs' and 'volunteering' were developed by Johns Hopkins University's Centre for Civil Society, located in Maryland, USA. The latter was developed in partnership with the ILO (2011) and adopted by the UN. These definitions are widely accepted as the global 'gold standard' against which country comparisons are made (Salamon, Sokolowski, and Associates 2004).

The UN working definition of a CSO uses the Johns Hopkins University 'structural-operational definition' and includes five qualifying characteristics (Ibid.):

- **Organised**: institutionalised to some extent.
  Private: institutionally separate from government.
- **Non-profit-distributing**: not returning profits generated to their owners or directors.
- **Self-governing**: equipped to control their own activities.
- **Voluntary**: involving some meaningful degree of voluntary participation.

The definition of volunteering as determined in the *ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* is as follows:

> 'Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organisation or directly for others outside their own household.' (ILO 2011, Manual on the measurement of volunteer work, page 13, Geneva)

Both of these definitions were developed to make sense of a context that is predominantly formal in nature, where the large majority of organisations are registered and thereby regulated by the state in some way. In contrast, as seen from the results of our South African study, the majority of CSOs are in fact informal and therefore would have been excluded had we not extended the definition used in that study specifically to include informal organisations.

Other problems with the definition emerge when terminology such as 'voluntary' or 'volunteering' is used. These concepts do not carry the same meaning in all parts of the world. If we do not explore how a term is understood and applied in a particular context, we cannot accurately

measure it. For example, if volunteering is seen as an activity that goes above-and-beyond our basic relational obligations to one another, we need to understand the diverse social expectations people hold. In South Africa, such obligations may be driven both by philosophies of mutual reciprocity and by practical necessity. We also need to understand the social, political, and economic histories that shape associational life across the country.

Specific elements of the definition above also pose conceptual and methodological problems. Take, for example, the notion of volunteering as an 'unpaid' and 'non-profit distributing' activity. In a country with such widespread poverty, the lines between work and volunteering or saving and income-generation cannot always be easily maintained. Much volunteering work for NGOs and development organisations includes the payment of a daily stipend, which putatively functions to cover the costs of transport to a particular location but can represent a significant economic incentive for participation. The notion of 'non-profit distributing' also fails to account for the unique organisational forms that exist in different countries. In South Africa, for example, there are large numbers of savings clubs, or 'stokvels' as they are known locally. These form a safety net for the poor, not only financially but also socially. Stokvels are rotating saving groups: typically, members contribute a fixed monthly amount, which is given as a lump-sum to each member in turn. Some stokvels also have an income-generating function, such as those which profit from the sale of refreshments. The 'gold standard' definition above does not take into considerations 'civil society' organisations such as this that play such a vital role in the lives of the poor.

Measuring up to expectations? When definitions are counted

In addition to problematic definitions, the imposed 'standard' methodological approaches to identifying and interviewing

CSOs make contextual assumptions that are not valid in many countries. The greatest assumption relates to levels of organisational formality. Many organisations are not registered with the Department of Trade and Industry or with the Department of Social Development and, as such, are not included in any official lists of organisations. Not only do they fall out of the CSO definition above by not being institutionalised (registered), they also become less visible to quantitative researchers who may not hold strictly to these definitions but still rely upon official registers for answers. In the Johns Hopkins study conducted in South Africa by Social Surveys Africa, where definitions were extended to include informal, unregistered organisations, 52% of all CSOs in that country were found to be informal (Swilling and Russell 2002), making up the backbone of civil society in that country. This means that if the global definition had been used, fewer than half of all the CSOs in South Africa would have been included in the survey results.

The challenge for researchers in the Global South who want to develop locally resonant concepts is that they run the risk of being irrelevant in the global context and not being able to enter into comparative conversations with other contexts in the Global North or Global South. Social Surveys Africa therefore worked with the five characteristics that constitute the standard global definition of a CSO, but instead of treating each dimension as a dichotomy, we developed each into a continuum.

Instead of asking an organisation whether it is 'organised' or not, which may preclude it from being considered a CSO, we ask: how organised are you? The answers are coded on a spectrum from pre-institutional and unregistered to registered and highly structured, adding a whole level of nuance to what 'organised' means. Similarly, taking another arm of the global definition 'voluntary', the organisation can be assessed on how voluntary are you? And coding is done on a spectrum from

'no external sanction' for non-attendance to 'government or corporate volunteer programmes', which are definitely not always voluntary. An example of an activity in South Africa that would fall in the middle of the spectrum would be the digging of graves by young men. In some contexts, there is a cultural expectation that this work forms part of broader burial practices. The presence of a cultural expectation in such contexts would mean that the activity would not be considered entirely voluntary.

In this way there is an outer limit, which includes all CSOs from the South that fall outside the global definition, and an inner limit, which only includes CSOs that adhere to the global definition. When the results are analysed, depending on the audience, it is possible to use either the inner limit as a filter, in which case all informal organisations would be excluded, or to use the outer limit so all CSOs would be included.

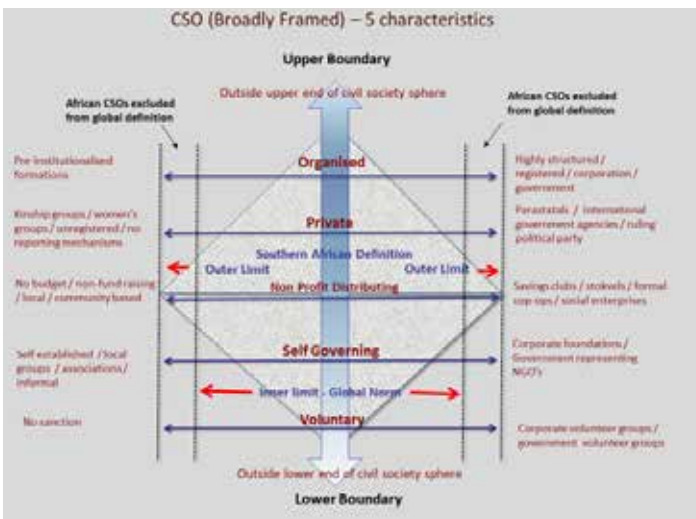

Figure 1: Definition of a CSO as a Continuum

So by using the normative definition against which to compare those organisations identified in our study, we ensure global relevance but along a continuum not as a static category. Thus, we can provide two definitions, gaining the conceptual flexibility needed to build a truly global conversation.

Limitations of global tools in the measurement of volunteering in South Africa

Over the last decade, the study of volunteering globally has matured to the point of there being several standardised instruments that are regularly used by countries around the world to generate comparative data on volunteering. Two of the most prominent and widely established are the methodology established by the ILO Manual (2011) and the Charities Aid Foundation's (CAF) World Giving Index methodology (CAF 2012). As noted above, these instruments were originally designed to measure volunteering in the North and have subsequently been applied, often without significant adaptation, to other contexts around the world. Both of these methodologies have been applied in South Africa. In 2012, South Africa was included in the CAF World Giving Index and, in 2014, Statistics South Africa applied the ILO Manual methodology in their Volunteering Activity Survey (Statistics South Africa 2014). In both cases, virtually no local adaptations were made to the original methodologies.

Figure 2 shows the extremely low levels of volunteering captured by the Statistics South Africa/ILO methodology and the CAF methodology as compared with the methodology designed and implemented by Social Surveys Africa in 2013. The Social Surveys Africa study came to very different results by recognising the limitations of the terminology and methodology. A more narrative approach was used to identify volunteering behaviour, avoiding terms like voluntary

or volunteering but rather asking about unremunerated spare-time activities. The results were then coded back into the standard classification provided in the ILO Manual, thereby allowing the results to remain comparable without undermining their integrity. Some additional categories, however, did need to be added to accommodate all the activities identified in South Africa.

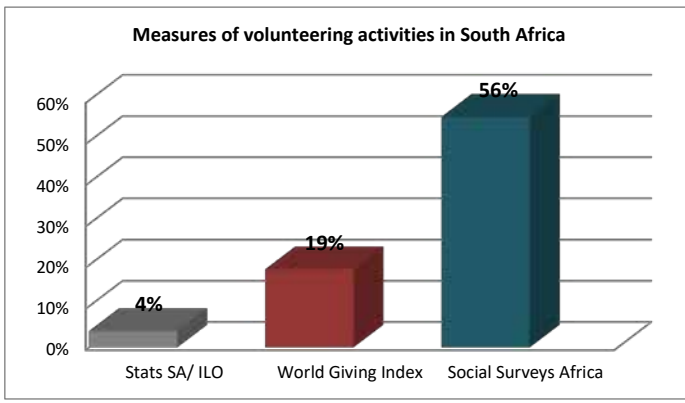

Figure 2. Comparative Measures of Volunteering Activities in South Africa[3]

Conclusion

The methodological approaches of the Johns Hopkins CSO study and the ILO and CAF volunteering studies were developed to measure levels of activity comparatively across the world. The challenge of global studies such as these is always how best to balance comparability across contexts with ensuring the locally appropriate expression of the concepts being measured. If the latter is not adequately addressed, however, the former – comparability – is compromised. Simply using

3 The Social Surveys Africa and the Statistics South Africa figures reflect prevalence of volunteering in Gauteng Province. The figures for The World Giving Index Survey reflect national giving figures.

the same terms and questions across contexts is insufficient if these questions are understood differently in these different contexts. This may provide highly incomparable data since different underlying concepts are being measured. If, however, the questions are formulated in ways that can account for local differences across contexts, and indeed diversity within each context, then the same methods can be applied globally and remain comparable. The key is recognising the extent to which volunteering, or any other social concept, is impacted by structural factors and the local idiosyncrasies that shape our world, creating differences between, and within, the Global North and the Global South. Once we have done this conceptual work, we can devise the methods necessary to carry out comparative work on that basis. Approaches that are developed locally, which understand and can interpret local volunteering characteristics, are a critical component of any global arsenal of measurement tools. Without accurate tools to measure volunteering, for example, it will be impossible to measure how volunteering contributes to the global initiatives such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (Russell 2016).

The answer to the power dynamics of imposed and decontextualised definitions and methods is not to avoid engagement with comparative frameworks but to reshape them. The methodological strategies developed by Social Surveys Africa in its studies of CSOs and volunteering – open up space for concepts to operate as continuums rather than dichotomies and use people's own words and meanings to measure those concepts – provide a way to combine local contextual relevance with global comparability. Such approaches are not just useful in the Global South. These tools offer the combination of contextual flexibility with the conceptual transparency and aggregability required for cross-contextual comparison across the globe. They provide one answer to the question of how comparative

studies can meaningfully capture and engage with diversity, acknowledging it as an essential and enriching part of any global study.

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Conjunctural Comparison: Using Comparison to Think Through the 'Intimate Publics' of Department Stores and City Space in Johannesburg and Baltimore

Bridget Kenny

Comparative thinking is potentially as problematic as it is promising. Used critically, it can encourage us to think more expansively about the world in all its complexity. All too often, however, it has encouraged scholars to extract their 'units of analysis' from the wider relationships and realities through which they are constituted. For instance, political and sociological studies have seen the nation-state as a natural unit of comparison, and scholars have been left seeking to explain differences between countries using only the factors within their borders (Goswami 2002).

Within labour studies, the discipline my work engages, this tendency has been critiqued, and there has been a subsequent push for transnational or global histories (Rachleff 2001; van der Linden 2003, 2008; Alexander and Halpern 2004; Bonner, Hyslop, and van der Walt 2007; Cole and van der Walt 2011; Cole 2018). Indeed within labour history some of the most interesting work presents globally intertwined histories with extraordinary effect. This work shows the deep interconnections (and disconnections) between multiple forms of coerced labour moving around the world. For instance, histories show how capitalism in one place emerged through longer reliance on markets, resources, and labour in material

and meaningful entanglement with colonies elsewhere and via spaces and routes in between. Such work details how the ideologies of freedom, nation, 'free labour', community, and citizenship have been thus interconnected across place (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000; Lowe 2015).

And yet, it is possible to redeem comparison as a method and, indeed, conceptual starting point. Beginning her essay on 'Relational Comparison', Gillian Hart(2018, 371–372) makes the point, following Harootunian and Coronil, that those in the Global South live comparatively. We in the Global South live always within a comparative sensibility that must explain our world in relation to somewhere else and, hence, always already within an 'asymmetrical relation of global power' Hart (2018, 371). Precisely because of this situatedness, Hart makes a strong claim for how comparison offers a form of critique (and critical knowledge production) despite its potential dangers. She develops her concept of 'relational comparison', a postcolonial Marxist approach to comparison in which the political stakes are fundamentally about being attentive to emergent possibilities in order to change the world.

Critiquing different comparative approaches, Hart cautions us against comparisons based on an 'external relationship', that is, one in which bounded units of analysis are held up to comparison as if separate and thus isolated from their mutual histories. In this approach, the objects of comparison have no relationship to each other, except in terms of how they offer models of difference and similarity. There is no 'whole' to which they both belong, which might help to explain their relationship.

She also warns us of comparisons which start from a premise that assumes a related whole and seek to demonstrate how specific instances (which are compared) explain differences and similarities encompassing the range of possibilities of this larger whole. An example of this way of comparing is when a

large unified process, such as 'neoliberalism' or 'globalisation', comes to explain what is then seen as its variations in different locations, its 'local' particularities. This is what Hart (2002) calls in earlier work an 'impact model'. While this way of comparing pays attention to histories and interconnections, it begins from a premise of already having the motor force outlined.

We should not think of our sites of comparison simply as local examples of a bigger whole. Instead, Hart advocates for understanding how the sites we study are constantly being produced – both constituted by and constituting those relationships, resources, and meanings at multiple scales simultaneously.

In practice, Hart argues, anything we think of as a 'thing' or a 'structure' is actually the result of numerous processes coming together. We are not moving towards a specific, singular predestined end point. Nor is there a singular structure that is determining everything we see before us. Instead we need to realize that the world around us is made up of 'an infinite number of mutually dependent, constantly changing processes' (2018, 388). As such comparative approaches can be particularly useful because they give us multiple 'vantage points' (2018, 389) from which to view these processes in action in the same frame. To see what these vantage points have to show us, we need to understand them in their specificity, working from the contemporary realities we see before us into history and back again.

For Hart, this approach is not just about ensuring a more rigorous methodological process, it is also about enabling a more progressive political practice. If we ignore the ways in which forces operate simultaneously to connect and also differentiate places in the world, we fail to understand how power is articulated through such complex relationships. Hart's approach allows an attentiveness also to the 'slippages,

openings, and contradictions' that create the possibilities for resistance and change (Hart 2018, 375).

By focusing on both what makes her method relational as well as what makes it 'comparative', Hart offers us a way of doing postcolonial research and writing. This is conjunctural analysis: it 'bring[s] key forces at play in South Africa and other regions of the world into the same frame of analysis, as connected yet distinctively different nodes in globally interconnected historical geographies – and as sites in the production of global processes in specific spatio-historical conjunctions, rather than as just recipients of them' (Hart 2018, 373).

I began my research into comparison, then, with this paradox in mind – the premise that comparison is possible and thus begins from a logical starting point of a global whole – and yet that this whole is immanent; it can be traced only through the analysis of concrete relations of power and articulations across space and time.

