

National Identity and State Formation in Africa

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Edited by

Manuel Castells and Bernard Lategan

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Preface

This book is the outcome of a three-year research project (2017–2019), initiated by the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) under the leadership of Manuel Castells (a Permanent Visiting Fellow of STIAS) and Bernard Lategan (the Founding Director of STIAS).

STIAS promotes high-level, innovative and interdisciplinary research (for more details, see https://www.stias.ac.za). For this project, a group of twelve experts were invited to explore the contradictory dynamics of globalization and identity and how this interaction is reshaping Africa in the twenty-first century. The result is a highly original book offering insights with historical, social, political, conceptual and methodological implications.

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Manuel Castells and Bernard Lategan Barcelona and Stellenbosch March 2020

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Abbreviations

ANC African National Congress

ANCYL ANC Youth League

AWB Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (Afrikaner

Resistance Movement)

AU African Union

BAD Bantu Affairs Department

BC Before Christ

BDP Botswana Democratic Party
BPP Botswana People's Party
CEO Chief Executive Officer

CERD Committee for the Elimination of Racial

Discrimination

CNC Chief Native Commissioner

CODESA Convention for a Democratic South Africa CODESRIA Council for the Development of Social Science

Research in Africa

COPE Congress of the People

COSAG Concerned South Africa Group

CP Conservative Party

CPA Comprehensive Peace Agreement CPSA Communist Party of South Africa

DA Democratic Alliance
DC District Commissioner
DOP Declaration of Principles
DUP Democratic Unionist Party

EC Ethiopian Calendar (seven/eight years later than

Gregorian Calendar)

ABBREVIATIONS

ECOWAS Commission of the Economic Community of West

African States

ELF Eritrean Liberation Front
ELM Eritrean Liberation Movement
EPLF Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRA Ethiopian People's Liberation Army

EPRDF Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic

Front

EPRP Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party

FAK Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations

GNU Government of National Unity
GoSS Government of Southern Sudan

HEC High Executive Council
HLP High-Level Panel

ICSS Interim Constitution of South Sudan ICU Industrial and Commercial Workers Union

IFP Inkatha Freedom Party

IGAD Intergovernmental Authority on Development

ILO International Labour Organization
IMF International Monetary Fund

IT Ingonyama Trust
ITA Ingonyama Trust Act

KADU Kenyan African Democratic Union KANU Kenyan African National Union KLA KwaZulu Legislative Assembly

KZN KwaZulu-Natal KZP KwaZulu Police

Ma'ison (Amharic) All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement

MCP Malawi Congress Party
MP Member of Parliament
MWU Mineworkers' Union

NABANTUKOP Natal Bantu Co-operative Society
NAD Native Affairs Department

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NBTU Natal Bantu Teachers' Union NEUM Non-European Unity Movement NGO Non-governmental organisation

NIC Natal Indian Congress NMC Native Military Corps

NP National Party

NPA National Prosecuting Authority

NUP National Unionist Party

ABBREVIATIONS

NZRFU New Zealand Rugby Football Union

OAU Organisation of African Unity

OFS Orange Free State

OLF Oromo Liberation Front

ONLF Ogaden National Liberation Front

OPDO Oromo People's Democratic Organisation

PAC Pan Africanist Congress
RdC République du Cameroun
SACOS South African Council of Sport

SACTU South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADC Southern African Development Community

SANU Sudan African National Union

SAP South African Police

SARFU South African Rugby Football Union

SARU South African Rugby Union

SC Southern Cameroons

SPLM/A Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army

SSU Sudan Socialist Union

STIAS Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study

TCRSS Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South

Sudan

TIC Transvaal Indian Congress
TLSA Teachers' League of South Africa

TPLF Tigray/Tegrean People's Liberation Front

UDF Union Defence Force
UDF United Democratic Front
UFP United Federal Party
UK United Kingdom
UN United Nations

UNIP United National Independent Party
UNDP United Nations Development Programme

US United States

UTP United Tanganyika Party

ZAR South African Republic/Transvaal
Zulu Society Zulu Language and Cultural Society

