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THE STATE OF STATUS GROUPS
IN ETHIOPIA

MINORITIES BETWEEN MARGINALIZATION
AND INTEGRATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume is the result of a panel co-organized with Fabienne Braukmann for the 19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (ICES) in Warsaw in 2015. The idea was to bring together some of the scattered recent research on the contemporary situation of craftworkers, hunters and slave descendants in Ethiopia. We were inspired by our own work for a language documentation project, during which we had been confronted with the complex and changing relationship between the hippo-hunting Haro and the agro-pastoralist Bayso people.[1] My supervision of the research of several BA, MA and PhD students on related topics during my time as Assistant Professor at Addis Ababa University (2007–2015) likewise motivated me to dig deeper into the topic.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Fabienne Braukmann for being such a cooperative and helpful colleague throughout our research project and while co-organizing the panel. Thanks too to all the authors for their excellent contributions to this book. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) generously granted me a returnee grant, which gave me time to work on the manuscript. I am grateful to the Frobenius Institute for financing the publication of the book and for accepting it in their series. Thanks also go to Dena Freeman, Roland Hardenberg, Holger Jebens, Richard Kuba, Sophia Thubauville and Gebre Yntiso for their valuable comments on the manuscript, and last but not least to Kay Celtel for her fast and professional copy-editing.

FOREWORD

Dena Freeman

I am delighted to have been asked to write a foreword for this book about status groups in Ethiopia. The existence of marginalized minority groups in Ethiopia has puzzled scholars for decades. From the early ethnological work of Haberland in the 1950s and 60s, through the collection that Alula Pankhurst and I put together in the early 2000s, to today, anthropologists and historians have struggled to explain the situation of groups of hunters, craftworkers and former slaves – hereditary occupational groups who live on the margins of larger groups of farmers or herders. This exciting book showcases a new generation of research on these groups and breaks new theoretical and ethnographic ground.

Ethnographically, it offers new research on a number of little known groups, such as the Bayso and Haro who, until recently, lived on Gidiccho island in the middle of Lake Abbaya; the Mao and the Komo who live dispersed in Ethiopia's western fringes and over the border in Sudan; and the Kumpal-Agaw, a small group who live in north-west Ethiopia.

Whilst much of the previous work on marginalized groups – or status groups as the authors in this volume prefer – focused on craftworkers, this book significantly broadens the scope and includes studies of hunters, slave descendants and small ethnic splinter groups. Many of the chapters also take an in-depth historical approach and show how the situations of these groups have changed over time. In the process, they show the interconnections between these different categories and in fact destabilize and problematize some of these categories, which previous, more synchronic, studies had taken as fixed. Thus we see cases of hunters being captured and sold as slaves, of small ethnic groups being subsumed as status groups, and of former hunting groups effectively merging with farming groups. This shows how these should not be seen as separate and distinct categories but as changing identities within shifting historical processes.

Many of the chapters emphasize how the relations between different groups are shaped by the political and economic exigencies of the time. Thus, in many cases, earlier more reciprocal patron-client relationships became transformed into relationships of domination and exploitation when the Abyssinian empire in the north developed a demand for slaves that led larger agricultural groups in the south to start raiding neighbouring smaller ethnic groups – often hunters – to sell as slaves. Descendants of such slaves, now living in parts of northern Ethiopia, have to this day found it impossible

to integrate, and many have moved to towns in an attempt to escape their hereditary identity.

The main focus of the book is on how well these various status groups are able to integrate into broader society. The first section gives relative success stories, while the second section highlights cases of on-going resistance and tension. Many of the chapters look at the role of contemporary state policies in this process and show that the ethnic federalism approach is, in many cases, making the situation of these minorities more difficult. The notion of a polity built up of essentialized, distinct and separate ethnic groups leaves no room for these minorities who often seem to be both part of, and yet distinct from, various groups. In some cases, they have succeeded in gaining political recognition in the form of their own 'special *woreda'* but in most cases, they remain politically invisible. The quest for rights and citizenship is not the same as the quest for integration, and yet in contemporary Ethiopia the two often become blurred, with various consequences. Thus, in their quest for equal rights, members of status groups often find themselves pulled in one of two uncomfortable directions – either getting equal rights through merging with the larger ethnic group but in the process losing their own cultural identity (e.g. Haro), or finding themselves in endless conflict when seeking to gain rights whilst retaining their distinct cultural identity and practices (e.g. Manjo).

One of the highlights of this book is the way in which it focuses on the members of the status groups themselves. We hear their voices and get a peek into the daily struggles of their lives. We also see some of the subaltern strategies that members of these groups have used, and are using, in order to improve their situation and to negotiate the relations between them and the majority group amongst whom they live. They draw on available social, cultural and political resources in order to challenge their domination and to move towards equality. In the contemporary period this includes converting to Protestant or Orthodox Christianity, calling for their own 'special *woredas*', and in some cases drawing on human rights norms developed by the United Nations. In most cases the dominant groups resist the actions of the minorities and the chapters shine a light on the dynamic power struggles that continue to take place.