Prior to engaging in comparative work, I had set out nearly a century of changes to and endurance of retail worker politics in greater Johannesburg, understanding this politics through the changes to forms of retail capital, state regulation, labour relations; articulations of race, class, and gender; and ideas of 'nation' and belonging (Kenny 2018). Subsequently, I wanted to think more decisively about how this history could be used to reflect on wider histories of retailing and service work.

So often service work and retailing 'formats', as they are called in the industry, are perceived to be generated in the Global North and to circulate intact elsewhere. In this version, a history of retailing from Johannesburg would only ever be a minor example of a larger global story. Instead, I began from the observation that South African retailers were starting department stores around the same time as retailers in many other parts of the world, and they were as attentive to

form and format as elsewhere. They were indeed immigrant Europeans bringing their knowledge of dry goods and supply chains to the settler colony, but they also integrated these practices into an emergent city, Johannesburg, with its own dynamics, and in the process those relations and meanings shifted. I wanted to understand how that viewpoint – from Johannesburg – could be used to understand retail arenas in other places.

I began with the expectation that I would do a transnational history of women's labour in two racially divided cities, Johannesburg and Baltimore, Maryland. In practice, it was much harder to find in the archive actual evidence of interconnections. Clearly they were there – retailers and their agents would have kept abreast of the same journals, the same markets for buying, the same fashion trends and potential suppliers, and the same ideas of staffing and servicing their clientele. But I was not successful at retrieving any clear connections.

Faced with this frustration, I shifted to a comparison and began to see what it means to do a comparison from apparently separate sites existing contemporaneously and where similar developments occur but not always with the same interpretations and outcomes. It is this puzzle that I seek to untangle with my project. How do we keep two places in the same frame, where downtowns became racially divided in similar ways, where, in the same general period, white working class women served white customers in elaborately ornate department stores in ways that reproduced notions of race privilege, where in the same general period black women moved into these jobs, and where in both places around the same time there were public outcries over those changes to the social relations operating in stores (Kenny 2020).

The project examines the interrelated yet different histories of the workplace and of the marketplace in these two cities, as spaces of 'participation' and of politics. I begin with a historical

relational comparative focus on the service work of women in department stores there. The shift in racial and gender composition of sales workers from white to black women in both contexts occurred in the same period. In Baltimore, when black women moved into service jobs, campaigns focused more prominently around equal access by African Americans as customers in these spaces. These political mobilisations were contested by retailers and some white customers who demanded such spaces remain exclusively for white customers. The movements for equal access to department stores and for African Americans to be served in the tea rooms won, and rights of access to 'public accommodations' were extended to such contexts of private property as a symbol of democratic belonging. In Johannesburg, when black women began to be employed in frontline service jobs, the National Party argued for keeping them out of the occupation because it was threatened by the idea of white and black women working alongside each other and black women assisting white customers in shops. It was opposed by retailers and trade unions in the sector. The National Party lost the argument, and black women's employment in service jobs expanded. Such moments then, offer quite important differences in how urban spaces like department stores became contested in terms of race, class, and gender relations (see Kenny 2020). In particular, I examine department stores as a site of struggle around what the boundaries of the polity were, that is, where the nexus of 'inclusion' was located. These were concrete spaces, which, while private property, invoked campaigns and claims around belonging that in both places were proxies for the wider 'nation' but rested on presumptions and histories of women's service labour, differently configured. In my analysis in Baltimore, these spaces became primarily sites for the contestation around inclusion over consumption, and, in Johannesburg, the struggles were around who would be allowed to be workers therein (Kenny 2020). I take from this

comparison quite an important difference around how the relationship of labour to consumption and work and race and gender played out in understanding these histories and thus in how struggles against racialised subjugation developed in these cities.

This starting point has expanded into thinking more directly about how such 'micro' sites of comparison (see Catsum 2006) offer a terrain to theorise interlinked histories that are often examined at the level of more abstract processes (see Hart 2002; Massey 1994). I am doing this now through conceptualising and comparing sites that I call 'intimate publics', following Lauren Berlant which often involve 'private property' open to the public, where diverse people come into contact with each other. They rely on women's service labour, and they are constituted through affective labour and discourses of 'intimacy'. They describe simultaneously urban space and meanings of nationhood and belonging, and they also become places of wider public contestation over who should be in those spaces and why (see Kenny 2020). The extended project seeks to trace racialised urban histories through its taken-for-granted 'intimate publics', materialized in mundane spaces, such as department stores, lifts, tea rooms, bioscopes, and cafés. It examines how those somewhat 'public' places (on private property), became means through which the polity was debated. How have struggles around the market and the workplace related to each other or diverged? It becomes a question to answer, then, through comparison: why do two places seemingly very far apart share a similar temporality in their histories of such spaces? How were they interconnected globally and imaginatively? What is the significance of the similar and different spatialisations and political meanings producing them and produced by these connections?

For me, comparison forces the hard work of putting two separated spaces in the same frame and thinking through them together and in relation to each other, as Gillian Hart

has so clearly explained for us. It recentres the view from Johannesburg, as it assumes that developments here also shaped these phenomena elsewhere. Tracking these histories was not easy, though, and perhaps the effort is in simply trying to do the work to entwine them, to think of them together.

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Liberating Comparisons in Conflict Studies

Zainab Ladan Mai-Bornu

The study of conflict has crossed, combined, and transcended multiple disciplines in the academy. As a consequence, conflict has been studied using a wealth of different methods. The role that comparative approaches has played in these studies has been incredibly diverse. In this chapter, I argue that there is nothing necessarily liberating about comparisons in the study of conflict. If we want comparative work to help us find new ways of understanding, our focus needs to be on *who* is comparing *what* and *how* they are doing so. Only then will comparative work help us in the work of 'rethinking thinking' (Odora Hoppers and Richards 2012) – that is, reconsidering how we create, hold, and deploy knowledge.

In this chapter, I frame my discussion by explaining what liberating comparisons means to me: a research agenda that seeks to radically embrace of all who inhabit the world, one that enables us to think freely and act upon that knowledge. I also explain how my own particular approach to liberating comparisons has deepened my understanding of decolonisation as a collective effort to re-appraise how we understand the world as it is and move towards what it could be.

I make my case by exploring the study of conflict in the Niger Delta, where I conduct my research. Here, the distinct responses of different groups to conflict offer a fertile ground for comparative analysis, but *how* we approach these comparison matters. I make two points. First, in order for comparative studies to be disruptive, we need to think about

whose voices are being included. When I think of what is to be studied in the conflicts in Nigeria, I think about the neglected voices of women. It is their voices I try to include in my research. Second, the research methods that we use to include different voices also matter. I describe how the use of participatory video methods opened up a space for different voices to be heard on different terms in my research. Both of these arguments point towards the importance of critically reflecting on our own place in knowledge production and asking, 'What will count as new knowledge in my research?'

Comparison and Inclusion in Conflict Studies

A lot has been written on the Niger Delta conflicts (see Ikelegbe 2010; Obi 2014; Tantua, Devine, and Maconachie 2018; Watts 2015)2018; Watts, 2004, and sometimes it feels as if there is nothing new to be studied in that region. And yet, there are still questions that remain. I think about the Ogoni, and I think about the Ijaw, two ethnic groups that share similar lived experiences but chose different strategies of engagement: one through nonviolence and the other through a mixture of nonviolence and violence (Mai-Bornu 2019, 2020). There is an obvious case here for comparative analysis, but how should it be conducted? Below, I highlight three key considerations that form part of the answer to this question: how we conceptualize a 'case study' in our comparative work; what voices we include; and what research tools we adopt.

Making the Case for Comparison

When conducting comparative case study work, the nature of the research that we do heavily depends upon what we understand a 'case' to be. The approach that I took was one advocated by Lesley Bartlett and Frances Vavrus (2017a, 2017b). Their Comparative Case Study (CCS) approach does not simply identify specific units of analysis and compare and

contrast them, it also advocate tracing across individuals, groups, sites, and time periods within and between multiple scales (Bartlett and Vavrus 2017a, 8). In doing so, this approach seeks to 'disrupt dichotomies, static categories, and taken for granted notions of what is going on' (Bartlett and Vavrus 2017b, 907). Therefore, the CCS approach encourages real-time and over-lapping attention to three axes of comparison: horizontal, which compares how phenomenon or policies unfold in distinct locations as well as looking for connections between these sites; vertical, which traces phenomena across scales (e.g. local, regional or international); and transversal, which traces phenomena and cases over time (2017b). Bartlett and Vavrus's (2017b, 907) approach is grounded in critical theory. As such, it is committed to structural critique and change. In short, their approach encourages us to challenge established practices in comparative work and develop our own critical knowledge-seeking strategies, which both deepen our work and have some form of positive impact on those whom we study and with whom we collaborate.

What does this mean in practice? It means taking an approach to Ogoni and Ijaw mobilizations within the Niger Delta that holds open the phenomena that I am exploring and the categories that surround it. For example, whilst some case study approaches might encourage us to think about a '(static) culture within a (bounded) group' (Bartlett and Vavrus 2017a, 10–11), I understand the boundaries of an ethnic group to be socially constructed and constantly under negotiation. Likewise, I see culture as a 'processes of sense-making [that] . . . develop[s] over time, in distinct settings, in relation to systems of power and inequality, and in increasingly interconnected conversation with actors who do not sit physically within the circle drawn around the traditional case' (10–11). When thinking about mobilizations, I do not start my research with any pre-conceived ideas about what forms of mobilization will be important and why. Instead, I allow

this awareness to develop within my research and remain open to exploring both actions that are more institutionalized and sustained as well as actions that are more short-lived and spontaneous. Moreover, whilst I am interested in the differences between Ogoni and Ijaw mobilization, I do not think of these groups as being completely separated from each other or removable from the world around them. Instead, I think about the links between them and the links that spread from these groups to the wider world and back again. In sum, the CCS approach played a fundamental role in shaping my approach to comparative work.

Whose Stories on Whose Terms?

The approach above fitted with a second concern that I held: whilst literature on conflict in the Niger Delta is prolific, you hardly ever hear the voices of the women. Within the various studies done on the region, the emphasis has been on the men. To me, liberating comparisons means reflecting on what has been done on the Niger Delta and taking a bold step towards a critically new aspect of comparison by including women. Recognizing women's agency in Niger Delta conflicts allows for a more nuanced understanding of the comparative landscapes in conflict situations.

Findings from my research suggest that women in the Niger Delta are treated as second-class citizens, marginalized, and neglected. They are not given a voice and are expected to accept all the decisions taken by the men. They are seen as tertiary next to men in the society and of no consequence when decisions are made. This is true in the private sphere and the public sphere: My research found that women are often marginalized in politics – due to, for instance, high levels of violence, beliefs that women are incapable of performing in leadership roles, and high levels of personal scrutiny that female political candidates face. Women are not considered in

the whole decision-making process in the communities. They are exploited and sidelined when benefits come, especially from the oil companies who play such an important role in the political economy of the region. Women are affected psychologically, emotionally, and financially. It is important in our narratives to recognize the traumas that women face as well as the damaging consequences that trauma and oppression can have in women's lives. That said, researching the role of women in conflict is more complex than merely looking at victimhood.

In reality, Niger Delta women have played a key role in organising important oil protests (Barikor-Wiwa 1997). In fact, women are not always victims, criminals, or passive accomplices. Women often contribute to the outbreak of violence and hostilities; they also play a vital role in preserving order and a sense of normalcy in communities, but they tend to fade to the background during official peace negotiations. Including women's voices can allow us to recognize the ways in which women exercise agency despite the cultural and political constraints they face in the society. This situation therefore calls for significant attention on the local level participation and leadership of women in conflict situations. The uniqueness and diversity of Nigerian women's conflict-related experiences should be given more emphasis in view of the fact that the prospects for peace in the nation are increasingly fluid and elusive with ongoing cycles of violent conflicts increasingly threatening national security. A comparative approach to understanding mobilisations by the Ogoni and Ijaw will be incomplete unless it captures women's voices and experiences.

Documenting Change

Decolonizing knowledge production is a major contemporary issue (Mbembe 2015; Ndlovu-Gathsheni, and Zondi 2016;

Comaroff and Comaroff 2011). Arowosegbe (2008, 2016) suggests that the production of knowledge on Africa in the humanities and social sciences, for example, takes place within asymmetrical relations of power that have long historical roots. And so how do we challenge these asymmetrical power relations to open up to new forms of knowledge and understanding through the inclusion of the voices and perceptions of marginalized people and communities themselves? What types of knowledge are accepted as relevant and important in the process – which types of knowledge and understandings are validated and which are devalued or suppressed?

In addition to looking at whose voices we include in research, we need to look at *how* they are included. As a researcher who seeks to unsettle the power relations within knowledge production (Rosa and Bonilla 2017), I constantly question and re-question my research choices (Keso, Lehtimäki, and Pietiläinen 2009). This questioning helps me to reach excellence and work towards greater equality within my research. In my research on the women in the Niger Delta, one of the areas that this questioning shaped was the methods I used. I wanted an approach that would provide a platform for my participants to be an integral part of the research.

One of the key methods I found to open new space for women's voices was participatory video. Participatory methodologies open up spaces for thinking differently about conflict, allowing for local knowledge and perspectives to serve as the basis for research and planning. Participatory approaches have long been promoted as a means to generate knowledge in ways that address power inequalities, passing power from researcher(s) to research participants (Chambers 1997). As such, they represent 'critical elements of a strategic research agenda that is liberating and empowering' (Smith 1999, 116).

Specifically, I worked with participatory video. This approach throws the decision of what is to be reported to the groups being studied. It is a bottom-up approach that empowers participants by giving them the opportunity to determine on their own terms what the world should know about their issues, and why. The use of participatory videos has served as a mobilization tool for marginalized groups in societies who ordinarily have been denied a voice in their communities. The women who participated in my study got the opportunity to determine what was essential to the study and how they wished to be represented. Moreover, this approach made the research findings accessible to diverse audiences, including various levels of policy makers and civil society activists beyond the academy. This approach, of course, is no panacea: it does not remove the power balances within the group being studied, overcome differences in people's exposure to and comfort with particular forms of technology, or remove this research from the broader power structures in which it is embedded. Nonetheless, it can represent an important opportunity to move towards a more inclusive form of research.

Reflecting Back, Looking Forward

Through a comparative study of mobilizations by the Ogoni and Ijaw, I have tried to create space for innovative forms of comparison and include previously excluded voices, guided by a decolonial ethic. This work has harnessed the Comparative Case Study approach, which gives us the analytical room we need to constantly question the boundaries of the terms we use, the meaning of phenomena we study, and the ways in which they are shaped across different scales, times, and spaces. Whilst following this approach, I have also remained attentive to *whose voices* are included within my study and *on what terms*. By engaging Ogoni and Ijaw women through

participatory video methods, I have created space for silenced and marginalized knowledge, enabling theorization from a position of lived experience.