Chapter 1

Introduction: Identity, Networks and State Formation in Africa

Manuel Castells and Bernard Lategan

The contradictory dynamics reshaping our world in the twenty-first century are characterized by the relationship between globalization and identity. On the one hand, the core activities that define the economy, technology and geopolitical power are organized around a global network of glocal networks. This is the case for financial markets, international trade, multinational manufacturing, advanced business services, research and technology, military strategies, media production and distribution, and internet communication. On the other hand, historically rooted cultural identities, at the source of the creation of meaning, are stronger than ever everywhere, as a counterpart to the global flows of capital and communication that attempt to overwhelm the specificity of every human community, to merge them in a global culture that ultimately rationalizes the domination of certain values, multinational economic actors and political institutions in an interconnecting network of local and global hierarchies. To no avail. Deprived of their ability to exercise control over global forces, people around the world retreat into their own values, asserting their identity and using whatever means available to them to claim their autonomy vis-à-vis global networks that embody domination under the cover of instrumentality. In doing so, they are also mobilizing their energies to maximize their interest in the interconnecting global and local hierarchies in which they find themselves.

The world in the twenty-first century is dominated by conflicts of identity: religious, national, territorial, racial, ethnic, age, gender, ideological and otherwise. The failure to recognize the essential role of identity in structuring social life creates a key epistemological obstacle to understanding our world. The ideology of the Enlightenment (which recognizes identity only in the categorization of its opposites) that refuses to see identity as the source of self-definition, in favour of the abstract

construction of the citizen, defined by the state, leads to intellectual dead ends. Even if we do not like the primacy of identity, we must acknowledge and deal with it as social scientists and philosophers.

This fundamental development can be observed everywhere, not just in the previously dominated/colonized areas of the world, but also in the United States and in Europe. The American nationalist movement, built around Trump, or the mobilization for Brexit in the UK, are clear expressions of the power of identity – a trend that often leads to xenophobia.

Sources of collective identity (always a cultural construction) are diverse. One of the most significant in the socio-political evolution of our societies is national identity. National identity is the set of interrelated cultural attributes that provide meaning and self-recognition to a collective of humans that define themselves as a national community. The term 'national' specifies the aspiration of this community to be acknowledged as a distinct social group that transcends primary ascription attributes, such as ethnic or territorial, and to emphasize their shared experience over time and space. It is suggestive of a congruence between polity and culture. Fundamentally, nations are cultural communities, but they are not 'imagined'; they are constructed with the materials of history and geography.

Nations must be clearly distinguished, conceptually and practically, from states, because states are political-institutional constructions, sometimes derived from a pre-existing nation, but more often resulting from the integration/annexation of several nations, that are fused, through political domination, into a given state. In fact, the nation-state of the modern era is an exception in the high diversity of institutional constructions resulting from the interaction between nations and states, from city states to imperial states, and from communal institutions to tribal confederations. The multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual composition of many (if not the majority of; cf. Welsh 1993) states gave rise to the idea of 'multinational states' (cf. Peleg 2007; Kraus 2008).

Moreover, when a nation-state is constituted, it defines a new identity: citizenship as established by the state. Citizenship tends to reflect the cultural identity of the nation that prevailed in the construction of the state, although in some cases, the project of state formation may include the negotiated recognition of pluri-national states – always a fragile construction because it does not necessarily respect equal access to the resources of the state. This is where federalism becomes a critical intermediate institution between the state and the nation. In some situations (South Africa is one example), despite the formal structure of a unitary state, many ethnic groups would rather understand and speak of themselves as nations. This is especially the case in previously colonized

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countries who see themselves obliged to operate under the label of modern nation-states, post-colonialism.

The existence of nations without states is widely acknowledged as a result of the diversity of the historical process. The most often cited examples are Scotland, Wales, Quebec, Catalonia, Euskadi, Kurdistan, Palestine (still without a state), Tibet and multiple quasi-national communities still entangled in struggles, violent or not, in their aspiration to statehood. The boundaries between nationhood and statehood are fluid and often change over time. Moreover, nations tend to persevere longer than states, the most important examples being the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

The role of identity in both founding and dissolving the institutions of the state can be better understood by differentiating three major types of national identities: resistance identity, legitimizing identity and project identity.