This excellent collection takes forward the study of status groups by placing it in the political context in which it belongs. It will be of great interest to those working in the Ethiopian context and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

Susanne Epple

Earlier literature on Ethiopian occupational and descent-based status groups described their origin, history and livelihood as well as the scope and nature of marginalization. More recently, researchers have begun to look at the flexibility of social categories and the redefinition of social boundaries between dominant herders and farmers and submissive craft workers, hunters and slave descendants. However, detailed studies on the transformation of hereditary status groups and their relationships with dominant sections of the society, and on the underlying internal and external factors for change, have been insufficient and scattered, both in their thematic and regional coverage. This volume relates to, and brings together, some of the most recent research looking at current developments and changes in the relationship between various status groups and the larger society in Ethiopia.

The low status of certain occupational and hereditary status groups is a worldwide phenomenon and is still common, especially in South Asia and many parts of Africa. According to some estimates, there are more than 260 million people in the world who are excluded on the basis of their descent or occupation (Pinto 2001:2817, Human Rights Watch 2001). Most of them are part of the Indian Dalit caste (often called 'the untouchables'), but similar forms of social differentiation and discrimination are found in other Asian countries (Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Japan), in Africa (Burkina Faso, Mali, Cameroon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, Mauritius, Senegal) and in a few other places (Human Rights Watch 2001). In some countries, for example India and Nigeria, members of such groups have recently begun to form activist groups and – often with the support of NGOs and the media – to gain national and international attention.[1]

The scope, underlying causes, local explanations and justifications for the social exclusion of such groups have raised the interest of scholars from history, social anthropology, political science, law and human rights. In the last two decades, people's lived experiences and the dynamics around allegedly static and impermeable boundaries between marginalized and dominant groups have also become a topic of interest.

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[1] See for example, the Asia Dalit Forum, an activist group fighting for equal treatment and chances for the Indian Dalits and similar groups in other countries (http://asiadalitrightsforum.org/interventions.php).

This book builds on the work of researchers who have written on such groups in Ethiopia, where social differentiation based on occupation and descent is common in many ethnic groups, and has been well described in numerous studies (for an overview see Freeman and Pankhurst 2001, Epple this volume). Many efforts have been made by the present and previous governments to establish equality between all Ethiopian societies and subgroups. And today national and international NGOs and churches are active in raising awareness of the issue of inequality (Freeman and Pankhurst 2001).[2] Yet, as many studies have shown, marginalization continues to exist. Some authors have even reported that, due to the high value given to ethnic identity in the context of ethnic federalism, local values and cultural practices – including the marginalization of craft workers, hunters and slave descendants (Aalen 2011, 2012; Tronvoll and Hagmann 2012) – have been revitalized. The contributions in this volume focus particularly on change, by exploring the contexts and causes that have allowed social boundaries to be altered, manipulated or crossed. Some also identify specific factors that have prevented such changes from happening.

Most of the chapters in this volume came out of an interdisciplinary panel entitled 'From periphery to mainstream? Recent observations on status changes of so-called marginalized groups in Ethiopia', which I co-organized for the 19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (ICES) held in Warsaw/Poland in August 2015.[3] Some other chapters were included later by request. The studies cover different parts of Ethiopia and show a range of circumstances as well as internal and external efforts to integrate marginalized groups into more dominant sections of the society. The results show that certain status groups in Ethiopia have experienced favourable change due to religious conversion; education; cultural contact; and changes in the political, economic and socio-cultural environment. Examples of integration have been observed in the cultural and linguistic adaptation of minorities to the majorities, the elimination of former prohibitions of close contact, and the development of innovative economic cooperation. Among the difficulties around and obstacles to integration are the continuation or revitalization of cultural stereotypes from both dominant and dominated sections of society, and the indirect reinforcement of marginalization through preferential treatment of the dominant sections of society in urban contexts (in education, employment, political participation etc.).

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[2]   See for example the work of the Ethiopian NGO KMG (Kembatti Mentti Gezzima Tope) Ethiopia in Kambata, which fights for gender equality, an end to female genital mutilation and the empowerment of the locally marginalized *fuga*, craftworkers (http://kmgethiopia.org). The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) is also addressing the issue through organizing 'Minority Forums' where groups who consider themselves as marginalized (most of them are considered as 'pollutive' by the surrounding groups) and have problems in inclusion discuss, together with some prepresentatives of the dominant groups, their plights. Many of them are craftworkers, but also slave decendants and hunters are coming from different parts of the country (oral information, Leikola, this volume).

[3]   I co-organized the panel with Fabienne Braukmann.

Social differentiation and the exclusion of certain categories of people from mainstream society exist in all parts of the world, in developed and developing countries, in stratified and more egalitarian societies, and in rural and urban contexts. However, the causes, dimensions and faces of this differentiation differ from place to place, ranging from avoidance and prohibition of commensality and intermarriage, to disadvantaged access of certain status groups to resources and public participation, to very expressive forms of dominance by the farming majorities towards occupational groups and slave descendants, such as public insults, physical violence and other forms of disgraceful treatment when dominant and marginalized groups meet.

While efforts to use accurate terminology in the academic context have led to the abandonment – or, at least, use only in specific contexts – of imprecise terms, in the non-academic discourse they continue to be used and instrumentalized, apparently to emphasize discriminatory practices. In the following, the most commonly used terms in academic and non-academic discourse will briefly be presented.