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Migration, Gender, and Maternal Care, Comparison between Chile and South Africa

Lorena Núñez Carrasco

It must have been in the mid-eighties when I was working at feminist NGO La Casa de la Mujer la Morada in Santiago, Chile. These were the long years of Pinochet's dictatorship. I had finished my undergraduate studies in social anthropology, and I was fully involved in action research working with women's groups from 'sectores populares' (low-income areas). Our feminist work was focused on supporting and building the women's movement, which was deeply committed to re-establishing democracy in the country. One of those days, we received a delegation from South Africa and met with two members from an NGO doing similar work in Johannesburg. I do not remember their names. I just remember the kind of questions posed by them of our work and the insights they gave us into our own challenges. With surprise, I realised that our approaches were similar: linking the oppression of the dictatorship (or that of apartheid) to the oppression of patriarchy. For both of us, it was crucial to reveal the articulation of these forms of oppression in the lives of women, particularly those who were also economically oppressed. We urgently wanted to build paths towards a more expansive idea of liberation. I was intrigued by the fact that we had so much in common in our struggle while situated in different contexts, continents, and political orders. Little did I know that 33 years later I would still be trying to work out how to put these two contexts into conversation.

My interest continues to gravitate towards the issue of how various forms of oppression feed one another in the lives of women. I want to interrogate the ways in which these interlocking oppressions are articulated. With both countries free of their authoritarian regimes, the challenge for me now is to understand the place of difference in these two democratic contexts. My work explores this topic through the lens of bodies that need care – the bodies of those whose rights are not always recognised. I look at the treatment and care given to pregnant migrant women in public health-care institutions in Chile and in South Africa. My aim is to explore differences as experienced and perceived by migrant women giving birth in a foreign country as well as to understand this experience from the perspective of health-care providers.

At this point, let me share a bit more contextual information to situate my comparison. Both South Africa and Chile became democracies in the nineties. The overthrow of their respective authoritarian regimes was driven by social movements, many of which were sidelined or subsumed into broader groups as the terms of their respective democracies were negotiated. This political transition did not herald the arrival of economic equality in either country. Inequalities have persisted and deepened in the years that have followed. Nonetheless, both economies became regional hubs, attracting a sizeable number of migrants. These migrants were mostly drawn from within their respective regions – Africa and Latin America – but people also came, in lesser numbers, from Asia and eastern Europe (IOM 2018). Migrants arriving in Chile and South Africa were met by outdated legal systems that conceived of migration as a security issue. Modifications have since been made to this legislation, providing some rights for migrants and refugees. Both countries, for example, provide the right to free care for pregnant migrant women. In Chile and South Africa, however, xenophobia, discrimination, and racism against foreigners

have grown, shaping people's lives on a daily basis. These conflicting forces – protection and persecution – permeate the practices and spaces of public health institutions.

In academia, efforts to compare South Africa and Chile were more prevalent in the early nineties, at the dawn of the two countries' transitions to democracy as South Africa emerged from apartheid and Chile from its dictatorship. These comparisons of large-scale socio-political processes within countries were often made at a macro level. Such a high-level analysis was far from the in-depth insight I sought into how people lived; it could not tell us how people made sense of their lives and the world around them. Even these macro-level comparisons subsided as time passed and focus on each country's respective transition faded. This has left a significant gap, a gap which I am battling to fill.

I have researched the lives of migrants in both Chile and South Africa, writing detailed ethnographic accounts of migrants' communities on topics that are at the crossroads of culture and health. In my writing, I have tried to understand how contexts of marginality and vulnerability translate into migrants' lived experiences of health, illness, and death. Until now, however, I have only thought about the dialogue between these spaces and experiences. In this chapter, I write some of my thoughts for the first time on this comparison in progress.

In much of my thinking, I am trying to find threads that will allow me to connect the two contexts and the processes in which I am interested. I must confess, the routes that I have taken on this journey have not been liberating. I have spent time reading and writing about migration policies and legislation designed over three decades of democracy in both contexts. This is an arid road. The accounts have given us insights into the twists and turns of relevant policies, but they do not explain how these changes affect the experiences of women who are targeted by them.

As I search for the threads, I am guided by the work of Gillian Hart on relational comparisons (Hart 2016). Her work reminds us that the intimate realities of everyday life are shaped by, and shaping, broader processes that stretch across the globe. The threads I look for are those that will help us to make sense of these larger processes whilst keeping women's bodies, voices, and experiences at the centre.

Finding these threads in practice is not easy: What global processes are relevant? How might these be linked to regimes of reproductive care? How can we make sense of the ways in which these varied, multi-directional processes appear in people's everyday lives? How does difference (in terms of citizenship rights, race, culture, the treatment of pregnant bodies, the physical experience of labour, and visions/practices of motherhood) shape the treatment of migrants in public health-care spaces?

These questions are important because they help us to understand the lives of migrant women, which are inherently important. They are also important because they tell us something about how diversity is understood, experienced, and contested. Prior to the mid-nineties, the political regimes in both Chile and South Africa had been fixated on their own internal differences. Attempts to classify, manage, construct, and center internal differences – racial and ideological – were at the heart of these oppressive regimes. My work explores what an analysis of difference can tell us about the organisation and contestation of political, social, and economic realities today in two highly unequal societies and how these disputes are being played out in the bodies of women.

In both contexts, pregnant migrant women are new subjects of care. I am interested in exploring, therefore, what categories health-care providers construct and use to deal with these women 'others'. More broadly, what are the regimes of care and difference that underpin the provision of care to pregnant migrant women? Public health institutions

are the spaces where rights formulated in post-authoritarian regimes are realised.

Some of the questions guiding my work speak to the tension between rights and their realisation. In Chile and South Africa, the state recognises fundamental rights but does not ensure access to basic needs for all, including access to health care. I ask: how does this tension manifest itself in the provision of care for migrants? What rights are recognised and realised in the provision of public health care to foreign migrants? Amidst the real or perceived scarcity of public resources, which care needs are named and attended to and which are unrecognised or actively rejected?

These questions, in turn, push us to ask how hierarchies of patients are forged and how these hierarchies are enacted in the provision of maternal health care. Specifically, what is the place of migrant women in that hierarchy? How are moral categories and notions of 'deserving others' constructed? Are some migrant women seen as more 'morally deserving' than others? What notions of (un)desirability underpin these ideas?

Answering these questions requires an intersectional approach[4], which can capture how race and class meet as categories of differentiation when health care is delivered to migrant women. Using a comparative approach, we begin to see how these processes play out in both contexts, tied to bigger processes of change.

Constitutional democracy and neoliberalism have interacted in diverse ways in Chile and South Africa. The place migrants occupy in both societies is tied to these diverse dynamics. Comparisons help us to untangle these complex knots. They help us to see that broadly similar outcomes – such as discrimination against migrant women in the

4 An intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1991) allows to capture how race, gender and class and other social identities combine as specific form of oppression and discrimination experienced by an individual.

health system – emerge from the distinct social, economic, and political trajectories. Comparison enables us to see the similar struggles that people face around the world without collapsing the differences that exist within and between these struggles; the struggles in Chile and South Africa have distinct causes and varied solutions.

Chile transitioned into a democracy with a neoliberal system already in place. Although it was transitioning away from authoritarianism, its political and economic systems were still fundamentally shaped by Pinochet's constitution of 1988. The Chilean neoliberal model was not significantly altered by any of the democratic governments that followed. It is only now, following the social uprising of 2019, that the Chilean people have held a referendum to change the constitution. Back in 1989, with a neoliberal system well in place, the key demands that Chileans' made of their democratic government were respect for freedom, justice, and human rights. The new government was not required to realise the depth of socio-economic rights that we see in the case of South Africa.

In South Africa, democracy promised socio-economic justice and integration of the Black majority who had been segregated and excluded by apartheid. The new constitution, finalised in 1996, was intended to recognise equality, freedom, and the human dignity of all, undoing the socio-economic and political injustices of the past. Affirmative action was also put in place as an attempt to mitigate and reverse the economic discrimination facing previously disadvantaged groups. By providing basic goods and enabling fair access to economic opportunities, the government suggested a 'Better Life For All' could be found within an economic system still largely ruled by neoliberal principles. Yet after three decades of democratic freedom, this promise has not been fulfilled for the majority. A sizeable percentage of the population are still living in poverty, unemployment is persistently high, and access to basic goods like 'adequate housing' remains lacking.

Despite these failures, many continue to hope that the state will deliver socio-economic rights. In some contexts, migrants are seen by poor South Africans as a threat to the realisation of these rights, overstretching the capacity of a limited state. This perception is often fuelled by politicians searching for an easy scapegoat for the failures of the government (Misago 2019). Thus, in South Africa, we see neoliberalism, rights-based state provision, and xenophobia coming together to shape the realities that migrants face whilst trying to access the health system. Along with a dysfunctional health-care system in South Africa, there is a manifest anxiety about caring for migrant women using public resources which are perceived to be scarce.

In Chile, there is not the same expectation that the state will deliver on constitutional promises. Historically, as mentioned above, the constitution has bolstered, not blunted, neoliberalism in the country. Moreover, while employment is precarious in Chile, there is a low level of unemployment. All this means that while resources are a concern, sites of service provision do not bear the same weight of expectation and anxiety that they do in South Africa. In the space of health care, concern about state resources is less pronounced. Anxiety focuses instead on race.

Chileans have for a long time, even under Pinochet, perceived themselves to be a homogeneous mestizo population (Tijoux and Cordova Riviera 2015). Implicit to this belief are racist notions of white Europeans as more advanced and desirable and indigenous people, are seen as less desirable, poorer, and destined to remain marginal. This underlying racism is an unresolved issue that has surfaced with the arrival of migrants from the region and is yet to be tackled. Widely held beliefs that connect phenotypical appearance to levels of development play out through the health service (as well as through other societal spaces). There, migrant women are racialised and placed on a continuum. Those who are

mestizo are considered familiar and deserving of care. Those who are indigenous or black are deemed to be problematic and undeserving. Underpinning these anxieties, which fundamentally shape the country's regimes of care, is the idea of a nation and who is part of the nation. Health-care services and health-care workers see black and indigenous migrants as undesireable groups, coming from less developed regions, their presence in the country threathens the perception of Chileans of their nation as a whiter and developed (Tijoux and Cordova Riviera 2015) .

As I try to connect or speak to both places and I begin to interrogate these regimes of care, I am concerned with both the macro politics and the micro politics of encounters that take place mostly among women. What are health-care providers (mostly nurses and mostly women) caring for when they deny care to migrant women, or when they exclude them using language women cannot understand? What are they protecting?

These questions bring me back to the search for the threads that link global processes to local realities. In both countries, public health-care institutions have become spaces where the contradictions of neoliberalism take place; where the role of the state and its responsibility to care for all the people is in dispute; and where racism and xenophobia comes to the surface. In the waiting rooms and wards of health-care institutions, health-care workers are not only negotiating the provision of care, but they are also asserting the boundaries of democracy and nationhood and demarcating how difference is conceived and tackled. In Chile and South Africa, migrant women often endure most of these negotiations. In this sense, we can see a commonality in their struggles. And yet a comparative approach reminds us that the specifics of these contestations – their origins and their trajectories – are distinct. These specificities are not just theoretically important; any solidarity we practice must be able to hold

both the similarities and differences that a comparative lens allows.

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Rethinking Community-Level Spatial Comparisons: The Community Tapestry

Tara Polzer Ngwato and Lebogang Shilakoe

Introduction

Comparison is both about grouping similarities and contrasting differences. The nature of the similarities and differences – the relevant indicators for comparison – depend on your purpose, on what you are trying to achieve. This piece discusses an approach to spatial comparisons: the similarities and differences between kinds of places. This approach, which we call the Community Tapestry,[5] rethinks spatial comparison in ways that enable better decision-making around the allocation of resources to specific local areas and communities as well as reducing the costs of producing the data to inform these decisions. The basic premise of the Community Tapestry is that people's choices and social experiences are a combination of individual characteristics (demographics) and context factors, and so choices will be similar in similar contexts and different in different contexts. Without understanding the spectrum of contexts in which people make choices, and without comparing choices and experiences across contexts, we cannot claim to understand or predict or design interventions which impact on those choices.

5 The Community Tapestry is a typology and online platform development by Bev Russell and colleagues at Social Surveys Africa, which is a social policy and research organisation based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Comparing How

The best way to describe the Community Tapestry is to look at a map. Figure 1 is a map of Protea North, a neighbourhood in Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa. Soweto is well-known internationally and within South Africa as one of the major 'townships' into which Black South Africans were moved during the Apartheid era. For many, even in South Africa, Soweto is considered a homogenous place of poverty and crime. Alternatively, it is celebrated – again homogenously – as a place of social innovation and economic opportunity. In fact, Soweto has a population of almost 2 million people and myriad different neighbourhoods within it, which are wildly different from each other.

Figure 1: Protea North, Soweto, and surrounding areas with Community Tapestry Clusters overlaid on a street map.

Looking at the map of Protea North using the Community Tapestry immediately shows how diverse Soweto is. Each little box on the map is a relatively homogeneous 'community' of fewer than 3,700 households (defined as a 'small area' by Statistics South Africa) and each colour represents a different type of community context, using a combination of indicators in three dimensions: the socio-economic welfare of residents,

the type of infrastructure, and the levels of income inequality. When each of the 83,134 'small areas' in South Africa was mapped onto the three-dimensional space created by the three dimensions (or indices), the points naturally grouped themselves into 16 major 'clusters' (Figure 2). Each cluster represents a distinct type of community that exists in South Africa and matches the colours in the map. For example, the light green areas of Protea North are cluster type C, which is characterised by having among the highest levels of socio-economic welfare and infrastructure in the country, as well as having a fairly high level of internal income inequality (a large circle in Figure 2). The brown, blue, and bright pink areas on the map are clusters I, E, and D, with similar mid-range levels of socio-economic welfare but progressively lower levels of infrastructure.

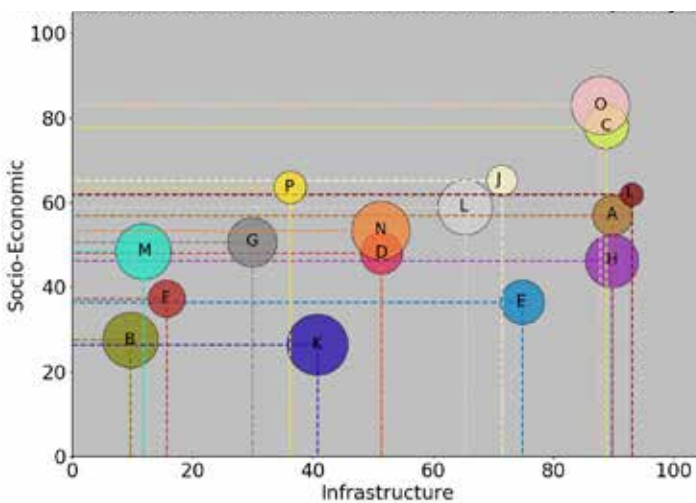

Figure 2: Community Tapestry Clusters: Infrastructure vs. Socio-Economic Slice, size is inequality (Gini)

This brief introduction shows that the Community Tapestry rethinks spatial comparisons in three main ways. Firstly, it increases the level of spatial nuance at which we can compare places. The conventional level of comparison for social information is at the provincial or municipal level, or at most at the 'suburb' or 'township' level. Yet, if we aggregated information for all of Soweto, or even for all of Protea North, we would miss the massive differences of experience represented by the different colours in our Tapestry. Secondly, by introducing a nuanced typology of communities, we can not only distinguish between different types of areas right next to each other but also compare similar areas across large distances, in different towns and provinces. For example, we see the same cluster colours and the same diversity of colours in Figure 1 for Soweto and in Figure 3, which is a map of Khayelitsha township in Cape Town.