Resistance identity occurs when a materially produced, culturally experienced collective identity is not recognized in the institutions of the state, when states are formed on different constellations of culture and power. Then, social movements and political projects emerge in what could be a protracted confrontation that results in a new institutional system. However, when the force of the existing states prevails, resistance identity becomes the source of multiple forms of negation of the dominant state institutions, sometimes for centuries. Pluri-national states based on consensus (such as Switzerland or Canada) become stable institutions that weave a new political actor by sharing in the construction of meaning. States that include various nations without recognition of national rights are periodically torn by confrontations, often intensified by ethnic or religious conflicts.

Legitimizing identity is the collective identity produced by the state on the basis of a period of sharing the building of common institutions, usually under the predominance of one particular identity, and a given set of interests. Most of the nation-states created in the last three centuries follow this pattern, so that national identities are constructed by the state, with the education system being primordial in this construction. The school of the French Third Republic epitomizes this cultural hegemonic development.

Project identity is the collective identity defined by a process of becoming rather than that of being. It is the national or pluri-national community that people would like to be, not as the expression of a pre-existing cultural community but as the will of discovering new institutional forms on the basis of a set of values in the making. The project of the European Union would qualify as a national identity project. The United States of

America was also built on the quest for a common goal – not without conflicts, as manifested by the atrocious civil war fought not only due to economic interests but also to the divergent fundamental values of the two national identity projects that clashed on the battlefield.

The nature of this relationship between nations and states is variegated. The nation-state, historically produced by the formation of states as an expression of cultural identities that became national by becoming embedded in the state, is under stress in our time because of the use of the state by globalizing forces, to enhance their power and interests, in increasing conflict with the identity and interests rooted in the national community. The opposition between globalizers and nationals, between cosmopolitans and locals, is evident everywhere. Ultimately these trends lead to the separation between the nation and the state in the course of history.

It would seem paradoxical that at the time of universal globalization, and networking of states, the old issues of nationalism and nationalistic politics have emerged at the forefront of current affairs. In fact, it is precisely because of the political projects aiming at superseding the largely obsolete sovereign nation-states that national cultural constructions emerge as a powerful alternative to the dissolution of meaning in instrumental networks of power without identity roots. 'Citizens of the world' is only fitting for the masters of the world, that is the financial, technological and cultural powers that do not need cultural roots to assert their power.

However, we want to focus this major issue on the interplay between nations, states and nation-states in Africa, a continent in which the identities of colonizers and colonized have been woven for centuries without necessarily finding a stable institutional construction that could reflect this human diversity. Africa is characterized by high levels of diversity related to a range of issues like race, ethnicity, language, culture, history, territory, colonialism, power struggles and wars. Congruence between the political and national as envisaged by Gellner (1983: 1) is therefore the exception rather than the rule. Accordingly, the need for nation-building (in the sense of making the boundaries of the state and the nation coincide; cf. Mylonas 2017: xx) and ways to achieve this are pervasive themes and a priority on many a national agenda.

While countries in Africa share many of the characteristics and trends to be found in other parts of the world, there are also specific features which shaped their histories and influenced their constitutional and statehood options. An important factor is that the process moved through different constellations of power and a variety of governing traditions, spanning many centuries and covering pre-colonial, colonial

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and post-colonial phases. The result is a kaleidoscope of experiences, legacies and attitudes, which still influences contemporary developments, and which requires a *long durée* perspective (Braudel 1958; Erk 2018) in order to make sense of a complex and multi-faceted history.

Despite this diversity on the level of individual states, there are some common, meta-level forces that shape the interplay between global networks and local responses in a less visible way. In his contribution, *Francis Nyamnjoh* highlights the importance of *mobility* which characterizes both global forces and local responses. He reaches into the 'deep past' before the advent of modern tools of communication and of containing human mobility to remind us of the 'primordial' forms of border crossing when waves of migration moved out of Africa. But the 'nimble-footedness' does not pertain to humans alone – it is equally true of things and ideas.