In academia

Although Asia is probably home to the highest number of people marginalized because of their descent or occupation, the social exclusion of craftworkers, hunters and slave descendants is also widespread in Africa, and is well known in the literature.[4] In the academic literature, among the most commonly used terms for certain status groups are 'caste' or 'avoided caste', 'pariah', 'outcast', 'marginalized or socially excluded groups' and 'depressed classes'. Among some scholars doing research in Africa, the debate on the right terminology has focused on two main questions: (1) whether occupational and descent-based status groups in Africa can be compared with the Indian caste system; and (2) whether the expression 'marginalized group' is appropriate to generalize the African context, as there exist many examples of ambiguous and complementary relationships between allegedly dominant and subordinate sections of societies.

The term 'pariah' originally referred to the Paraiyan, a Tamil caste of low status in southern India. The usage of the term was later extended to other low-status castes in India and eventually to similar groups in other parts of the world. Max Weber, for example, used it to describe the situation of European Jews and Gypsies in the Middle Ages, who were specialized on work that was considered impure, did not share the

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[4]   See, for example, Tamari (1991), who has looked at the origins of castes in West Africa; Dilley (2000), who has worked on the Tukulor craftsmen in West Africa; Koter (2016), who has studied elections in West Africa (especially Senegal) and the connection to ethnic politics and caste organization; and Regnier (2012), who has investigated the difficult situation of contemporary slave descendants in Madagascar.

local rights, were usually kept at a distance, and were not allowed to intermarry with the local population (Weber 1921, in Amborn 1990:289). The anthropologist Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann (1961, 1964, in Amborn 1990:290) extended Weber's use of the term 'pariah' to incorporate 'despised professional castes' and postulated the existence of a caste belt reaching from Bengal Iran and the Arab countries to West Africa (in Amborn 1990:290).

Many scholars writing on Africa used the term 'caste' to describe strata in Africa (Nadel 1954, Tuden and Plotnicov 1970:15–18, Maquet 1970), while those writing on India (such as Leach 1960, Dumont 1980) insisted that the term 'caste' should only be used in the context of Hindu ideology (Todd 1977:398). In his article 'Caste in Africa?' – based on his own research among the Dime people in southern Ethiopia – David Todd (1977:401) suggested a definition of 'caste' that allowed cross-cultural comparison. While previous authors had used it for occupational groups within the same society separated by certain alleged characteristics, Todd argued that the 'all-embracing division of labor' should be locally believed to be 'divinely approved, and protected by pollution concepts and practices'. As such, in his view, the Dime and Dizi of southern Ethiopia, who had several hierarchically ordered categories, were caste societies; while others, such as the Konso or Gurage, who distinguished only between farmers and craft workers, were not.

When Alula Pankhurst (1999) re-discussed the issue some twenty years later, he argued that the term 'caste' did not depict the African situation properly. Outside India, he said, the social differentiation lacked a 'uniform cultural ideological underpinning' (Pankhurst 1999:503), meaning that there was no coherent religious ideology or philosophy serving as the ideological foundation for the subordinate status of occupational and descent-based groups. In addition, he believed that the origins and histories of the numerous ethnic groups in Ethiopia, as well as the relationships between dominant and marginalized sections, were too diverse, unstructured and dynamic to allow comparison with the Indian castes.[5] Thus, he and others considered the parallels drawn

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[5]   Pankhurst (1999:487–495) listed three main objections to the use of the term 'caste' in the African context: (1) ideological objections, the lack of coherent religious sanctions or philosophies for a hierarchy of occupational groups and the variation in status of specific occupational groups from place to place and their often ambiguous or even 'dual' status within society; (2) genetic objections, relating to the different models as to how the social differentiation may have come to exist, which range from hunters being 'remnants of earlier groups', to craftworkers being migrants settling as 'guests' in places where their knowledge was needed, to social division of labour that led to 'internal specialization' and different categories of people; and (3) structural objections, where authors objected to the use of the term 'caste' in the African context as it is used only for the minorities, but not for the whole society, since relations between dominant and marginalized are mostly reflected in individual patron–client relationships rather than in general exploitation of one group by the other because there exists no clear ranking of marginalized groups (Pankhurst 1999:495). None of these models can satisfactorily be applied to all Ethiopian societies and they are also not mutually exclusive.

between the African context and the Indian caste system as exaggerated and, therefore, misleading (Amborn 1990, Pankhurst 1999).

While the term 'caste' has lost prominence in the academic literature on Africa, 'marginalized' and 'disadvantaged groups' are commonly used, often as synonyms for 'socially excluded'. French sociologists developed the concept of 'social exclusion' in the 1970s to describe economically disadvantaged people. The expression 'the excluded' was introduced to refer to a variety of disabled and destitute groups (Silver 1995 in Allman 2013:2). The European community used the term 'social exclusion' for the first time at the end of the 1980s as part of a policy response to economic marginalization (Wilson 2006 in Allman 2013:7) and, since then, the concept has been used to describe economic conditions, including unemployment and poverty. Political scientists and economists understood the term primarily in its economic sense, that is, that individuals can be excluded from participation in mainstream life due to economic disability and lack of access to resources. Sociologists, however, included in their understanding identity-based forms of exclusion, that is, where a bounded group of people (specific ethnicity or origin, castes, religious groups) is defined as different and often inferior on the basis of their cultural practices and shared way of life. Although such groups are often also economically disadvantaged, in principle they cut across economically defined strata of a given society (Thakur 2012).