Figure 3: Khayelitsha and surrounding areas of Cape Town with Community Tapestry Clusters.

Thirdly, the Community Tapestry allows us to conduct spatial comparisons using a multi-dimensional typology rather than the usual unidimensional categories. It is common

to read comparisons by the level of urbanity, dominant type of housing, and resident socio-economic status. Each of these dimensions for comparison provides useful information on their own but also obscures many nuances. Both Soweto and Khayelitsha are homogenously urban. All of Protea North has formal housing, so we would not recognise the variation in income levels within the area by looking only at that dimension. The purple, brown, and green areas on our maps have similar levels of infrastructure but very different levels of socio-economic welfare, just as purple and pink areas have the same level of socio-economic welfare but different levels of infrastructure.

Comparing Why

Why is more nuanced and multidimensional spatial comparison useful? What can we do with it? We developed the Community Tapestry to fulfil two different kinds of functions: 1. informing evidence-based policy and practice and 2. enabling more efficient data use.

Informing evidence-based policy and practice

Policies and projects are forged by people who often struggle with accessing the right information on which to base decisions. Sometimes the right information just does not exist; however, often the information is available but not presented in a way which helps with the practical and emotional elements of the decision-making process. There are two ways in which a comparative framework like the Community Tapestry supports decision makers to create spatially informed policy and implement it in practice: through 'right-level' generalisation and spatial visualisation for ease of interpretation and communication.

Appropriate policies and interventions (by the state, NGOs, or corporates) need to be adapted to the local

context or else they are likely to fail. From the perspective of project planners, the *right level of generalisation* about spatial contexts is needed. The Community Tapestry allows for interventions to be developed for sets of localities that are similar in relevant ways. It therefore enables policy makers to identify needs across space at a level that is general enough to be efficient and affordable whilst being precise enough to provide meaningful contextualised answers.

By visualising spatial inequalities, the Tapestry *enables spatial targeting of resources* and interventions to micro-areas in greatest need. This kind of targeting is always crucial for social development interventions but is especially important in countries like South Africa where you have highly unequal development in small spatial areas. Critical development theory has for many decades pointed out that development resources are often spent in places that are not the most in need but rather the most easily accessible (like being near a major road or hotel) or the loudest politically or the best known to development practitioners. Presenting spatial inequality in a visible way, therefore, makes it harder for development planners to keep allocating resources to the same areas while leaving out places immediately adjacent which have less voice or outward appeal.

In addition, an empirical comparative framework – in this case, based on combinations of census data indicators – can help nuance or shift other historical or political comparative frameworks which often exist in resource allocation without being fully stated or properly interrogated. In the South African case, for example, there is a strong historically and politically informed distinction between (historically Black) 'townships' and (historically White) 'suburbs' in urban areas which informs metropolitan spatial transformation policies and resource allocation. 'Township development' is certainly an important and valid policy objective, but without greater spatial nuance, resources may flow to those areas within

townships that are already doing well. As Figure 1 above shows, people living in (historically disadvantaged) Protea North today are in the same Tapestry cluster as people living in much of Johannesburg's (historically privileged) northern suburbs and so the socio-economic and infrastructure contexts are comparable. However, people living in neighbouring Mapetla are in a range of Tapestry clusters with much lower levels of socio-economic welfare and infrastructure than 'suburban' clusters and so should be targeted for spatial transformation and equity initiatives.

Clear visualisation also fulfils an emotional and a communication need for decision-makers by providing *ease of interpretation*. A complex typology that is still simple enough for easy visualisation and mapping gives decision makers 'permission' to think in terms of local variation by making it feel manageable. Conventional spatial mapping tools, such as the complex GIS systems used by most major cities, provide much more detailed spatial information and are crucial for development planning. However, very few political decision-makers at local, provincial, or national levels of government have the technical knowledge to engage directly with such spatial visualisations, so their use is limited to technical officials. Often, there is a disjuncture between these technically informed inputs to policy and politically informed inputs because there are few shared tools for talking about and visualising the reality on the ground. Similarly, civil society organisations and especially community-based organisations and citizens generally do not have access to advanced spatial visualisation tools and data nor do many have the capacity to process such information. The disjuncture between government planning and community-based engagement is therefore also increased by the lack of shared visual tools. A simple (yet sufficiently nuanced) comparative spatial tool like the Community Tapestry can be shared across all levels of government, community, civil society, and indeed corporate

decision-making, creating a common ground from which to discuss spatial development prioritisation.

More efficient data use

The second function of comparing different types of small spatial areas relates to the efficient use of data. Simply put, the Community Tapestry can make technical decisions in the research process more efficient and effective, with major implications for how decisions are made and where money is spent; it places spatially specific, evidence-based decision making within reach for far more people.

The basic premise of the Community Tapestry is that choices and social experiences are likely to be a combination of individual characteristics (demographics) and context factors. This means that choices will be similar in similar contexts and different in different contexts. Therefore if we know (that is, have recent data about) what a group of people are experiencing in a set of Tapestry cluster A areas, we can make an informed estimation of what that same type of person is likely to be experiencing in a different set of cluster A areas where we do not have recent data. That is the basis of data extrapolation: that you can reliably estimate what is happening in a place where you do not have primary data because you have data on what is happening in other similar places. This has huge consequences for the cost and scale of surveying. In South Africa, for example, a national sample of 30,000 can provide a strong evidence-base for neighbourhood-level effects as compared to the sample of over one million used for the national Community Survey run by Statistics South Africa, which is generally only analysed for municipal-level effects.

The same logic also allows for data linking. Let us say we have a dataset on household expenditure patterns for one set of cluster A areas and another dataset on health care choices

for another set of cluster A areas, and we want to understand how the two relate to each other. Instead of repeating the missing data collection in both areas, we can extrapolate both datasets and then analyse the patterns in relation to each other. At present, money and effort are wasted when large datasets are used only once, and when insights from one analysis are not linked to other data. Of course it remains important to be transparent about which datasets are originally from a particular place and which are estimates, but it is possible to verify assumptions and estimations and get a good sense of how accurate and reliable the extrapolated and linked analyses are. This means that valuable insights from investments in past, current, and future data generation can be maximised, rather than datasets languishing unused in silos.

As a final point on comparative frameworks and data efficiency, we come to sampling. The relationship between a sample and a population is crucial for whether survey data means anything. While the representativity of a sample is usually judged based on simple demographics (such as gender, race, or age), a sample should actually be representative of a population in terms of all the relevant dimensions of difference/similarity within the population for a particular study. If the study is intended to inform a decision on *where* something should happen (like where to invest in small enterprise development activities), then the sample should be representative of the different kinds of spatial contexts within which small enterprises operate. If the sample does not include consideration of the socio-economic and infrastructure contexts within which people live, the study is likely to miss important contextual differences – just as it would if it failed to disaggregate the sample by gender.

Considerations

As with any typology, there are potential disadvantages to grouping continuously scaled variables. There will always be

outliers that deviate somewhat from the cluster/group norm on one or more of our three dimensions. One should always be mindful of these when extrapolating from one cluster to the next, especially if the outlier variables form the premise of the intervention being implemented. For instance, there are disproportionately more informal backyard houses in a cluster A area in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, than in a cluster A area in Protea Glen, Soweto. Just because both are cluster A types of areas, one cannot simply assume that there is an equivalent (lack of) need for formal housing interventions. It is imperative to consider the nature of the policy or intervention for which evidence is being sought and verify the specific contexts of the areas of interest to ensure that a suggested policy or intervention based on the Tapestry clusters is in fact appropriate.

A second consideration relates to complexity. In contrast to traditional spatial analysis frameworks (i.e., urban vs. township vs. rural, low vs. middle vs. high income areas, etc.), the Tapestry disaggregates data to the second smallest spatial unit of analysis and then presents it in 16 major clusters. Although necessary for understanding the factors driving the development of an area, the Community Tapestry's degree of nuance by grouping communities into many more categories than usual may be overwhelming for decision makers who often want something simple. This makes it all the more important to understand an intervention's or a policy's core mandate and its most crucial social and spatial driving factors so that the 16 clusters can be further grouped into fewer categories where a standard intervention can be rolled out.

In terms of sampling and survey cost efficiency, the Tapestry allows for nationally and provincially representative sample sizes to be brought down significantly, as noted above. However, for more localised studies, using the Community Tapestry results in bigger sample sizes since all the cluster types in the area should be included in the sample to achieve

spatial representativity. While this may increase the costs for localised surveys, it enables the targeting of local spatial inequalities that would otherwise not be possible.

Finally, the social conditions of communities, especially in South Africa's case, shift considerably in a short space of time. Aerial photographs of areas in Soweto today compared to five years ago show massive changes in the infrastructure and housing quality, signalling major changes in social welfare as well. This makes it necessary for the underlying and increasingly out of date census information to be updated regularly with more recent databases and for that data to be extrapolated to similar areas for later corroboration – ensuring that the dynamism of communities is accounted for and subtle changes to the fabric of the social conditions of the community are not muted.

Conclusion

We have described why a comparative spatial framework is necessary for understanding social dynamics and why it is absolutely crucial for making decisions on where to spend money for improving social conditions. We have also discussed how a comparative framework allows information to be used in different ways – by extrapolating information between similar areas, for example. In addition, a comparative framework allows for specific characteristics and indicators to be seen and therefore taken seriously – just as disaggregating datasets by gender makes the comparative targeting of gender inequalities possible, so disaggregating datasets by community type makes targeting of spatial inequalities more likely. Finally, comparative frameworks are efficient and allow for cost-effective data generation. As with all typologies, there are also limitations, some of which we have described.

A theme running throughout our examples is how comparisons allow for storytelling and give meaning to

complex underlying sets of information. This meaning-making is to a large extent what allows decision-making to happen, and especially what enables collaborative decision-making by different people and institutions with different perspectives, skills, and levels of access to data tools. Grouping similarities and contrasting differences is how human brains work, and the power of shared comparative stories can be harnessed for many kinds of social development processes, including evidence-based spatial decision-making.

Transnational Engagement through a Comparative and an Ethnographic Lens: The Case Study of Eritreans in London and Milan

Mikal Woldu

As migration continues to shape the world around us, scholars and policymakers have tried to understand the connections that migrants create and sustain in their place of residence, their country of origin, and beyond. The types of connection that people forge are broad and diverse. They might include ties that are economic (remittances, donations, taxes), political (political demonstration, mobilisation, membership to political parties), social (visits to friends and family, membership to social clubs, contributions to newspapers, social remittances), and cultural (attendance at NDevents such as concerts and exhibitions, education) (Al-Ali, Black and Koser 2001a, 2001b). As researchers have shown, to understand these connections, we need to investigate people's priorities and aspirations as well as the political, economic, and social conditions in which they are embedded. Together, these factors shape both the *capability* and the *desire* that people have to cultivate particular relationships within and across borders.

Whilst many scholars have argued that we need to study how these factors shift over time, far fewer have made the case for analysing how they shift in different spaces. The case for comparative research here is obvious. As I think through the notion of 'liberating comparisons' though, I want to move

beyond the simple argument for more comparative research into the experiences and connections of migrant communities. Instead, I ask that we question what is often taken for granted – the homogeneity of experiences among migrants from the same country of origin – and adopt participatory research methods to capture the nuances that would otherwise be missed.

This is the approach that I have adopted in my own work, which uses comparison to explore how global, national, and local dynamics come together in people's lives within a particular time and space. I argue that by taking a migrant-centred research approach, we can better understand everyday practices of relationship-building. This, in turn, helps us to delve behind the statistics and macro-level analysis of migration so that we can develop policies that can bring transformative change to the communities studied.

My research focuses on the experience of Eritrean migrants in London and Milan through a multi-sited ethnography. This is an approach that takes people's geographic location seriously without thinking of 'the city' or 'the country' as a fixed unit of analysis that naturally and statically exists in the world. Cities and countries are constantly under construction, shaped by the everyday choices that people pursue as they try and make their hopes a reality in situations that are never completely of their own choosing.

Below, I explain how a migrant-centred comparison can help us to make sense of structural factors that shape people's lives without losing site of the specifics of their daily existence. I close by highlighting some of the insights that this approach gave me into the lives of Eritrean migrants in London and Milan.

Towards a Migrant-Centred Comparison

When developing any comparison, scholars must begin by considering the logic of their comparison. Clark and colleagues

(2002) outline three dominant approaches: theory-centred approaches, which try to test a theory in different countries or regions; case-centred approaches, which assume differences between countries and regions and try to explain these through comparison; and institution-centred approaches, where focus is placed on institutions as drivers of individual behaviour (266-67). The authors, however, suggest an alternative: taking an agent-centred approach to comparison. An agent-centred approach does not ignore the structural, institutional constraints within which people live, but it makes sense of those constraints through the lens of people's everyday lives. In doing so, it allows for the possibility that institutions and individuals both shape each other, albeit on uneven terms. This is the premise of the migrant-centred approach that guided my study. The lived experiences and biographical narratives of the people I spoke with were my starting point and guided my analysis of the larger institutions and structures I sought to understand. By taking this migrant-centred approach, I was able to forge a multi-sited ethnography that allowed me not only to study 'the life world of situated subjects' but also to see the 'associations and connections among sites' that, together, make the world of which we are a part (Marcus 1995).

Adopting a migrant-centred approach in my research did not come without its methodical challenges. How was I to draw a comparative analysis of highly heterogenous migrant communities in two significantly different localities whilst ensuring a dialogue between the two sites occurred? I approached the challenge by ensuring that the socio-political context of the Eritreans' pre-migration and post-migration experiences over time were reflected in the sample of my research. By bringing to the fore the concurrent historical changes that took place in Eritrea, Italy, and the UK, I was able to draw parallels between the two sites of the comparison.

London and Milan were interesting sites from which to conduct my studies. Firstly, the UK and Italy present very distinct histories of immigration, which have attracted different groups of Eritrean migrants over time. Italy has historically acted as a country of transition among Eritreans, whereas the UK has historically been a destination country. Especially during the armed struggle for independence (1961–1991), only a relatively small number of Eritreans remained in Italy as, at the time, the Italian government did not recognise Eritreans as asylum seekers (Ambroso 1987; Arnone 2010; Martignoni 2015). In contrast, Eritreans easily received refugee status in the UK, which was conducive to a more positive experience of settlement among those who migrated prior to Eritrean independence and the establishment of multiple Eritrean Refugee Community Organisations (ERCOs) (Campbell and Afework 2015). Following the border conflict with Ethiopia in 1998 and the resulting authoritarian turn taken by the Eritrean government, new waves of Eritrean migrants started to flee the country. However, post-9/11, international migration policies were predominantly concerned with securitizing the nation by reducing the number of migrants entering the country (Bloch 2002; Zetter et al. 2003), which rendered it increasingly difficult for 'generation asylum' seekers to obtain indefinite leave to remain. Secondly, there was evidence that both migrant communities had developed different types of connections transnationally, not least in their response to Eritrean conflicts. Without pre-supposing causal relationships at any level, I sought to explore these differences from a migrant-centred perspective. Below, I highlight some of the insights that emerged.