Nyamnjoh links the ancient past to present-day protest movements via the intermediate figure of Cecil John Rhodes. This dominant nineteenth-century personage embodies in one person the contradictory roles of imperialist and *makwerekwere/Uitlander*, of outsider and insider, of settler and native, thereby illustrating the interchangeability of these positions, but also the underlying ability of mobility which they all share. What was *not* interchangeable for Rhodes was his whiteness and his superiority, something that resonates with present-day populism across Europe and in the United States under President Donald Trump.

At the same time, mobility is ambiguous. It can imply freedom of movement and thought, but it can also be used to invade, conquer and possess. It fuels social mobility – either 'upwards' into the middle class or as 'whitening up', or to retreat into right-wing movements or fundamentalism of all kinds.

But mobility is not restricted to movement within existing social categories or frameworks. For Nyamnjoh its real significance lies in its ability to cross borders and to rupture the restrictive frameworks of the *status quo* – be it the frameworks of identities or of state formations. Nonetheless, rupture is not a goal in itself, but rather the first step towards repair. Hence his plea for conviviality as a necessary precondition for the processes of social renewal, reconstruction and regeneration – and even for a new kind of scholarship for African universities.

Finally, what kind of African citizenship is emerging out of the present turmoil on the continent? Against the background of these 'visible and invisible mobilities', Nyamnjoh (p. 11 below) pursues specific questions:

How do ideas and practices of mobility evolve, in a world of border protections and exclusionary practices? How do convivial forms of

interaction counter such trends? How do they bond fictional insiders and perceived outsiders? How are race, citizenship and belonging constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed across the fluid yet sometimes oppressive frontiers that link 'nation-states'? What can we all learn from the twenty-first-century nimble-footedness of humans, things and ideas? How do students of society make scholarship more convivial by factoring in human mobility as the norm in being human? How do ethnographers such as myself and my students (and some of you) decolonize the alienating tendencies that lead to the objectification of the people with whom we study by denying them the very essence of being – mobility?

Nyamnjoh's analysis provides the framework for the subsequent chapters, arranged in two parts: The first (chapters 3–6) focuses on more 'conventional' strategies and responses to the aspirations of national identities, such as attempts at federalism, secession or accommodation within a unitary state. These case studies are drawn from across a geographical and political multiplicity of contexts including Nigeria, the Cameroons, Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia. To maximize the comparative potential of this collection, the second part (chapters 7–10) then inverts this analytical logic to focus on new emerging articulations and 'unconventional' strategies within the same geopolitical space, namely the Republic of South Africa. Finally, a concluding chapter offers a number of metatheoretical and normative conclusions.

Eghosa Osaghae evaluates federalism as a strategy to deal with diversity in situations where identity and citizenship is constructed and deconstructed within and across state frontiers – frontiers which in many cases are imposed and artificially devised to create 'nation-states'. He makes the case that federalism has been far more influential with regard to political developments than the literature suggests. By narrowing federalism to the operation of federal constitutions, the propensities, variety, experience and utility of federalism as a general approach are often disregarded. Osaghae argues that Africa needs more, not less, federalism if it is understood as a heuristic and pragmatic device for managing diversity and holding fragile states together. In contrast to other traditions of federalism, it is largely of a sociological nature in Africa, closely tied to the issues of territoriality, identity and the character of the elite. Especially in the post-independence era, it remains a sociological imperative in the incomplete state-building process where more inclusive, participatory and accountable governance is required and where the capacity of the state to cope with diversity is constantly tested.

Carlson Anyangwe discusses the options of incorporation, secession and independent nationhood as a different set of strategies to deal

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with the tensions between cultural diversity, inclusion and exclusion, and the legacy of two colonial interventions in a specific region – that of the Southern Cameroons. He approaches identity – a topic that falls primarily within the disciplines of anthropology and sociology – from a legal perspective and focuses on the interface between identity and the law. The dispute between the Republic of Cameroon and the Southern Cameroons is not only territorial, but also an identity- and resource-based conflict. The chapter further investigates state formation and international law with particular reference to national identity. A final section deals with the distinct identity of the former United Nations trust territory of the British Southern Cameroons in its claim to, and epic struggle for, sovereign statehood.