These terms have also been criticized for generalizing the marginalization of occupational and decent-based status groups in a way that does not always reflect reality. Amborn (1990 and this volume) has argued that the term 'marginalized' does not properly characterize the situation of many Ethiopian occupational groups, as they usually constitute a highly necessary segment of societies. This, so he argues, is very different to the socially deprived groups such as unemployed or homeless people to which the term 'marginalized' originally referred.

To avoid false generalization, some authors have opted for more neutral terms, such as 'occupational groups' for craftworkers and certain musicians and, more generally, 'status groups' (Amborn 1990) or 'hereditary status groups' (Ellison 2006) for all kinds of descent-based status groups. In this volume, the terms 'occupational groups', 'descent-based groups' and 'hereditary status group' are preferred. The first term hints at the fact that identity is linked to profession, while the latter two indicate that social status is passed on to the next generation, and both do not automatically infer that such groups are marginalized and disadvantaged, thus leaving open the possibility of their being venerated or considered as equals. The terms 'marginalized' or 'disadvantaged' group are used in contexts where marginalization has indeed been observed.

Non-academic context

In international non-academic literature, the terms 'caste' and 'marginalized groups' are widely used, and the Indian case often equated with the African and other contexts. Indeed, a United Nations expert on minority issues once spoke of 'dehumanizing discrimination based on caste and similar systems of inherited status' in Asia, Africa, Middle East, the Pacific region and in the diaspora'.[6] Human Rights Watch (2001) has discussed the cases of 'caste societies' in Asia and Africa, indicating that they all face similar restrictions[7], which are – like the Indian castes – based on a differentiation of humans into separate categories based on concepts of purity and impurity.[8]

The Asia Dalit Forum has argued that caste could even be considered a kind of race. Their view was supported by the Indian political scientist Ambrose Pinto (2001), who stated that the Dalits' status in the Indian society is affected by a kind of racism, arguing that – in the case of both caste and race – status is ascribed at birth and transmitted over generations, which leads to prejudice and discrimination not only at a personal but also institutional level (Pinto 2001). By equalling caste and race, the Dalits aimed to highlight their status, as well as that of similar groups affected by discrimination based on descent and occupation, and make it one of the key topics during the UN's second World Conference against Racism held in Durban in 2001. In August 2002 the UN committee on the elimination of racial discrimination (CERD) strongly condemned caste practice and analogous systems of inherited status, as they violate the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. On this occasion, people from different countries presented the situation of groups discriminated against on the basis of descent in India, Japan, Nigeria, Senegal, Niger, Somalia, Kenya (Pinto 2002:3899). The EU has also spoken of 'caste-based discrimination' and has outlined its strategies for alleviating the issue (European Parliament 2013).[9]

The term 'marginalized group' is used by the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner for 'persons with disabilities, youth, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, members of minority groups, indigenous people,

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[6]   UN News Center (http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53511#.WaRHYJHg3wJ).

[7]   These include: (1) marriage – prohibition from marrying someone from a higher caste; (2) free choice of labour – duty to stick to culturally assigned occupations, which are often considered as 'filthy' or 'polluting' for higher castes; (3) access to land – often landless and forced to work as low-paid labourers for higher castes) (4) political representation and political rights, e.g. usually not represented in national or regional governments. It is also shown that these disadvantages commonly hinder such groups' efforts to actively change their life conditions, as they endure: (1) physical and economic retaliation when they refuse to accept their role or join activist groups; (2) multiple types of discrimination against women of low castes; (3) continued discrimination abroad, where structures are often replicated; (4) continued discrimination and disadvantage through the legacies of slavery – in some places as bonded labour, in others discrimination of slave descendants.

[8]   http://idsn.org/wp-content/uploads/user_folder/pdf/Old_files/africa/pdf/Africafull.pdf.

[9]   http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2013/433805/EXPO-DEVE_NT(2013)433805_EN.pdf.

internally displaced persons, and non-national, including refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers'.[10] As this definition does not clearly encompass the situation of members of castes, descendants of slaves or occupational groups, it has been strongly criticized by the Asia Dalit Forum. It has demanded that the situation of castes and similarly discriminated groups in other countries be specifically acknowledged as a 'determinant of poverty and under-development' and has made efforts – albeit unsuccessful – to have the plight of these people included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. The Dalit Forum has remained strongly critical of Agenda since failing to have its demands met.[11]

HANDLING DIFFERENCE: RESISTANCE, COMPLIANCE AND STRATEGIC HANDLING OF IDENTITY

Group identity is based on the perceived or claimed shared characteristics – such as race, language, religion, historical experience, territory, amongst others – of the we-group, which thereby create difference to others (Donahoe *et al.* 2009). It has been shown in the vast literature on ethnicity, identity and identity politics that social boundaries between different categories of people are flexible: they can be overcome, changed, blurred, manipulated and given up altogether[12] and individuals can be included and excluded according to the group's interests (Barth 1969:9–10).