Taking the Long View

Key to understanding people's experience of migration was understanding *when* they had migrated. In her study

of Eritreans in Milan, Arnone (2008) uses the notion of 'generations of arrival' to refer to the different waves of Eritrean migration, to bring to the fore the degrees of separation and difference that characterises the Eritrean 'community' in Milan but also emphasise the distinct experiences of 'journey' that each generation experienced. Similarly, Hepner (2015) adopts a historical perspective, emphasising the significance of the pre-migration experience and distinguishes between 'generation nationalism', to indicate the experiences of those who fled during the liberation movement (1961–1991), and 'generation asylum', to point to those who migrated after the border conflict with Ethiopia (1998–2000), which also marked the authoritarian shift of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) rule. In my research, I use the concepts of 'generation nationalism' and 'generation asylum'. I focus here on 'generation nationalism'. Although some scholars have previously observed and highlighted the heterogeneity of livelihood strategies (Riccio 2008) reasons to migrate (Binaisa 2013), and degrees of integration in the country of residence among migrants from the same country of origin (Mazzucato 2008; Riccio 2008) the comparative nature of this study allows for a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which changing political and historical contexts, both in the country of residence and in the country of origin, shape those differences over time.

What emerged from my research is that migrants and their descendants fluidly inhabit multiple (trans)national spaces where competing formulations of belonging, citizenship, and national identity are situationally enacted. My study brought to the fore some of the ways in which Eritreans' transnational engagement is shaped not only by their pre-migration experiences as they relate to the state – hence distinguishing between the experiences of 'generation nationalism' and 'generation asylum' (Hepner 2015) – but also by specific political conditions in the country of residence.

These experiences, for example, shaped transnational engagements with Eritrea's conflicts. Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia in 1991 after thirty years of armed struggle. The armed struggle was initiated by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), a Muslim-dominated movement that was based in Cairo. In its final stages, however, it was the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) that led the country to independence. The fundamental role played by the diaspora in supporting the war financially and politically led a number of scholars to refer to Eritrea as a 'quintessential diasporic or transnational nation-state' (Hepner 2015, 186; Hepner 2008; Iyob 1995). By 1991, it was estimated that up to one million Eritreans lived in exile (Hepner and Conrad 2005). A second conflict with Ethiopia broke out in 1998 and ended two years later, resulting in thousands of deaths on each side of the conflict. The border conflict also marked a shift in the rule of the PFDJ (former EPLF) that resulted in the closure of civil societies and independent media outlets and an increasing focus on the militarization of the population. While the contribution of the Eritrean diaspora to the war for independence has been widely documented, relatively less researched are the experiences of the diaspora's settlement and community organising in their countries of residence (Arnone 2008; Campbell and Afework 2015; Martignoni 2015).

With regard to 'generation nationalism', my study revealed that while Eritreans both in London and Milan were actively involved in supporting the armed struggle for independence, the ways in which the first forms of transnational community organising developed in the two cities differed in important ways. In Milan, the local EPLF branch held an almost exclusive monopoly not only over the political organising to support the war at home but also over the social life of the first wave of Eritreans. Experiences of social isolation, challenges in accessing housing and secure employment, and frustrations with discriminatory laws that prevented Eritreans

from regularising their migration status all contributed to the development of a strong network of solidarity among the first wave of Eritrean migrants. In Milan, for that first generation of migrants who fled within the context of the armed struggle, the EPLF played a fundamental role in creating a transnational space that fostered a sense of belonging towards Eritrea and loyalty towards the EPLF.

Conversely in London, the set-up of the first forms of Eritrean community organising were less entangled with the EPLF. In the UK, up until the late 1990s, the system of reception for asylum seekers relied heavily on the work of Eritrean refugee community organisations (ERCOs). Funded by the Home Office and the local authorities, various ERCOs offered a diverse range of services that facilitated the settlement experiences of migrants. The diversity with regard to ethnic, religious, and political affiliation of the Eritrean migrant population in London also raised important questions about the ways in which multiple social vectors, such as education, gender, class, and religion, facilitate specific migratory trajectories.

Pulling the Threads Together

The complexities of the experiences and journeys I have encountered among my respondents both in London and Milan raise important points of reflection for transnational scholars and migration practitioners. Methodologically, they highlight the need to move away from simplistic analyses that explore only the ties maintained between 'here' and 'there', 'home-country' and 'host-country'. Resisting such approaches, we must expand our focus to capture the multiple factors that shape migrants' ability and willingness to engage in transnational practices, in all their complexity (Al-Ali, Black and Koser, 2001a). At the beginning of my study, I expected that disparate histories of immigration and distinct

policy set-ups in Italy and the UK would produce different local patterns of Eritrean community organising. What I did not initially account for was the effect of local discriminatory laws on transnational forms of identification and loyalties.

In Milan, the EPLF played a central role in articulating an Eritrean national identity that advanced their political agenda of self-determination and self-reliance, but it also effectively alleviated some of the challenges of settlement that came with life in *sidet* (exile). Both of these factors instilled a sense of loyalty towards the EPLF/PFDJ that is still prevalent today. In the face of social exclusion and discrimination at work and in everyday interactions with native Italians, Eritreans in Milan quickly developed a form of 'reactive transnationalism' (Snel, Hart, and van Bochove 2016). This solidified strong networks of solidarity around the war at home.

In contrast, only a small portion of the Eritrean migrant population in London was actively involved in homeland politics before and after independence. In part, this was due to the system of reception available in the UK, particularly up until the 1999 dispersal act. In part, it was also shaped by the diversity of the Eritrean migrant population in London with regard to political affiliation, religion, and ethnicity. Together, these factors contributed to the expression of a formulation of Eritrean identity that was more diverse and less centred on the EPLF. Networks of solidarity were established and maintained along multiple social, cultural, and political vectors. Consequently, Eritreans in London were more likely to participate in formal and informal social and cultural activities, where 'community moments' (Alexander *et al.* 2007) were enacted predominantly within personal networks of family and friends.

The cross-national approach adopted in this study has brought to the fore the role of the nation-state in mediating migrants' ability to engage in cross-border activities. As

migrants are embedded within the national social field of the country of residence but also the transnational social field of the country of origin, state policies need to be incorporated in the examination of any transnational engagement.

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Living Law: What Can Comparative Approaches Tell Us?

Lovleen Bhullar

The law has played an important role in struggles for environmental protection and fair access to environmental resources, such as water. Many academics and activists alike view law as a potentially powerful tool in political and social struggles, but, ultimately the utility of law has to be proven in practice. Wherever we look in the world, it is clear that law has not always lived up to its potential. This is the starting point for many scholars who try to understand the dissonance between law in books and law in action. One way of doing this is by exploring how courts have applied a particular legal principle. At its heart, this is a comparative project: we place different judicial decisions alongside one another and ask what they can tell us about the life of a particular law.

This process can provide invaluable analytical insights. At a time when the 'rule of law' continues to be advocated uncritically by national and international organisations, such studies remind us that there is no inviolable connection between law and justice. That said, this method of case comparison is potentially limited and limiting. In this chapter, I demonstrate this point by exploring the polluter pays principle. I show the important legal and political insights that we gain by analysing the varied ways in which this principle has been interpreted and applied by courts in India. I close, however, by looking at the limits of this form of analysis: What questions does it leave unasked? What assumptions might be left unchallenged? What voices might be left unheard?

Polluter Pays?

The origin of the polluter pays principle is often traced to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organisation made up mostly of developed/high-income countries. In its broadest form, the idea they advanced was that polluters should have to pay the cost of the damage they caused through pollution. This principle was adopted as a legally binding instrument of the European Community (EC) and later the European Union. In 1992, the Rio Declaration incorporated the principle that 'the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution' into international environmental law.[6]

In 1996, the Supreme Court of India explicitly referred to the 'polluter pays principle' for the first time in two landmark cases relating to water pollution.[7] These judgements recognised that the principle was well-established at the regional (OECD/EC) and international level. One of them also noted that the principle formed part of domestic law on the basis of the constitutional duty of the State and citizens to protect and improve the environment as well as environmental laws.[8] The law declared by the Supreme Court becomes binding on all courts within the country, so these two decisions are frequently relied on in cases relating to environmental pollution. Subsequently, an explicit reference to the polluter pays principle was also made in the National Green Tribunal Act of 2010.

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6 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (14 June 1992) UN Doc A/CONF.151/5/Rev.1, reprinted in 31 ILM 874 (1992).

7 *Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action v. Union of India and Others* (1996) 3 SCC 212 [hereafter 'Bicchri'] and *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum v. Union of India and Others* (1996) 5 SCC 647.

8 Through the Directive Principle of State Policy (Article 48A) and Fundamental Duties (Article 51A(g)) as set out in the Constitution of India 1950; the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

In many ways, these legal developments were hopeful moments for environmental activists. By comparing case judgements on water pollution, however, we can see the slippage between law in books and law in action. Ultimately, there has not been any firm agreement on who the polluter is, what they must pay, and how. All too often this space for interpretation has benefitted the powerful and been used against the poor. In this context, we see courts in India narrowing the scope and contorting the spirit behind the principle. This is not the only outcome, however. In some cases, courts in India have *expanded* the reach of the law. I will unpack both trajectories, highlighting the value of these insights, before closing by noting some of the limits of this comparative frame.

From Principle to Practice

There have been two senses in which interpretation and application of the polluter pays principle by courts in India has done more to serve certain polluters than hold them to account or to make other polluters pay in order to protect certain rights holders. First, some court decisions have essentially allowed certain polluting industries to 'pollute and pay'. [9] The High Court of Gujarat reasoned that 'this will prompt the continued violation of the law by payment of money. In a sense, this would legalise the violation.'[10] We find that in some cases of water pollution, the judiciary imposes a fine on certain types of polluting industries or asks them to pay damages or compensation for past pollution but then grants them permission to continue their operations. In one case, even after accepting that the polluter had misrepresented and suppressed material facts in its petition, the Supreme

9 *Research Foundation for Science (18) v. Union of India and Another* (2005) 13 SCC 186 ¶29.

10 *Pravinbhai Jashbhai Patel and Another v. State of Gujarat and Others* (1995) 2 Gujarat Law Herald 352 ¶118.

Court observed that the closure of its plant would be against public interest.[11] In another case, the High Court of Himachal Pradesh noted that damages should not bring the polluter to a halt.[12] The judiciary also permitted potential polluters to continue with activities, which are likely to result in environmental pollution in the future, subject to the advance payment of a specified amount.[13]

The limits of the law are further amplified by the fact that, in some cases, polluters may not even end up paying fully. In some cases, they are required to pay a deposit for work undertaken by the government.[14] However, the deposit amount may not be sufficient to undertake the necessary work. In other cases, the government pays compensation which it must then recoup from the firm in question.[15] In practice, the government's willingness or capacity to do so may be limited, for instance, where a firm files for bankruptcy.

In contrast, the consequences for poor citizens who have contributed to pollution are stark and immediate. In cases in which the judiciary had identified a slum dweller or an encroacher or squatter on public land as the polluter – as a consequence of their living conditions – it ordered their removal from the place of residence in the city as the cost

11 *Sterlite Industries (India) Ltd. v. Union of India and Others* (2013) 4 SCC 575 ¶48.

12 *Him Privesh Environment Protection Society and Another v. State of Himachal Pradesh and Others* CWP No. 586 of 2012 and CWPIL No. 15 of 2009 (High Court of Himachal Pradesh, Judgment of 4 May 2012) ¶106.

13 See *MC Mehta and Another v. Union of India and Others* (1986) 2 SCC 176; *Manoj Misra v. Delhi Development Authority and Others* OA No. 65 of 2016 (NGT – Principal Bench, Order of 9 March 2016) [hereafter 'Art of Living case'].

14 See, for example, Bicchri (no. 1); *Vellore* (no. 2); *MC Mehta (Calcutta Tanneries' Matter) v. Union of India and Others* (1997) 2 SCC 411 [hereafter 'Mehta (Calcutta Tanneries)'].

15 See, for example, *Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action and Others v. Union of India and Others* (2007) 15 SCC 633 ¶2.

of pollution.[16] In most of these cases, while state-supported violence preceded displacement, rehabilitation did not follow. In a few cases, the displaced might have received government assistance for relocation, as is the case of certain polluting industries.[17] However, the judiciary viewed the closure of polluting industries as the last resort[18] but saw the removal of encroachers or squatters as an urgent measure to prevent and control environmental pollution. The differential treatment of polluting industries (who contribute to economic development) and the urban poor (who are assumed to not) is evident here. In other cases in which the urban poor resorted to open defecation on railway tracks or railway properties,[19] or in or around any water body or the floodplain of a river,[20] the National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered them to pay a sum of INR 5,000 per offence/instance of pollution. This fine represents more than one month's pay on minimum wage.

Fundamentally, the cases above demonstrate a failure on the part of the judiciary to consider the relationship between poverty and pollution. Whilst courts claimed to act in the 'public interest', their understanding of 'the public' seems to be particularly narrow in a country where the majority of citizens face poverty. It could be argued that the failure to close industries is driven by an awareness of the need for job creation and economic development. But the same considerations have not been afforded to poor farmers in urban and peri-urban areas, who rely on wastewater for

16 See *Almitra H Patel and Another v. Union of India and Others* (2000) 2 SCC 679; *Delhi Development Authority v. Rajendra Singh and Others* (2009) 8 SCC 582. See also *Wazirpur Bartan Nirman Sangh v. Union of India and Others* 103 (2003) Delhi Law Times 654.

17 *MC Mehta (Calcutta Tanneries' Matter) v. Union of India and Others* (1997) 2 SCC 411 [hereafter 'Mehta (Calcutta Tanneries)'].

18 See, for example, *Pravinbhai* (no. 10) ¶135.

19 *Saloni Singh and Another v. Union of India and Others* OA No. 141 of 2014 (NGT – Principal Bench, Order of 18 November 2014).

20 *Manoj Misra v. Union of India and Others* OA No. 6 of 2012 (NGT – Principal Bench, Order of 19 May 2017).

irrigation. When these individuals are identified as polluters, the judiciary relies on the polluter pays principle to prohibit wastewater-based irrigation[21] or to evict them.[22] In some cases, poor urban residents who rely on water for their livelihood seem to be held to account for pollution that is not their fault. Such was the case where the NGT ordered a stop to fish cultivation in a lake until certain water quality standards were fulfilled.[23]

In sum, a comparison of cases gives us a sense of the gap between law in books and law in action, as well as the co-existence of multiple versions of the law. On one level, this is a technical exercise, which highlights situations in which a particular interpretation of the wording of a principle may accommodate some polluters but lead to eviction of others. On another level, this is a fundamentally political exercise. At a time when numerous actors and organisations are advocating for the 'rule of law', this comparison is a reminder of the gap that can exist between 'law' and 'justice'. This analysis demonstrates we do not necessarily need to engage in new forms of comparative methods in order to produce findings that disrupt mainstream policy and practice. Highlighting the divergence between law and justice is not a new intervention, but that does not make it any less important. Whilst the law continues to be a fundamental mode of rule and reform, this gap remains a crucial point of contention.

