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## LOCALISATION, GHANAIAN PENTECOSTALISM AND THE STRANGER'S BEAUTY IN BOTSWANA

*Rijk van Dijk*

Recently a member of one of the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches in Gaborone, Botswana, recounted to a group of bewildered Ghanaian women a deeply mysterious event that had happened to her just a month or so before. She explained she had been getting dressed, standing in front of the mirror in her bedroom, when suddenly she became aware of a big and ugly watchdog approaching her in that mirror. This mysterious creature started to bark violently. This was, she continued, not a real dog but a spirit-dog, which although it appeared as a spectre in the mirror, turned its gruesome head to her as if it was going to attack her. The image in the mirror was so frightening that she fled in agony into the living room, 'without even dressing properly', she added. In the living room she found her husband reading a newspaper and when she screamed and demanded that he investigate the dangerous image in her bedroom he initially reacted by saying, 'Ah, you Christians, you make up stories all the time!' At this point in her story the other ladies shrugged their shoulders, condemning this indifference by proclaiming, 'Men are useless.' However, when he noticed the panic in his wife's eyes, he reluctantly decided to go into the bedroom and came out seconds later, trembling with fear himself. Although not a 'Christian', he too had been confronted with the fearful image in the mirror and concluded that this was a bad omen and that somebody must be playing an occult trick on them. The woman then continued to recount how she suddenly remembered that lately one of her employees had been behaving strangely. Being an owner of one of the many Ghanaian hair-salons and boutiques in the city, she employs a number of local Botswana women, one of whom she suspected of being involved in this occult threat. With growing interest from the other women, she then went on to explain how she confronted that young Motswana by asking her directly whether she had been up to something by using something that belonged to her body. The young employee had admitted and confessed that she had obtained some of the salon owner's hair and had taken it to a *sangoma*. The purpose of

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this was to fabricate anything, a medicine, a potion, an amulet, etc., which would make the woman 'love her more', that is favour her, put her above the other employees and prevent her from being laid off. However her confession of this action actually made her lose her job at the Ghanaian salon, as the lady explained: 'I fired her at once, I didn't want anything to do any more with these locals that use *muti* against you while you employ them and pay them!' The other Ghanaian women, having listened breathlessly to the story, all agreed that as salon owners and businesswomen (which they all are) one could never be too cautious in dealing with local employees and the access they seem to have to alternative means to reach their aims. In their view, foreigners in this society are at the mercy of barking 'spiritual' watchdogs all the time and, being expatriates, are forced to be careful in their every move.

Leaving aside an analysis of the symbolic meaning of signifying animals such as the dog in African cosmologies (see Willis, 1990), this story, documented in the context of researching the introduction of Ghanaian Pentecostal churches in Botswana, captures in a nutshell some elements of the ambiguities that are played out between foreigners and locals in this society. Ghanaian migrants, looking for greener pastures elsewhere on the continent, have been settling in Botswana in increasing numbers since the mid-1970s and have become influential in specific sectors of its society and economy. These Ghanaians, an estimated 3,000 by now, have taken part in the process of international immigration of professionals and entrepreneurs into Botswana, which began in the decade following Independence. Owing to a lack of educational facilities in the country, Botswana experienced a great need for professionals who, in line with policies of 'Africanisation', were preferably to be recruited from other parts of Africa. Many Ghanaians became involved in government-related sectors of employment, such as teaching in secondary schools, colleges and universities; others have been particularly successful in starting private businesses. After settling in Botswana, these Ghanaians along with other immigrants were confronted in the 1980s and 1990s by labour policies that turned away from 'Africanisation' as a way of dealing with a colonial past and took up 'localisation' as a way of producing a post-colonial society where the nation-state would cater for its 'own' people. The combination of identity and labour was targeted as an area of increasingly protectionist concerns leading on the one hand to a localisation of certain sectors of the labour market, whereby such jobs became available exclusively for 'locals', and to an alienation of expatriate labour on the other. As economic conditions worsened in surrounding countries while Botswana turned into a country where living standards and economic growth rates became one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, the influx of immigrant labour increased dramatically.

The issue of the foreigner, the alien and the stranger began to take centre stage in political and public debate and was leading to increasingly xenophobic expressions and sentiments. The rise of such feelings in the context of ethno-national politics—emphasising 'belonging' for

those considered autochthons and 'otherness' for those groups in society typified as the prototypical stranger—has been analysed in other African countries by an anthropology increasingly interested in the cultural dynamics of nationalisms (see, for instance, Malkki, 1995; Taylor, 1999; and, more generally, Anderson, 1991; Eriksen, 1993; Smith, 1994; Tishkov, 2000). Commonly the analysis of xenophobic sentiments takes either of two points of departure: the 'xenophobed' are recent immigrants to the country who find themselves excluded from taking up a new nationality, or the xenophobed are a group of people with whom longstanding historical relationships existed, in some cases pre-dating colonial times, but who through processes of ethno-nationalism suddenly come to be constructed as the unwanted 'stranger' and 'outsider'. These ethno-political processes of disenfranchisement and dichotomisation have been profoundly described by, among others, Taylor (1999) for the Hutu-led genocide on the Tutsi in Rwanda or the conflict concerning the anglophone community in Cameroon by Konings (2001) and Konings and Nyamnjoh (2000).