The strategies employed in ethnic boundary making and shifting can also be seen among social categories such as occupational groups, castes, slaves/slave descendants and others. Their situation has often been presented as rather static and difficult to overcome, as distinctions between them and the dominant majority are usually locally justified by their alleged impurity. Yet, there are dynamics at work around these boundaries, and these – although mentioned here and there – have only recently gained more attention from researchers and from activists looking for ways to address the matter.

Resistance

Some cases of public resistance have gained public and even international recognition as they involved open protest, recourse to national or international NGOs' courts, and the media. We have seen already how the Indian Dalits formed a movement to represent not only their own but also other marginalized groups' interests at levels reaching as high as the United Nations. Similarly, the 'low caste' Nigerian Osu people have taken their case to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights with the help of

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[10]   http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14690&LangID=E.
[11]   http://asiadalitrightsforum.org/interventions.php.
[12]   Cohen 1978, Schlee 2004, 2008, Elwert 2002, Wimmer 2008, Donahoe *et al.* 2009.

an international NGO called the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), demanding that the African Commission adopts a resolution condemning caste-based discrimination and to urge Nigeria and other states to take measures to eradicate all forms of discrimination against lower caste people'.[13]

Some NGOs are attempting to practically improve the lives of disadvantaged groups through direct (often financial) support, in the hope that this will increase their social recognition at the same time. KMG-International, an Ethiopian NGO, is currently hoping to upgrade the status of craftworkers in Kambata by providing training to artisans, promoting their products, and attempting to change existing stereotypes about them into positive ones through awareness raising.[14] And certain organizations in Sudan provide financial support to buy out and free slaves and redeem slave descendants from their alleged unclean status.[15]

Besides open resistance and these visible efforts to change existing categories, there exist everyday and hidden forms of resistance, a kind of covert form of 'ideological resistance', which can include 'foot-dragging, evasion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander and sabotage' (Scott 1985). Such acts are used by powerless individuals and groups for whom direct confrontation and a challenging of elite norms could be disadvantageous or even dangerous. While his own research was on peasants in Malaysia, Scott (1990:104) suggested that the concepts of 'public and hidden transcripts' could also be useful in analysing the lives of people in Indian castes and those living under similar forms of domination. In applying Scott's concepts, Regnier (2012:30) found that slave descendants in Madagascar manipulate the social system by 'establishing (fictive) kinship links with free descent families'. These 'rewritings' or 'inventions' of kinship, the author argues, constitute a means of resistance, which show that the Berosaiña have not internalized their 'slave status', but actively attempt to resist prejudice and discrimination without openly resisting. The case of the Manjo hunters of southern Ethiopia provides an example of both public and hidden resistance as they both demonstrate and fight for equal rights in the court (Yoshida, 2013, this volume) and use Kaffa language manipulatively (Leikola, this volume) to either identify themselves with the dominant Kaffa or be acknowledged as an independent marginalized group.

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[13]   Source: http://iheu.org/caste-discrimination-africa-iheu-speaks-out-african-human-rights-commission.

[14]   See www.http://kmgethiopia.org.

[15]   Their work has been criticized by some who argue that slave redemption in Sudan has actually increased the profitability of slave raids (Miniter1999, 2004). Other authors argue, however, that it is the only way to free at least some individuals from a system of suppression (Arrowsmith 2004).

Compliance

Social differentiation is often deeply entrenched in culture and legitimized through myths or religious values and ideas. Thus, while it is usually upheld by the dominant sections of a society, it may be supported by all members of that society, both dominant and discriminated against.

For this reason, Pelzer-White (1986:55–56) has argued that, alongside studying inventories of 'everyday forms of resistance', one should not ignore the 'everyday forms of peasant collaboration' between dominated and dominant groups. She suggests that collaboration is prevalent most of the time, as peasant majorities need the dominated people's compliance with the system in order to stay in power, no matter how oppressive and exploitative they are. The tricks dominated groups might use to cheat their superiors (she gives the example of adding stones or straw to their harvest in order to increase the weight and, thereby, the share due to the landlord or tax collector) may psychologically satisfy the powerless by giving them the illusion of having some share in power. Therefore, she argues, such acts – if discovered – may be interpreted as 'rebellious' by the powerful, but are meant as simple means of having greater economic gain by the powerless through cheating.

Some studies have shown that certain status groups may actively hold on to and even emphasize social differentiation in order to achieve a specific goal. Beall (2002) has demonstrated how a low-caste occupational group of waste workers in Punjab, Pakistan used its identity-based social exclusion to secure its livelihood. Despite their conversion to Christianity, they had continued to be labelled with the same stereotype of alleged ritual pollutedness, which had given them the exclusive right to remove solid and liquid waste. When they were threatened with the loss of their livelihood by the introduction of service firms for waste removal, they began actively protecting their label. In order to protect their source of income, they argued that their own impurity meant that they were they the only ones entitled to do this dirty job (Beall 2002:45–46).