21 *Amar Singh and Others v. Union Territory, Chandigarh and Others* AIR 1993 Punjab and Haryana 100.

22 *Manoj Misra v. Union of India and Others* OA No. 6 of 2012 and MA Nos. 967 of 2013 and 275 of 2014, Order of 13 January 2015 (NGT – Principal Bench) ¶55.

23 *Subhash C Pandey v. Municipal Corporation Bhopal and Others* OA No. 34 of 2013, Judgment of 19 September 2014 (NGT – Central Zone Bench) ¶24.

Talking Back to the International Sphere

Above, I have highlighted how a comparative approach highlights the ways in which the polluter pays principle has been contorted and either narrowed or widened in its application. The international sources of the polluter pays principle suggest that the polluter in question is a non-state actor. Certainly, in India, non-state actors (industries and individuals) that discharge untreated or partly treated solid or liquid waste into water bodies or on land have been identified as polluters. However, courts have also extended the polluter pays principle to make public authorities also pay for pollution. In one case, the NGT held the government and statutory authorities liable for dereliction of statutory duties, which led to environmental degradation or pollution.[24] In another case, the NGT held the statutory authorities liable for a failure to furnish correct information, which hindered appropriate action to prevent pollution by an industry.[25]

Such decisions can perform an important preventive role and ensure that the government and statutory authorities discharge their constitutional and statutory powers, duties, and functions concerning environmental pollution. These precedents are not without complication: unless public authorities are held personally liable for pollution, the public may end up indirectly paying for the pollution it experiences. Nonetheless, this judicial practice provides an important counter to any narrative that countries (and courts) in the Global South are sites where Western or international principles are simply applied rather than generated, eroded rather than extended.

24 Art of Living case (no. 13).

25 *M/s. Cox India Ltd. v. MP Pollution Control Board and Another* Application No. 10 of 2013 (NGT – Central Zone Bench, Judgment and Order of 9 May 2013).

Considering Comparisons

This chapter has highlighted that established modes of comparison in law continue to be useful in disrupting our assumptions about the world. Above, I focused on the example of the polluter pays principle, showing how its application has been both contracted and extended through legal decisions in India's courtrooms. Both these findings are important. The first highlights the potential gulf between law and justice. Whilst this gulf has been apparent for centuries – as any scholar of colonialism will testify – it remains theoretically and practically significant in a world where the 'rule of law' continues to be proposed as the cornerstone of development. The second finding emphasises the importance of seeing Indian courtrooms as spaces of legal innovation, producing versions of principles that could have important international ramifications. Again, this finding is not new, but at a time when academic and practitioner focus remains on policy transfer from the Global North to the Global South, it remains important.

In closing, it is important to acknowledge the potential limits of this mode of comparison. What questions does it leave unasked? What assumptions might be left unchallenged? What voices might be left unheard?

First, an indigenous version of law might pre-date or exist in parallel with international or regional developments. The concept that the polluter should pay has informed court decisions in India since long before the explicit incorporation of the polluter pays principle as articulated in international environmental law or in other jurisdictions. This ought to be factored into any comparison – whether multi-scalar or at the same level. Second, the units of comparison themselves may not be clearly identifiable and homogeneous. Polluting industries include large-, medium-, and small-scale industries. We need to acknowledge the possibility of comparison between and within these units. Courts may assess the

contribution of these industries to 'development' (economic growth) at different scales of operation and turnover and what is to be paid by them differently. The third point is related. A relatively straightforward comparison is likely to miss the underlying structural causes of the problem (here, pollution) that the law seeks to address. This, in turn, highlights the limits of the subject of comparison itself. The polluter pays principle applies unequally to public authorities and certain industries, on one hand, and poor members of the public, on the other. In the former case, laws governing public authorities and authorisation of industrial activities under environmental laws respectively may sometimes shield these actors from harsher judicial orders. In the latter case, their exclusion from the legal framework, for example, due to the absence of landownership particularly in the case of slumdwellers, heightens the illegality of their actions. This category of polluters is almost completely dependent on public authorities for the provision of public services (for example, toilets) that could prevent polluting activities (such as open defecation). However, public authorities are not held responsible for their failure to provide public services which led to the polluting activity. My final point concerns methods of comparison. By relying on the reported orders and judgments of courts, we exclude unreported orders and judgments. The reasons often include paucity of resources (time, money, language constraints), but the risk is incompleteness of comparisons. I am not advocating for an all-or-nothing approach to comparison, but acknowledgment of these limitations will certainly promote a more responsible approach to comparison.

Merely Revealing: Transgender People and the Shift from 'MSM' to 'Key Populations' in HIV/AIDS Programming in Africa

B Camminga and Kamau Wairuri

The HIV/AIDs pandemic, which has had a massive impact on the lives of many people on the African continent, has proven to be a dual epidemic as Paula Treichler (1987, 32) forewarned. On the one hand, it is a transmissible lethal disease that has claimed almost 33 million lives so far worldwide (WHO, 2020). In 2019 alone, it is estimated that more than 690,000 people died of HIV-related causes; the majority of which deaths (63 percent) were in Africa (WHO, 2020). On the other hand, it has shaped global scientific and cultural discourses related to gender, sexuality, and identity. In this essay, we are mainly focused on the latter – the meaning making potential of the pandemic. Our task here is to consider the extent to which comparisons of discursive categories can be said to be liberating. To our minds, the idea of *liberating* comparisons suggests the need to go beyond academic analysis to consider the lived realities of the people whose lives are impacted – sometimes in incredibly violent ways – by the discursive categories created by distant experts and imposed on their lives through actions of the knowledge-power elite. Towards this end, we center our analysis on the experiences of transgender people with the two categories in the HIV/AIDs epidemiological programming – and especially the shift from 'men who have sex with men' (MSM) in the 1980s to the more recent term 'key populations' (KPs).

The role of *risk*, *behaviour*, and *identity*, in the construction of these categories is central to our analysis here. We base our analysis on the apparent definitional contradictions in two global organisations that are leading the efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic: the UNAIDS and the World Health Organisation (WHO). On the one hand, the WHO *Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care for Key Populations* defined key populations as including: (1) men who have sex with men (MSM), (2) people who inject drugs, (3) people in prisons and other closed settings, (4) sex workers, and (5) transgender people (WHO, 2014). On the other hand, UNAIDS *Terminology Guidelines* emphasized that it was behaviours – and not membership of a group – that placed individuals at the risk of HIV infection (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS 2015). A comparative reading of the definition of key populations by the WHO in light of the terminology guidelines by UNAIDS raises some questions regarding the inclusion of transgender people in this category. Being transgender is not a behavioral category such as MSM or people who inject drugs; therefore, unlike these behavioral categories, it does not explain why 'transgender people' are considered to be an at-risk group. We have divided this short essay into four sections. Following this introduction, we turn to an examination of how the efforts to include transgender people led to the shift from MSM to KP. We then proceed, in the third section, to highlight the effect that these discursive ideas have had on the lives of trans people. In the final section, we note that comparisons can – and indeed do – reveal underlying assumptions but conclude that the comparison of categories – in and of itself – falls short of being liberating.

The Ascendancy of MSM and the Shift to KP

As the HIV-pandemic escalated in the US in the 1980s, epidemiologists initially termed it gay-related immune

deficiency (GRID) as they noted the significant spread of the virus among gay men. That most societies regard homosexuality with a mixture of disdain and disgust has been, and remains, a major factor in the development of the epidemic. The epidemiological terminology which entrenched stigma and discrimination in the early days proved to be highly problematic, becoming, as anthropologist Tom Boellstorff (2011, 292) notes, a hindrance to the public health efforts to address the rising infection rates. In particular, by focusing on an identity rather than a behaviour, this earlier language excluded men who were at risk of infection for having sex with men but did not identify as 'gay'. This identitarian language was also a hindrance to a more international effort to deal with the virus since many countries where same-sex relations were not widely accepted would not approve programs using such terminology. In many of African countries, for instance, the initial terms associated with HIV, such as 'gay', were – and remain – linked to criminalisation. The effect was that the entrenched stigma and discrimination slowed down the mobilisation of resources and, therefore, scuppered the response.

To address these challenges as the pandemic raged, American epidemiologists developed the term 'men who have sex with men', abbreviated as 'MSM'. The term 'MSM' was meant to solve the problem of stigma associated with homosexuality, and especially the term gay, while avoiding the political concerns of community building and rights (Boellstorff 2011). By analytically describing behaviour rather than identity, the term was seen as broadening the HIV/AIDS surveillance and behaviour change campaigns beyond the men who identified as gay to include those men who engaged in anal intercourse with other men but did not identify as such without falling into the identitarian trap (Boellstorff 2011). It was also judged to be more acceptable in many countries where identitarian terms such as gay and

homosexual were unacceptable. This shift from gay to MSM signaled what Boellstorff terms as an enumerative logic – the unending addition of categories to an ever-expanding list. This logic, Boellstorff adds, is undergirded by a prolepsis – the anticipation of the failure of the category to adequately name the people it intends to cover (2011). In any case, the term MSM soon became central to the global efforts to combat HIV/AIDS.

This anticipated failure of the category to name its intended referents soon became manifest as questions about the place of transgender people in this new language came under scrutiny. Some epidemiologists also suggested that transgender people were *included* in the definition of MSM (UNAIDS 2006, 110; Baral et al. 2008, 9). This had real life consequences. Most importantly, organisations for and by transgender people had to access funding through the MSM network (Eisfeld, Gunther, and Schlasko 2013). Unsurprisingly, this idea – and therefore the term MSM – was rejected strongly by trans activists across Africa (Haufiku et al. 2010). The activists raised three main objections. First, they noted that by arguing that these behavioural categories were inclusive of trans people, epidemiologists had conflated gender with sex and behaviour with identity, thereby obscuring the presence of transgender people in HIV/AIDS work on the continent (Haufiku et al. 2010). Second, they noted that the inclusion of trans people in MSM had failed to respect the self-identity of transgender people, negating trans women's positions and experiences as women. Third, this type of inclusion, based on the active conflation of trans women with MSM, has only served to further marginalise all other trans identities especially trans men, an issue which remains a concern for HIV/AIDS programming to date (Eisfeld, Gunther, and Schlasko 2013, 19; Russell and Riley 2016).

These debates are not just a matter of semantics, these ideas shape programmatic interventions and therefore have real life consequences for trans people (Kaplan, Sevelius, and Ribeiro 2016, 826). Most critically, the conflation of gender with sex and behaviour with identity, in the official discourses that included transgender people in the MSM category, entrenched the idea that to be trans is a category of *behaviour*. In other words, in the conflation of categories, being trans was transformed from being an *identity* to a *behavior* in order for trans people to be captured by the epidemiological imaginaries that shaped the response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The official discourse had therefore served to entrench the very idea that predisposes transgender people to life-threatening social stigma and discrimination globally. Paradoxically therefore, a category invented to circumnavigate the problem of stigma has served, for this population group, to reinforce it. In a world where black trans women are murdered with seeming impunity, the possible hand that Global HIV programming plays in perpetuating stigma and discrimination needs to be taken seriously (Transgender Europe 2009). Additionally, the focus on augmenting the existing 'behavioural categories' – MSM/WSW – has obscured the realities that trans people experience a unique set of social, political, and economic factors contributing to HIV/AIDS prevalence linked to gender identity. As such, the use of these categories serves to deny the specific conditions that transgender populations face, including gender-related stigma, poorly trained health care providers, and a lack of access to gender affirmative healthcare (Poteat et al. 2016).

The shift from MSM to KP did not resolve the enumerative approach to the idea of risk in HIV discourse. As we have already noted, the term key populations refers to defined groups who are at increased risk of HIV *irrespective of the epidemic type or local context* due to specific higher-risk

behaviours. Yet, it is clear that being trans is not a behavior. It is, therefore, not exactly clear from the definition why transgender people are included in this category. In any case, even though the trans community in the Global North was brought into stark visibility within HIV programming by the growing burden of HIV on trans communities in the 1990s (Operario and Nemoto 2017, 1537), there is no data to support the position that a trans person is at risk of HIV infection by virtue of being trans. It would seem, as Svati Shah notes, 'the familiar terrain of risk is framed by the broader rubric of fear and the social and political marginality it produces' and reproduces (Shah 2010, 142–43). The designation of transgender people as KP strains what is meant by transgender, risk, identity, and behaviour. Even if we were to accept the epidemiological discourse which frames being transgender as high risk, this approach tells us nothing about the factors contributing to HIV transmission or riskiness (Aizura 2014, 140). To echo Shah and Boellstorff, the inclusion of transgender people among KP confuses and obstructs the ability to conduct 'a systematic analysis of forces structuring choice and responsibility' (Gossett 2014, 41).

The long-term effects of this behavioural approach are evident in the way in which research has been conducted. In a scoping review of HIV prevention among transgender populations, it was noted that the predominant behavioural approach to HIV prevention and care has not addressed the issues specific to trans populations but rather has exacerbated them. Studies on the impact and needs of transgender people with regards to HIV remain limited. What few studies do exist focus predominantly on transgender women. Even fewer specifically focus on trans men, and the studies that do have been limited by their tiny sample sizes. Almost no studies take into account HIV among trans groups outside of binary gender identification (Poteat et al. 2017, 142). This may be in part because the vast majority of trans specific HIV prevention

programmes are targeted at transgender women, which, in turn, leads to outcomes data focused on transgender women. As Young and Meyer have astutely noted, 'ironically, while *MSM* and *WSW* have succeeded in forcing a conceptual shift in public health from identity-based to behaviorally based notions of sexuality, they have not generated more complex approaches to sexuality' or, indeed, it seems gender identity and expression (Young and Meyer 2005, 1144).

Comparing categories: Liberating?

For this chapter, we have been invited to consider the extent to which the notion of liberating comparisons is helpful to our analysis. The idea that comparisons can be 'liberating' is anchored in the premise that comparative approaches can disrupt our understandings of the world around us. Our analysis here reveals that comparing categories – such as MSM and KP – can reveal some of the underlying assumptions and therefore disrupt the unquestioned categories of existence which structure HIV/AIDS programming as Frank Esser and Rens Vliegenthart (2017) have suggested. Here comparison does not only point to the hidden assumptions undergirding the category MSM and its circulation but also, once trans people are shifted into the category KP, comparison helps us begin to discern a second tier of categorical anxiety regarding trans women in particular. One which perhaps belies the actual perception of those who create and circulate these categories. Placing trans people under the behavioral umbrella of KP makes clear that lurking beneath this purportedly more inclusive, affirming and liberating framing are the same assumptions which initially lead to their inclusion within MSM: the deniability of their lived experience as women. This type of baggage continues to suggest that trans women are not who they say they are. Instead, they are always their imagined biology while their being trans is transformed into a

behavioral element. When the emergence and evolution of KP and MSM are held alongside each other, we can more clearly see some of the tensions between these issues of behavior and identity. For this reason, to the extent that comparisons make invisible assumptions visible, we agree with Donahue and Kalyan's (2015, 134) view that comparisons can play a decolonizing role.