Bahru Zewde pursues the topic of secession in a different setting. His entry point is the remarkable events in the Horn of Africa in 2018, when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ushered in a new era by ending the long stalemate of 'no war no peace' between Eritrea and Ethiopia. His analysis makes clear that mobility is already operative on the most basic level of identity formation and that this has consequences on the higher level of state formation. Identity itself is a site of mobility and fluidity, demonstrating its mediating potential. Yet this bridging capacity is seldom utilized. Zewde therefore maintains that the root of the problem is the accentuation of mono-identities by Ethiopia's elites and the consequent failure to accommodate multiple identities. The reality on the ground is that both Ethiopia and Eritrea are composed of a mosaic of different nationalities and regions. The same ambiguity is visible at state level where Eritrea cherishes its hard-won independence but also wants to enjoy the maximum benefit from the interdependence with Ethiopia. The attitude of Eritrea towards Ethiopia is thus one of both attraction and repulsion. This ambivalent stance has its roots in Italian colonization and Eritrea's hard-fought struggle for independence.

Samson Wassara provides a counter-example where the mobility of identity and national diversity do not result in convergence and nation-building, but in fragmentation. He traces the historical developments and social dynamics that led to the fragmentation of national identity in Sudan. While colonial powers played a role, external forces also contributed to the process. He argues that the impact of Arabism and Islam led to anxiety among non-Arab nationalities and to the construction of regional and ethnic identities as a measure of protection, leading eventually to the secession of South Sudan from Sudan. However, the identity of the South Sudanese was constructed on the weak foundation of geographical belonging and of resistance to a common enemy and oppressor. When South Sudan gained its independence in 2011, this common enemy

left the scene and citizens reverted back to their tribal affiliations and former colonial regions, resulting in the current crisis of identity and state formation.

The second part of the book approaches this crisis from a different angle, focusing on South Africa. What may appear to be an overconcentration on one country is intended as an exploration of generic trends in more depth and detail in a specific region, illustrating the intricacies and often contradictory sub-currents, the practical outcomes and their conceptual and theoretical implications. Similar concentrated studies of other countries or regions would be as valuable. Although the local context, its history, circumstances and power relations might be totally different, the same global forces are at work and the same generic challenges have to be faced.

The four chapters on South Africa illustrate the emergence of novel state formations and alternative expressions of loyalty to the state. Some of these strategies exhibit a remarkable degree of inventiveness and 'nimble-footedness', making effective use of the resources provided by global networks. Despite their location in the same political space, these case studies illustrate a diversity of approaches and difference in logic which motivates the choices in each specific strategy or by specific social actors.

This section is introduced by an analysis of recent developments in 'Afrikaner' circles and, more specifically, of the Solidarity Movement in South Africa. Danelle van Zyl-Hermann returns to the core theoretical argument of the book that the emergence of the network society challenges existing concepts of the state as a stable, homogeneous or unambiguous presence exercising dominion over defined spaces with clear physical, relational and ideological boundaries. She then describes how in post-apartheid South Africa, identity politics is being mobilized in an effort to establish an 'alternative state' for the white, Afrikaans-speaking minority. Van Zyl-Hermann traces the history of Afrikaner state formation since the nineteenth century, demonstrating the various permutations such efforts have taken over time. The Solidarity Movement is taking advantage of the opportunities afforded within the post-apartheid context of Afrikaner political disempowerment and the rise of global white nationalist and anti-multiculturalist discourses to mobilize on the basis of resistant Afrikaner nationalist identity. In contrast to secessionist or nationalist identity politics elsewhere in the world, these initiatives emanate from the sphere of civil society and do not represent aspirations for formal political or territorial autonomy. Rather, the Solidarity Movement's plans for Afrikaner minority autonomy revolve around creating institutional, community-based and even virtual spaces for

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Afrikaner and white self-determination. These provide evidence of new strategies of state formation in the network society and of the unexpected forms these may take.