Höhne (2014) gives the example of minorities (occupational groups and others) in Somalia, which – due to the civil war in Somalia – instead of striving to be included into the mainstream society, began demanding to be recognized as ethnically different. In their case, this was driven partly by an intention to receive preferential treatment as refugees abroad. The Waata hunters of northern Kenya likewise are emphasizing their own ethnic identity with the aim of using their independent ethnicity to gain political rights and participation (Aneesa and Bashuna 2004).

As the case of the Kumpal-Agaw of northern Ethiopia shows, among some groups, the members' internalization of their inferior status can be so strong that they maintain it out of cultural conviction. According to Desalegn (this volume), the Kumpal-Agaw uphold the ancestral curse responsible for their alleged inferiority. The continued feeling of guilt for their ancestors' failure to behave loyally to another section of their soci-

ety has rendered them unable to change their low self-image and overcome their marginalized position.

Hereditary status groups are found in many Ethiopian societies, whether stratified or more egalitarian. They constitute either subsections of a given society or separate small groups that live close to, or in association with, majority groups. The dominated groups or subgroups include artisans/craftworkers (potters, tanners, blacksmiths, weavers, woodworkers, etc.), certain musicians, hunters and descendants of hunters, descendants of slaves, special clans or small splinters of ethnic groups living dispersed among others. The dominant majority usually consists of farmers and, in some cases, agro-pastoralists. Most of these hereditary status groups are widely perceived as being fundamentally different from the majority groups. They are separated from each other by clearly defined social boundaries, and interaction with each other is usually limited and regulated.[16]

Among the negative characteristics attributed by the majority groups to hunters, craftworkers and slave descendants are ritual impurity (often related to their work, the materials they work with, and/or the consumption of unclean food), as well as unsocial and disloyal character and/or behaviour. Slave descendants are in many places perceived as racially different, unclean and polluting, and not fully human.[17] Some marginalized groups are believed to be cursed, as is the case for the *lalibela* singers in Amhara region

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[16]   Among the detailed earlier works on hereditary status groups in Ethiopia are publications of the Frobenius Institute, such as the volumes by Ad. E. Jensen (1936, 1959), Helmut Straube (1963) and Eike Haberland (1963) on the expeditions to southern Ethiopia in 1934–35, 1950–52 and 1954–56. Haberland in particular was interested in the topic of status groups and published several articles and books on the status of craftworkers, hunters and slaves and the connection between sacred kingdoms and special castes (Haberland 1961, 1962, 1964, 1972, 1979, 1984, 1992, 1993). His student Werner Lange went on to write about divine kingship and the special position of bards in Kaffa (Lange 1976, 1979/80). The 1950s, 1960s and 1970s also brought monographs and articles by international scholars writing on various ethnic groups with marginalized subgroups. Among these were the *fuga* minority, a group of former hunters currently engaged in craftwork, living with the Gurage and some other people (Shack 1964, 1966; Teclehaimanot 2003); the *hauda* (also *xawda*, *xauda*) craftworkers among the Konso people (Hallpike 1968, 1972); the Manjo hunters among the Kaffa people (Huntingford 1955); and the Ethiopian Jewish *Beta Israel* community, living among the Amhara and Tigray (Quirin 1977, 1979).

[17]   Many slaves in the north originally came from the west or south of the country and had much darker skin than their owners. Quite differently, in southern Ethiopia, most slaves originally came from the same or adjacent areas as their owners. Therefore, in some cases the only difference between them and the freeborn was their slave status, and neither cultural nor racial distinctions played a role (see, for example, the case of the Ganta, Bosha, this volume). The impure and inferior status of slave descendants is then explained by their alleged loss of proper humanity at the moment their ancestors turned into slaves. In some places, redemption to full human status could be achieved through certain rituals (on Ganta see Bosha, 2013 and this volume) or through the extraordinary merits of individual slaves for their masters (on Hadiyya see Braukämper (2014:80).

(Kawase 20014:185), or by parts of their own society, like the Kumpal-Agaw (Desalegn, this volume).

Certain status groups, however, occupy an ambiguous position with both positive and negative attributes ascribed to them. The positive attributes assigned to hunters/descendants of hunters and craftworkers in many places include special powers and abilities to bless, curse, heal and mediate. In the past, hunters were often believed to be close to the sacred kings and/or the creator, and in many societies, they acted as guards and servants of kings, performed the burial services for kings and participated in the coronation of new ones. They were often responsible for actions that were considered unclean, for example, undertaking executions for the king (Haberland 1964). Craftworkers also played an important role as ritual assistants during initiations, and as birth attendants, circumcisers, musicians, conveyers of news and morticians (Pankhurst 2001:2). Moreover, craftworkers' products were economically indispensable in the mostly agrarian or agro-pastoral communities around and among which they lived. Slaves used to fulfil important economic needs in societies with intensive agriculture, where the majority of males were engaged in warfare (for example in Wolayta, Haberland 1993), but slave descendants seem to lack any kind of ritual or social responsibility.