Yet, from our analysis here, we struggle to term this comparative effort as 'liberating' – that is, if we are to understand liberating as freeing transgender people and not merely freeing analysts from their 'epistemic enclosures' (Munshi 2017). To our minds, the assessment of whether a comparative effort is liberating or not must be tied to the extent to which it frees the people whose lives are directly impacted by the epistemological categories that are used or critiqued. As we have shown here, it is questions about the place of transgender people in these categories – a comparative effort in its own right – that resulted in their shuffling from MSM to KP. And even this has not been liberating. In fact, our analysis here has shown that the continued use of these categories has served to entrench ideas that continue to pose risks to transgender people. For instance, rather than disrupt or even highlight the unacknowledged biological essentialism which undergirds MSM as a category, the extraction of transgender from it entrenched the notion of the stable and (biologically) knowable man. This is further evidenced by the ongoing exclusion of trans men from this category, essentially signaling that there is a fixed epidemiological notion of what a man – for the purposes of HIV programming – is. Additionally, contrary to popular belief, the category KP has not affirmed transgender people but only further negated them. The acknowledgement of trans people, which may at first appear like a step towards affirmation, turns out to erroneously frame them as at risk by nature of existing.

In our view, therefore, a comparative analysis does little to shift the enmeshed deniability of trans lives within global flows of capital, healthcare, politics, and language. We suggest that rather than liberating, this analysis serves only to highlight – yet again – instances in which trans lives are valued only in as much as they do not challenge the perceived categorical stability of cis lives. To put it simply, comparisons merely reveal the often-hidden assumptions in analytical categories, but the work of liberation is more complex and practical and, of necessity, lies beyond the mere comparison of epistemological categories.

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Liberating the Study of Boko Haram from the Limiting Comparative Frameworks of the Western Gaze

Ini Dele-Adedeji

Despite being responsible for more deaths than ISIS (Searcey and Santora 2015), Boko Haram is not as well-known on the global stage nor is it given the same amount of press coverage. When the sect is mentioned, it is typically in relation to Al-Qaeda or ISIS as an example of the power and reach of these groups across the world. This approach is particularly prevalent in what I call 'globalist' approaches to studying the Boko Haram sect. Faced with a shortage of original empirical evidence on the movement, this scholarship seeks to understand the movement through global comparison. Such comparisons are far from liberating. By using comparison *as a substitute* for the views of residents in north-eastern Nigeria, these scholars create an image of Boko Haram as little more than a proxy of international terrorist organisations: a local echo of developments elsewhere. This, I argue, is the comparative work of 'the Western Gaze'.

And yet, comparative approaches can be used in powerful ways that disrupt this Western gaze when they are driven by the comparisons and connections that people make in narrating their own lives. Some of these insights have been drawn out by what I call the 'localist' tendency within studies of Boko Haram, which is grounded within the local cultural and historical contexts in which the movement emerged in north-eastern Nigeria. Scholars within this approach tend to

use historical and anthropological methods and do not seek to establish links with other trans-national Islamist movements, such as Al-Qaeda and, more recently, ISIS. As I demonstrate below, these scholars have picked up on the importance of comparisons made by residents between Boko Haram and other 'local' movements to draw connections across time and space that help us to better understand the sect. All this is not to rule out the possibility of global comparisons and connections but rather to demonstrate that liberating comparisons are those that are driven by the theorising of people who have experienced the effects of the Boko Haram insurgency directly.

Below, I begin by sketching out the structures of knowledge production that are central to any understanding of Boko Haram scholarship before exploring in more depth the globalist and localists trends in this scholarship and the relative place for comparison in each.

A History of the Under-Reporting of the Boko Haram Crisis

The geographical provenance of the Boko Haram sect forms an integral aspect of the overarching narrative of the sect's insurgency. In addition to this, the regional zones that have been re-defined as the hotbeds of the insurgency, which has affected most parts of north-eastern Nigeria since 2009, are equally important in the crafting of this narrative. The epicentre of Boko Haram's activities since 2009, Borno State, is the hub of north-eastern Nigeria. But, more importantly, this sub-region also happens to be on the periphery of Nigeria, not only geographically but also socio-politically and socio-economically (Mustapha 2014). The historical and political marginalisation of north-eastern Nigeria is not only responsible for influencing the emergence and mobilisation of Boko Haram (Higazi 2013), it has also heavily impacted on the production of knowledge of the sect and the wider population of north-eastern Nigeria.

There has been a paucity of data on Boko Haram since the sect's first emergence into the national discourse in 2009 for several reasons. The outbreak and use of wanton violence by both Boko Haram fighters and the Nigerian armed forces has rendered the north-east of Nigeria arguably one of the most volatile hotspots worldwide over the last decade. Consequently, non-residents and residents alike have found the region incredibly difficult to access and traverse. Those travelling on the region's motorways, for example, risk being massacred or abducted by Boko Haram. The situation has been exacerbated by the insensitive policies of successive Nigerian administrations. Former President Goodluck Jonathan, for example, took a unilateral and unjustified decision to shut down Maiduguri airport in 2015, the region's only airport for commercial travellers (Sahara Reporters 2013). All of the aforementioned factors have contributed towards the creation of scarcity effect where data from north-eastern Nigeria is concerned. This scarcity effect is even more evident when it comes to data specifically on Boko Haram.

The relative lack of popular and academic interest in the local contexts in which Boko Haram was birthed and operates, however, is not a matter of physical access alone. I aver that a major reason why Al-Qaeda and ISIS have overshadowed Boko Haram is due to the relative ideologies and modus operandi of the three movements. Whereas Al-Qaeda and ISIS membership cuts across national and regional boundaries, Boko Haram's membership demographic does not extend beyond Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon (Pérouse de Montclos 2014). Unlike Al-Qaeda and ISIS, Boko Haram is geographically bounded in its activities and rarely targets 'foreign' interests due to the fact that the sect's fighters are concentrated in geographically peripheral areas, which lack a heavy presence of 'Western' individuals and organisations. In short, because Boko Haram does not pose a threat to lives in the West, it is not deemed worthy of public attention, and

certainly not attention that is grounded in the voices of those who drive or have experienced the group's insurgency.

Commentary on the sect has spiralled in recent years, but this itself stands as a testament to the politics of knowledge production. In April 2014, Boko Haram fighters abducted 276 schoolgirls from Chibok Local Government Area in Borno State, the epicentre of the sect's insurgency (Higazi 2015). The perceived inaction and insensitivity of the Nigerian government that followed prompted a national outcry from Nigerians, culminating in the 'Bring Back Our Girls' (BBOG) campaign. This gained widespread international media attention, briefly becoming the favoured cause célèbre for several international celebrities, including Michelle Obama. A global demand for studies on Boko Haram followed, and reports spiralled. The 'Chibok abduction', however, was not the first incident of its kind in the region. Local narratives from towns and villages in the hinterlands of Adamawa and Borno in north-eastern Nigeria have alleged that similar Boko Haram abductions of girls, women, men, and boys occurred both before and after the events in Chibok (Human Rights Watch 2012). Knowledge production, in other words, has been tied to international interest, not local needs and realities.

What is more, the apparent overflow of information on Boko Haram obscures the paucity of empirical first-hand data on the sect. Like most research published since 2009, many of the studies that have been produced on north-eastern Nigeria, particularly since the emergence of Boko Haram, have been more reliant on derivative and recycled data than on first-hand or anthropological research. This paucity of research has, I argue, fuelled the use of comparative analysis as a means of making sense of the organisation. In this context, comparative analysis is not liberating. In fact, it has forged what I call 'the Western gaze' on Boko Haram.

Fledgling Scholarship and Tendencies in the Study of Boko Haram: Data and Focus as Dividing Factor

Within the mushrooming social science literature on Boko Haram, two overarching tendencies have emerged, which could broadly be defined as globalist and localist. These are not merely superficial analytical differences; they represent fundamentally different approaches to knowledge production. Below, I explore each tendency's approach and the space they create for different forms of comparison.

The globalist tendency is essentially predicated on the notion that Boko Haram's success is due to the sect's operation in cahoots with Al-Qaeda and, most recently, ISIS. In this literature, comparison covers for a lack of empirical insight, with proof of *apparent similarity* between groups becoming mistaken for proof of connection. The leading scholar in this school, Jacob Zenn, uses both debatable and vague sources (Zenn 2013, 2014a, 2014b), lacking in in-depth qualitative and ethnographic work. The underlying implication and logic of this work is that the sect lacks the sophistication indicated by its relative success. This analytical approach is problematic on several fronts, with the denial of agency to the residents of northern Nigeria being key among them.

On the opposing end of the divide, scholars in the localist tendency (such as Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, Adam Higazi, and Kyari Mohammed) promote, through their scholarship, research on Boko Haram that is predicated on anthropological data in the area that is analytically interpreted within the historical, religious, political, and cultural context of the region. As such, the research of scholars within the localist tendency centre the lived experiences of various actors within Boko Haram's geographical terrain in their analyses. From this empirical foundation, they build a trenchant critique of the notion that Boko Haram's form and function is fundamentally shaped by its global connections (Higazi, Kendhammer, Mohammed, Pérouse de Montclos, and

Thurston 2014). Instead, they depict Boko Haram as being a locally grounded group, comparing the sect's ideologies and practices to other contemporary and historical movements in the region.

Focusing within country, Abimbola Adesoji (Adesoji 2011) helpfully highlights the similarities between the sect and the Yan Tatsine sect, which also staged a revolt two decades prior in northern Nigeria (Danjibo 2009). The comparative analytical method is particularly helpful as a means of creating links between similar themes to guide laypersons who might be familiar with one but not the other. It can also highlight what makes the Boko Haram insurgency unique in the area, such as the use of pseudonyms and operational aliases by some members (Brigaglia 2014).

Thus, Boko Haram's comparison to other proxies has its merits. All historical events require contextualising, and comparison can be a means of exploring which elements of a particular context are relevant. Well-deployed comparison can add analytical nuance and insight. Our understanding of Boko Haram and its insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria has benefitted from being juxtaposed against other social movements and historical episodes. Whilst the localist approaches focuses within Nigeria, useful global comparisons could potentially be drawn. Social movements the world over share many similarities in relation to mobilisation tactics, rhetoric, and organisational structure (della Porta and Diani 1999). And so Boko Haram is not exceptional in its benefitting from comparative analysis to other movements. Crucially, though, comparison must be driven by the narratives of those on the ground.

The globalist tendency in knowledge production does not harness the analytical power of comparison. Instead, it uses comparison as a cover to compensate for a lack of empirical data and insight. Such simplistic comparisons go to the very heart of how Boko Haram is defined. Attempts at comparing

Boko Haram to other movements has led to the production of a tranche of scholarship that labels the sect as simply being a 'terrorist organisation' (Forest 2012). While I agree that Boko Haram has evolved into a terrorist organisation, I argue that it is not simply that. Boko Haram is a multi-faceted organisation that represents different things to different demographics in north-eastern Nigeria and its environs. The label of 'terrorist' is incomplete but powerful, with important repercussions for how the group is attacked or defended across the globe (Jackson and Hall 2016).

The answer here is not to replace the label of 'terrorist' with another label but to resist rigid and reductive categories altogether. This point is made by the author who prefers to be known as 'Anonymous' in their seminal article titled 'The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-radicalism in Nigeria' (Anonymous 2012). Anonymous asserts that the Boko Haram phenomenon cannot be explained through simplistic categorisations or skewed analyses. To focus on economic and political factors while downplaying the centrality of religion, for example, is to misunderstand how Boko Haram transformed from a marginal sect to a violent insurgent movement. Anonymous proposes, instead, a redirection of the focus in studies on the Boko Haram insurgency to those involved directly in the narrative itself – in other words, leading members of Boko Haram and also vocal opponents of the sect's doctrines.

This, of course, means that any comparative work must be driven by empirical evidence rather than covering for a lack of it. The globalist approach does the latter, denying the centrality and the complexity of people's lives in north-eastern Nigeria. Events and institutions in the region gain their shape and significance from developments that happen elsewhere. This is the essence of 'the Western gaze', and it leads to work that is simplistic in its analysis and reductive in its conclusions. Unfortunately, the reductive simplicity that

makes this approach analytically unconvincing also makes it appealing to policy makers and practitioners.

I propose an analytical method of comparison that circumvents what I describe as 'the Western gaze' prevalent in analytical approaches that operate with the underlying notion that Boko Haram has to be written about as being part of a wider-reaching terror network that includes strong links with Al-Qaeda and ISIS. Instead, I favour a study of Boko Haram's insurgency that focuses on how members of the sect and other residents of north-eastern Nigeria and its environs see the world and see themselves so as not to inadvertently silence their voices. This does not necessarily exclude the possibility of global comparison and connection, but it makes both dependent on the narratives and theorisation of residents of north-eastern Nigeria and researchers whose scholarship on the region is primarily predicated on those narratives and the local contexts in which they have been formed.

Conclusion

An established body of scholarship already exists on the various groups – such as ISIS and Al- Qaeda – that have been used repeatedly as comparative templates in studying Boko Haram. The groups that make these templates have been studied in depth and on their own respective merit. The paucity of scholarship that applies the same intellectual rigour to the study of the Boko Haram insurgency has contributed in many ways to the misunderstanding of the crisis in north-eastern Nigeria. It is also for this same reason that after more than a decade since Boko Haram entered the national discourse, there has arguably not been a major improvement on empirical data available on the sect. In other words, we still do not know a lot more now than we did in 2009. In order to stem this tide, a radical shift in the economy of data production on the study of the Boko Haram insurgency is

needed. The residents of north-eastern Nigeria and its environs urgently need to be at the centre of future analysis: both the perpetrators and victims of the Boko Haram insurgency. Comparisons must happen on their terms.

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Liberating Comparisons and the Law: Legal and Social-Scientific Perspectives on Law in a Global World

Anne Griffiths

I address the question of *liberating comparisons* from the perspective of a trained Scots lawyer who teaches and researches legal issues involving families, gender, and access to and control over land in southern Africa. Thus, for me, the major issue has been how to work with 'law' in a way that captures what people are doing in everyday life. This presents a real challenge. For law in all its instantiations has been recognized as 'a key category of contemporary world-making' (Goodale 2017, 17). Its significance is evident from law's wide-ranging remit in managing diverse legal systems, in dealing with human rights abuses, in promoting sustainable economic development, and in regulating security of land tenure. These diverse and multiple domains raise questions, especially in a global era, about how law and legal systems are to be identified as the first step in engaging in a comparative analysis. How we define law determines the framework within which comparative analysis takes place. This crucial task is not just a technical matter. What we understand as law is tied to broader ideas of authority and legitimacy, which it can help to both create and uphold. When we are exploring the concept of law, power becomes an important factor in the questions that we ask and the answers that we pose.

Examining the Foundations of Law

Part of my role as a legal scholar is to understand where law is located, how it is constituted, and what forms it takes. This is especially important in a postcolonial African context. Across the continent, plural legal systems inherited from the colonial period continue to operate today. The term 'plural' in this context refers to the recognition of multiple forms of law, including customary, traditional, religious, or indigenous law.