In the same post-apartheid context, *Marizanne* and *Albert Grundlingh* describe a very different manifestation of the relationship between local identity, the state and broader global realities. They present the curious case of a group of South Africans who are avid supporters of the New Zealand rugby team (the 'All Blacks'). This represents a subterranean current which surfaces only occasionally in the media, but which is no less real in the lives of many ordinary rugby fans. This is an attitude which is under renewed pressure after the recent victory of South Africa in the Rugby World Cup championship. The authors argue that although support for the All Blacks in South Africa may at first appear as wilfully contrary and even perversely wrongheaded, it demonstrates the many and enduring fault lines still plaguing South African society.

Iabulani Sithole and *Mary de Haas* analyse aspects of 'Zulu' identity. Sithole explains why KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) remains the one province in South Africa with the most persistent and formidable ethnic identities - identities which sometimes exhibit secessionist and regionalist tendencies, despite all attempts to forge a national unity in the country. Why the persistence and resilience of this specific expression of ethnic identity? In pursuing this question, Sithole traces the complex and fragmented history of the region and finds that the idea of a consolidated 'Zulu' identity only emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century. He then probes the implications of the recent resuscitation of Zulu ethnic identities and concludes that sections of the country's population are still searching for ways of reconciling individual human rights with collective cultural belonging. What emerges is the picture of a 'composite' state, containing conflicting elements typical of a kingdom, of a regional, secessionist state, and of a group participating on the national level of government.

Mary de Haas describes how the unresolved tensions between these conflicting notions of the state and the continuing existence of other ethnic identities lead to endemic violence in KZN. She relates how the apartheid state made good use of the ethnic blueprint prepared by the British colonial era to establish a KwaZulu Bantustan which set the parameters for enduring conflict. The situation intensified during the negotiations for an inclusive democracy in the 1990s and ethnic mobilization continued even in the post-apartheid era. Relations in the province are further complicated by the growing involvement of multinational mining companies in KZN. De Haas maintains that violence will continue to hold its iron grip on the province, given the high level of

unemployment and the willingness of 'Zulu warriors' to defend the king and 'his' land.

In a concluding chapter, *Bernard Lategan* draws some metatheoretical and normative conclusions. The preceding discussion makes abundantly clear that current concepts of both the state and of identity are in need of critical re-examination as well as substantial readjustment. This includes a re-conceptualization of borders, of what constitutes an effective state and of the matrix which determines our understanding of identity. In view of the progressive fragmentation of societies and the destructive consequences of mono and restricted forms of identity, an 'innocent' concept of identity can no longer be maintained. The challenge is to move beyond the limits of narrow interests and regain a new vision of the common good. This calls for a mature understanding and responsible use of identity with 'distinctive interconnectedness' as the goal.

Chapter 2

Mobility, Globalization and the Policing of Citizenship and Belonging in the Twenty-first Century

Francis B. Nyamnjoh

This chapter on mobility, citizenship and decoloniality draws on my recent book titled #RhodesMustFall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa (Nyamnjoh 2016). The book examines student protest movements in 2015 to have the statue of Cecil John Rhodes moved or removed from the University of Cape Town campus. It addresses questions such as: How do ideas and practices of mobility evolve, in a world of border protections and exclusionary practices? How do convivial forms of interaction counter such trends? How do they bond fictional insiders and perceived outsiders? How are race, citizenship and belonging constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed across the fluid yet sometimes oppressive frontiers that link 'nation-states'? What can we all learn from the twenty-first-century nimble-footedness of humans, things and ideas? How do students of society make scholarship more convivial by factoring in human mobility as the norm in being human? How do ethnographers such as myself and my students (and some of you) decolonize the alienating tendencies that lead to the objectification of the people with whom we study by denying them the very essence of being - mobility?

Cecil John Rhodes as the epitome of unsettling mobility

It is all too easy to forget, in this day and age when countries around the world are increasingly obsessed with detecting, policing and containing human mobility – through chains, agents, cameras, walls and other tools – that there used to be a time when it was free to move. If Africa was the cradle of humankind some four and half million years ago, then it is only proper to remind ourselves that waves of migration out of Africa