Pankhurst (2001:2–7) has identified five main domains of social marginalization for craftworkers and hunters: spatial, economic, political, social and cultural. Spatial refers to the fact that many craftworkers or hunters live outside or at the edges the farmers' villages, often close to the forest/bush or in infertile places. Economic exclusion arises from their lack of access to certain resources, such as land, animals, and their confinement to certain activities, such as the production of certain products. Often forced to sell their products for a low price, traditionally many are poor. Politically, members of low status groups have been denied access to political office, prevented from expressing their views and denied any active participation in public decision-making. Social exclusion entails the daily avoidance of members of certain status groups by the members of the mainstream farming or herding community. Many farmers and herders today continue to refuse to eat or drink or share plates or cups with them, and – in extreme cases – even avoid touching the people themselves. They expect to be greeted in very submissive ways (bending down leaving the road, expressing low status verbally) and, where social relations exist, these are usually non-reciprocal. In almost all cases, intermarriage is strictly forbidden. Culturally, marginalization is expressed through oral history, myths of origins and proverbs and stories that express and justify one group's subordinate position. Although Pankhurst only looks at craftworkers and hunters, the same domains of marginalization seem to be applicable to slave descendants[18] and marginalized splinter groups (Desalegn, this volume; Meckelburg, this volume).

In Ethiopia, as elsewhere, many of the efforts made by external agents to alter the status and lives of occupational and decent-based groups have not been successful,

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[18]   Haberland 1992, Aalen 2011, Bosha 2013, Kiya, this volume.

or their successes have not been sustainable. Yet, there are examples of individuals or groups who have tried and succeeded to overcome social boundaries through different internal and external mechanisms: cultural adaptation, external support, economic success, maintaining distance from the dominant group, redefinition of their own status (Epple 2017 and this volume).

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The first chapter gives an overview of the most recent literature on occupational and hereditary groups in Ethiopia. Chapters 2 to 11 are based on original and recent field-work and give insights into the present situation of allegedly marginalized status groups. Two of these works (by Bosha and Kiya) deal with the contemporary situation of slave descendants. Five chapters (by Epple/Braukmann, Savà, Yoshida, Leikola and Samuel) look at the contemporary situation of hunters or descendants of hunters, both from an anthropological and a linguistic perspective. One chapter examines the experiences of craftworkers in southern Ethiopia (Amborn) and two authos look at the marginalization of small ethnic splinter groups (Desalegn, Meckelburg). Chapter 12 is a translated reprint of an article published by Eike Haberland in German in 1962, in which he gives his view on 'hunters' and 'special castes' in Ethiopia.

In Chapter 1, Susanne Epple gives an analytical overview of the recent research on Ethiopian occupational and descent-based groups, focusing on the contexts and specific circumstances that have caused change. The literature shows that social boundaries between various status groups have been modified, redefined or blurred through factors and forces that come both from outside and within the groups themselves. Here, certain factors seem to be more effective and sustainable than others. The paper ends with a look at gaps in the literature and suggestions for future research.

Samuel Tibebe writes in Chapter 2 on the limits and chances for integration through religious conversion of the Manja living in Dawro, southern Ethiopia. The rather recently introduced Protestant Christianity propagates equality and brotherhood and, as such, gives hope to the Manja – a group of former hunters comprising the lowest stratum of Dawro society, looking to gain more acceptance and be better integrated. As his research shows, churches serve as platforms for newly defined encounters between Manja and the farmers (*malla*), and there is a general trend toward the dominance of the Dawro being less obviously demonstrated and the Manja showing less submissive behaviour. However, the effect of Protestant Christianity is not the same all over Dawro. While in some areas the Manja and the dominant *malla* visit the same churches and are members of the same savings organizations, in other areas the *malla* have resisted sharing the church with the Manja and ideas of their inferiority and impurity persist. Where a certain level of integration has been achieved, it has led to an economic disadvantage

because, in places where Manja are allowed to participate in *malla* work parties, the *malla* do not reciprocate the labour.

Chapter 3 is devoted to Bosha Bombe's description of the contemporary situation of slave descendants in Ganta. He elaborates the continuance of slave status even after the abolition of slavery in the 1940s. Since then, the *ayle* (slave descendants) – most of whom are from Ganta and not outside – have continued to experience discrimination and exclusion from mainstream life. Ganta society has developed a mechanism for reinstalling full human status to the *ayle*. As this mechanism is extremely costly, the government, churches and church-based NGOs have recently become active in trying to eliminate the institution of the *ayle* altogether. Bosha describes the various internal and external efforts made and critically analyses their successes, setbacks and overall sustainability.

In chapter 4, Susanne Epple and Fabienne Braukmann examine the unequal yet dynamic relationship between two small groups in the context of approaching modernity. The agricultural Bayso have played the dominant role in their relationship with the hippo-hunting Haro, who they claim to have accepted as settlers on Gidiccho Island around 150 years ago. The Haro have made great efforts to adapt culturally and linguistically to the Bayso in order to decrease the social distance between them. In recent times, the complete conversion of both groups to Orthodox and Protestant Christianity and their economic cooperation in a fishing cooperative have brought the two groups even closer together, so that today boundaries are blurred and even intermarriage – previously prohibited – has become common. Yet, integration has been at the cost of an independent Haro identity, and the Haro are now not officially recognized as an independent group. Indeed, the Haro have not only adopted many Bayso cultural practices, but even show a tendency to deny any earlier cultural difference.