Understanding what pluralism entails is crucial. To do so scholars must untangle the concept of law from specific histories of statehood in the west, which form the basis of the 'Westphalian model' of statehood. Whilst this model of statehood emerges from a particular regional history in Europe, it claims universal relevance as does the 'Juristic model' of law that emerges from it. Unless we consciously challenge this claim, we are accepting a *particular type* of law as *the* standard against which *all* claims to law are adjudicated. In other words, we encourage acts of comparison on unequal terms.

The consequences of this approach are not just academic: if one form of law is normalised and universalised it can be presented 'as a non-ideological, even technical solution' (Seidel and Elliesie 2020, 3) to be applied worldwide to questions of legal reform. In other words, ideas have material consequences. In this chapter, I explore this approach and its alternatives in more depth, highlighting the implications they hold for comparative analysis.

The Juristic Model of Law and Legal Pluralism

Engaging with legal pluralism can provide a liberating form of legal analysis because it helps us to produce narratives that counter a Eurocentric assumption about law. How legal pluralism is perceived, however, is open to contestation. Debates around legal pluralism hinge on the extent to which

the state is seen to determine the locus of law. In other words, the degree to which the state defines and creates law.

The classic, formalist model of law associated with the Westphalian state depends on state recognition for its validity. It represents what Griffiths (1986) has termed a juristic or lawyer's view of law. This model derives from a notion of statehood that developed out of the Peace of Westphalia (1648) that ended the Thirty Years War in Europe. That treaty created the notion of sovereignty linked to territorial integrity which provides that within its territory a state is sovereign, that it has exclusive jurisdiction within its borders, and that other states may not intervene in its domestic affairs. It is a model that is predicated upon a separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. Under it, the state claims jurisdictional sovereignty within its borders that is governed by law. Within this system, law is founded on a specific set of sources (statutes, cases), institutions (courts), and specialist personnel (lawyers, judges) that derive their authority and legitimacy from the state.

As mentioned above, this predominant model of law is based on a particular, ethnocentric view of law derived from European nation-states in the 19th and 20th centuries. Nonetheless, it claims universal applicability across the globe, excluding from the definition of 'law' any claims that are drawn from different values or sources than its own. Thus, it upholds a monopolistic grip on law.

Power and Outreach of Juristic Model of Law

The power of this model is clearly visible in the context of colonial rule, in which, as Chanock (1985, 4) observes, law represented the 'cutting edge of colonialism' in its attempts to control and govern its subjugated populations. It did so by aligning law with the territorial Westphalian state and

imposing this perspective on jurisdiction on African polities. Under this framework, colonial powers did take account of legal pluralism in that they recognized some indigenous, local, customary, and traditional forms of law (especially in the field of family law). The recognition of such law was not, however, on an equal footing with colonial law. It was viewed as something 'other' than Western law, as separate and distinct from it, rendering it subject to colonial control through mechanisms such as the repugnancy clause, which provided that such 'customary', 'indigenous', or 'local' law would not be upheld where according to colonial law it was contrary to humanity, morality, or natural justice. This approach to legal pluralism is one that reflects the 'old', 'weak', or 'juristic' view of legal pluralism associated with lawyers' perceptions of law. It is one in which the state defines the parameters that mark the territories of legal systems that exist within its domain and that are subject to asymmetrical power relations and hierarchical control.

This external imposition of law and state was often at variance with African concepts of statehood, in which territoriality was not a governing factor and the transposed European concept of that nation-state promoting a one-nation-one-state ideology was never applicable. For as Achilles Mbembe (2000, 263) observes, the 'visible, material, and symbolic boundaries of Africa have constantly expanded and contracted….. their limits do not necessarily intersect with official limits, norms or language of states'. What is clear is that the territorial state as a creation is one that 'is imbued with different meanings, and exists in contestation with other forms of authority and social organization' (von Benda-Beckmann, von Benda-Beckmann, and Eckert 2009, 1). Making these forms visible and understanding how they work allows for a recognition of pluralism in law that is not subject to the limitations of the juristic model discussed above.

Contextualizing Law: An Alternative Social-Scientific Approach to Legal Pluralism

A more social-scientific approach to law is required to provide for a more liberating form of legal analysis, which allows for more rigorous, equitable comparisons. This approach represents what Griffiths (1986) refers to as the 'strong', 'new', or 'deep' approach to legal pluralism. It involves a contextual approach to law, situating it within a broader social compass, exploring its relationship with other bodies, institutions, and agencies that construct social relations, including an analysis of the specific, everyday lived experiences and perceptions of law that inform people's lives. Such an approach holds good for law in the global North as well as for law in the global South. In adopting this perspective, anthropologists and social scientists have challenged a particular Western perception of what constitutes a legal domain. For while they acknowledge the existence of states and states' laws, they have never perceived of these domains as having exclusive control over law but have viewed them as representing one form of organisation along with other local, political or religious organisations that generate their own law. Such an approach, based on empirical data and fieldwork, has enabled social scientists to extend the concept of law beyond rule-based formulations to incorporate views of 'law as process'. In adopting actor-oriented perspectives that interrogate who is 'inside' or 'outside' law, they highlight the frontiers of legality, giving voice to those who are rendered invisible or otherwise excluded from the terrain of state law. It is this approach to law that I have adopted over the years in my work on Botswana (Griffiths 1997, 2019).

Situating Law in Space and Time: Beyond a Linear Model

In making the case for a social-scientific understanding of legal pluralism, I have found it liberating to engage with

the concepts of space and time. This is because although all law is situated in space and time, the ways in which juristic and social-scientific models are configured by these concepts varies, with important consequences. How space and time are conceived has an impact on how law is perceived and on the claims that it makes to authority and legitimacy.

As we have seen, the juristic model of law claims that its narrow definition of law is universally applicable. While legal pluralism allows for a more inclusive approach of different forms of law, the juristic model rests on a singular, exclusionary logic. This derives from the way in which space is conceived in this model. The space that the juristic model occupies is singular and it denies any legitimacy to any other co-existing spaces embodying forms of law or temporality. Yet, as Doreen Massey (2013) observes, space is not a pre-determined, fixed entity, is flexible and multi-faceted. She notes that where 'space represents that dimension of the world in which we live', it is one 'within which distinct trajectories co-exist'. This perception of space is one that is in keeping with a view of legal pluralism that acknowledges the intersections of transnational, regional, and local norms that are constantly being negotiated at multiple levels in the production and reproduction of law. The juristic model of law denies this possibility by endorsing *one* particular perspective on the space that law embodies, which operates to the exclusion of all others.

If we hold to this idea of space, our comparative analysis is flattened and fails to represents the ways life is lived at the meeting point of global, local, and individual trajectories. This was what space was for Massey (2013): a 'pincushion for a million stories' at any given moment. That is why, for Massey, to talk about space was not to talk about a 'flat surface' or 'stage' it was to talk about 'relations between human beings'. As a result, a site in space cannot be divorced from ideology or politics (Lefebvre 1991) nor can it be seen purely as 'local'

'national' or 'global'. If we keep this in mind when we abalyze law, we have an understanding that is in keeping with a world beyond the nation-state, where more far-reaching forms of governance are at work, engaging with a whole range of transnational forms of law and ordering, including a diverse range of actors involved in global, regional, and local networks of activity, institutions, and regimes of governance, as well as transnational social movements and associations. In these contexts, it is clear that legal claims cover many arenas and that the spaces they inhabit, engaging with the physical, territorial, imagined, and symbolic, are multi-layered. I use this perspective on space to highlight how the relationship between law and land in Botswana is constituted in ways that may vary, compliment, overlap, or even come into conflict with one another at any moment in time.

Our understandings of space are fundamentally tied to our understandings of time. As Massey (2013) explains, 'If time is the dimension in which things happen one after the other' then space is the 'dimension of things… existing at the same time: of simultaneity.' The juristic model, however, has a problematic relationship with time which means that it is incapable of holding Massey's notion of space.

In one sense, the juristic model is timeless in that its claims to being universally relevant and neutral depend upon it ignoring the particular historical circumstances and power relations from which it emerged (Greenhouse 1989, 1650). This assumption of timeless neutrality is at the heart of what Fitzpatrick (1992) calls the 'mythology of modern law'. It is on this basis that law is seen as being 'capable of balancing competing interests and engaging in value-free discourse' (Greenhouse 1989, 1462).

In practice, this means that those who adhere to the juristic model of law see it as *the* model to which all should aspire: the only authentic, authoritative, and legitimate perspective. To make this argument is to restructure the world, imaging all

countries to be on an evolutionary pathway towards a single destination: the realization of a juristic model of law. This, in turn, fits with other linear, hierarchical or evolutionary ways of mapping the world, such as the demarcation of the world into 'developed' and 'developing' nations.' The effect of such classification is to create a disjunction between countries. For in classifying a country as *developing*, the country is no longer viewed as being on par with *developed* countries. What this form of categorization does is to deny the coexistence of all countries or states: when a country is categorized as a 'developing' country they are understood as 'a country which is following our path to becoming a developed country like us' (Massey 2013). This is what Massey means when she speaks of 'turning space into time' and 'turning geography into history': if we have a singular sense of where history should be going then we start to imagine countries as being ahead or behind us on a shared trajectory. What should be seen as different realities co-existing in space are imagined instead to be either ahead or behind the times. This kind of thinking is problematic because we cease to understand reality on its own terms. By imagining a singular goal towards which we are headed we also deny 'the possibility of something different' and of opening up 'politics to the possibility of alternatives' (Massey 2013). When this model forms the spoken or unspoken framework for comparative analysis it produces scholarship that reflects its own narrow, hierarchical assumptions.

These ways of thinking have tangible consequences. By refusing 'the possibility of something different' and the opening up of 'politics to the possibility of alternatives' (Massey 2013) policies intended to improve the 'rule of law' can be ineffective or actively harmful. A social-scientific approach, in contrast, allows for 'alternative development paths' emerging from 'different pasts' and 'leading] to 'different futures' (Santos 2005:31). Such an approach creates the way for a

more informed understanding of legal pluralism and how it operates in today's world.

Concluding Observations

In legal studies, as in academia more broadly, rigorous scholarship is inclusive and equitable. The juristic model is neither. When it is used, scholars draw the world into a comparison on unequal terms. Implicitly or explicitly, they judge different legal systems on the degree to which they adhere to a particular model of law. The social-scientific approach, in contrast, understands different systems of law on their own terms. This releases scholars from the trap of unacknowledged comparison and opens up the possibility of equitable comparisons between different legal systems, in all their complexity.

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Afterword: Hoping for liberating comparisons

Indrajit Roy

In her prescient analysis of the limits of comparative politics, political theorist Neera Chandhoke reminds us that 'the general loss of all certainties has posed problems for all theories,' all the more so for comparative analysis which is 'based on grand theories and categories of understanding' (Chandhoke, 1996: PE-7). As a growing unpredictability of contemporary life calls into question the certitudes that anchored mid-century (mostly US) social science- such as development, nationalism, revolution, and the state, comparative analysis appears increasingly unviable. With ethno-centric 'grand theories' being increasingly suspect, the 'hard science' of the comparative approach which could be 'employed to support some universal theory or meta-narrative' (Fox and Gingrich, 2002: 1) seems less useful than ever in explaining the continuities and changes of the contemporary era.

And, yet, as the thoughtful contributors to this volume have illustrated, comparative approaches may yet be valuable, if- and this is a big 'IF'- such accounts are sensitive to history, appreciate process and respect nuance.

The role of history is undeniable in recognising the colonial origins of the contemporary hierarchies in global politics and narratives of global politics. Urging us to pay attention to history, Ini Dele-Adedeji cautions against the tendency to offer identical narratives of very different organisations and claims, such as the Boko Haram and international

terrorist organisations. Likewise, Hazel Gray identifies the circumstances under which Tanzania and Vietnam collectivised as key to understanding its differential outcomes in the two countries. Indeed, as historical analysis becomes ever more careful about identifying differential notions of time across cultures (linear in some, cyclical in others, and hybrid of the two elsewhere), they could teach a great deal to students of comparative approaches. In this vein, Anne Griffith alerts us against the tendency to compare legal developments around the world in relation to values and practices prevailing in the West.

A sensitivity to history leads us to think of the importance of process in comparative analysis. Reflecting on the tendency in comparative analysis to focus on such units of analysis as nation-states, societies and cultures, Sally Falk Moore (2005) pinpoints the value of studying processes. Analysing processes offers a dynamic, yet focused, account of a given phenomenon that departs from the essentialisms that mar the characterisation of entire communities and peoples. The accounts offered by Bridget Kenny, Lorena Núñez Carrasco, Loveleen Bhullar and Mikal Woldu illustrate the unfolding of processes in specific political spaces without making claims about the essences of the cities and nations within which these are located.

Finally, the importance of nuance. Comparativist projects typically hinge on validating Eurocentric theories that style themselves as universal. In this context, calls to 'provincialise Europe' (Chakrabarty, 2000) are to be welcomed. Nevertheless, provincializing Europe cannot offer an alibi for cultural relativism where everything goes. Indeed, as the contributors to this volume demonstrate, eschewing teleology is not the same as endorsing radical difference that rules out shared understandings of justice, fairness and solidarity. Bev Russell highlights the adaptation of the definition of 'volunteering' to fit practices on the ground in different

countries. Kesi Mahendran illustrates the importance of the 'freedom to compare' for research participants in dialogue with one another in creating new ways of conceptualizing ideas like migration and mobility. The importance of nuance is emphasized by Zainab Ladan Mai-Bornu in her reflections about the terms on which we invite our interlocutors to participate in our research.

The tensions between embracing the uncertainties of nuance and espousing the certainty offered by general categories are, of course, real. My colleagues and I have discovered this in our comparative and collaborative project on the politics of hope harboured by socially excluded people in three cities: Mumbai (Suryakant Waghmore), Paris (Carole Gayet) and London (simon Parker). We began with a commitment to ensure that the study was informed by 'theory from the Global South' which would help us 'reverse the gaze'. But what exactly does that mean? While I have kept slipping into the temptation of proceeding with institutionalized understandings of hope, citizenship and social exclusion, my co-investigators have steadfastly pushed back. They insist that we keep an ear to the ground, appreciate organic understandings of hope, and look not only for points of similarity, but also difference. Across the wards of Mumbai, boroughs of London and arrondissement of Paris, we let our interlocutors tell us about their life histories, what matters to them, what worries them, what (or who) gives them hope, and their hopes for their children and grandchildren. We ask them about what has changed in their lives and what has not; who has helped them and who has not; and (in the wake of COVID-19) how the pandemic affected them and how they coped with it. We explore their hopes in the context of the histories of their three cities and the political institutions that govern them. Whilst the hopes and needs people discuss are broad, political belonging remains key amongst them. Therefore, an important element of our project is collaboratively and

comparatively exploring the meanings that our interlocutors hold. In doing so, we have avoided such tropes as patronage, clientelism and neopatrimonialism that have been the staple of comparative analysis. What we have created in their place is a richer, more liberating (though challenging, no doubt) way to think, through comparison.

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