In chapter 5, Graziano Savà gives an insight into the speech behaviours of several Bayso and Haro people, comparing those living on the shores of Lake Abbaya, in close distance from the district capital Mirab Abbaya town with those living on Gidiccho Island in the lake. Both groups have long been multilingual in the languages of the groups surrounding them (e.g. Gamo, Gats'ame, Wolayta and Guji-Oromo), and Amharic has recently been added to their linguistic repertoires. As the administrative language used in town and the language used in schools, Amharic stands for modernity and progress and has become attractive, particularly to young people, and has entered people's daily discourses through code-switching and borrowing. Savà demonstrates and interprets the differences between Bayso and Haro code-switching behaviour that emanate from the Bayso's more intensive contact with the town through education and employment.

In Chapter 6, Hermann Amborn looks at the dynamic relationship between craftspeople and the majority farming community over the course of the last eighty years. He argues that their relationship has always depended on the interplay between internal development and external events, such as the prevailing social order, economic conditions and historical change. He stresses that in the south, their relationship can by no

means be generalized as one of domination and marginalization. Rather, it should be considered as one of complementarity, as it is mostly based on social division of labour and concepts of discrimination and social hierarchy that were imported from the north of the country. He also argues that many scholars who did research in the south of Ethiopia were highly influenced by previous research done in the north and therefore exaggerated the dominance of the farming communities over craftworkers.

In the second part of the book, cases of persisting marginalization are explored. Desalegn Amsalu looks in Chapter 7 at how marginalization is locally explained and sustained by a marginalized group itself. The Kumpal-Agaw of north-western Ethiopia are convinced, that their physical appearance and their failure to be successful in modern education, political participation and economic development is a result of an ancestral curse. As the author shows, although external forces and factors have strongly contributed to the social marginalization of the Kumpal people, their belief in the ancestral curse has made them, and continues to make them, passive.

Chapter 8, written by Kiya Gezahegne, explores the history and contemporary situation of the exclusively female slaves who constituted the bottom stratum of the hierarchical society of the Rayya Qobbo Amhara in north Wollo. The slaves in this area, originally from the south or southwest of the country, were mainly used for physical labour and strongly discriminated against by the rest of the society. After the abolition of slavery, the descendants of the slaves have continued to be differentiated and many have left the area to live in towns, where they can hide their identity.

Chapter 9 was contributed by Alexander Meckelburg, who examines the situation of the Mao and Komo people of western Ethiopia: two related groups who – for historical reasons – live spread over various districts and even regions as minorities among other groups. As cross-border minorities in Sudan and Ethiopia, they have been affected by civil war, displacement and the slave trade and, thus, have been disadvantaged and stigmatized in various ways. Today they continue to be discriminated against by the surrounding groups. As small splinters, the Mao and Komo are not recognized as independent ethnic groups and therefore have no voice in the regional or national context. An exception is the Mao people living in Benishangul/Gumuz, who were given a special *woreda.* Nevertheless, they have not managed to achieve any remarkable social status within the Ethiopian context. Meckelburg first discusses their complex history under the last three political regimes in Ethiopia, and then reflects on their contemporary situation as a scattered minority.

Sayuri Yoshida recapitulates the history of the Kaffa-Manjo relationship in Chapter 10. She elaborates how the position of the Manjo as a group of former hunters with a special role in the Kaffa kingdom changed into that of a socially discriminated group. She traces the changes in the social organization of Kaffa society – and the effects of these changes on the status of the Manjo – from the forced inclusion of Kaffa in the Ethiopian Empire at the end of the nineteenth century, through the Italian occupation and the regimes of Emperor Haile Selassie I, to the socialist Derg and the present

EPRDF government. Despite many efforts to create a more equal relationship between the Manjo and the Kaffa majority, the Manjo have so far not been empowered and their social and political participation is marginal.

In Chapter 11, Kirsi Leikola shows how language can be used to influence social status. While Manjo and Kaffa both speak *kafi-noono*, the Manjo claim that the variety they speak is being stigmatized and therefore limiting their social chances. To counter this, the Manjo are strategically entering into new social networks with the Kaffa majority and thereby gaining access to additional linguistic repertoires. They use these repertoires for two different goals. Through imitating the Kaffa way of speaking they create a kind of sameness with the Kaffa that allows them to claim equal rights more easily. However, in contexts when they rely on the Manjo variety of *kafi-noono*, they emphasize difference in order to support their endeavour to have their separate ethnic identity acknowledged – a privilege so far denied to them in the context of ethnic federalism. Depending on the context of the speech situation, they will opt for one repertoire or the other, thereby manipulating their social boundary with the Kaffa according to their own interests.

Chapter 12, a translation of an article published originally in German by Eike Haberland in 1962 provides a detailed overview of the status groups existing in Ethiopia in the late 1950s, with a particular focus on 'hunters' and 'special castes' in all parts of the country (slave descendants are not mentioned). The chapter includes Haberland's review of the literature on their origins, history and various theories and explanations for their special status and marginalization that existed when he was writing.

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