While some authors, such as Gray (1998), argue that xenophobia often is expressed in straightforward terms of a 'dislike' of and even repulsion from foreigners and their cultural practices, and thus should be analysed in terms of the sharp boundaries such sentiments tend to create, this paper argues that xenophobia is never clear-cut. Instead, upon closer inspection, it appears that relations between dominant groups and the xenophobed are not only determined by the policies and sentiments of alienation that may be considered conducive to outright xenophobic 'dislike', but rather that they develop as an albeit sometimes surreptitious, play between attraction and repulsion.<sup>1</sup>

This insight may alert us in the Botswana situation to the possibility that, despite government policies on and public debates about 'localisation', a transcendence of difference and a commonality of interest may appear in some forms of attraction between the dominant groups in society and foreigners, such as the Ghanaian community. In this respect it is noteworthy that, whereas the barking dog in the Ghanaian lady's mirror may be symbolic of the aggression she feels from working in a sector that is 'localised' (namely hairdressing) and where she does not belong, 'local' women nevertheless visit her boutique in large numbers, attracted as they are by her West African skills in 'doing hair'. This article aims at exploring this ambiguous but at the same time ubiquitous relationship between the Ghanaian migrant group and the host society in Gaborone by pointing out that the term 'xenophobia' should be used with great care as it may unduly emphasise the dominant group's perspective of the foreigner and the stranger (see, for example, Gray, 1998). Instead, by analysing the play of attraction and

<sup>1</sup> Malkki (1995) and Taylor (1999) for instance describe how Hutu men remained attracted to Tutsi women despite their public and extremist dislike of the Tutsi in general and the danger Tutsi women in their eyes represented of being able to lure Hutu men into compromising sexual relationships. The relationship between nationalisms and sexualities has been also explored outside Africa (see Parker *et al.*, 1992).

repulsion in Botswana, the stranger's perspective of the host society becomes particularly relevant to a deeper understanding of the genesis of xenophobia as something fostered on the foreigner's side as well. It is in this sense that the present article interprets the remarkable role of Ghanaian Pentecostal churches in Gaborone, which are capable of attracting a membership of 'locals', but also seem to mediate Ghanaian anxieties concerning local spiritual powers.

These ambiguous relations must be placed in the context of the development of the Botswana nation-state which, since its Independence, has been resolutely liberal both in economy and society, thus propagating the equal rights of individual citizens irrespective of group membership. Over the last couple of years Botswana's development as a small-scale but nevertheless multicultural society has however become confronted with debates concerning the position of its 'internal' minorities. As Werbner (2002a, 2002b) argues, in recent years Botswana has witnessed important transformations in its politics of recognition whereby it was no longer only the groups living in the Kalahari that became the subject and object of the shifting sands of majority versus minority rule. Everywhere in Africa the divisions between the perceived majority and the assumed minority appear no longer to be clear-cut, as politically induced processes have given way to the minoritisation of certain groups in society where this previously may not have been the case (see Geschiere and Nyamnjoh, 2001; Gray, 1998; Werbner, 2002a, 2002b; Durham, 2002). Additionally, in Botswana political and economic interests are at stake in the public attribution of a majority or minority status to distinct ethnic groups in society. These have been leading to a hardening of identities, the pursuit of tribal and/or ethnic interests, and to calls for the improved representation of the so-called minorities' voice in various forums of the modern state where it has not previously been heard. As the politics of recognition—pursued by the self-proclaimed majority or the minorities alike—has led to fierce (but never violent) public debates, it is remarkable to note that 'external' minorities, i.e. the foreigner and the stranger, do not seem to play a role in the nation-state's recognition of minority rights. Strangely, the present debate while putting to the test the production of a liberal multicultural society, at the same time ignores minorities of this different kind and paradoxically can be interpreted to foster xenophobia.

This contribution sets out to explore some features of the relationship between 'locals' and foreigners in the context of the liberal multiculturalist programme in which Botswana society is presently involved. Whereas it is hard to detect any sort of xenophobic feelings in relations between the various ethnic groups that make up the multicultural mix of the society, these feelings are nevertheless noticeable in relations between locals and foreigners, for which the Ghanaian case serves as the specific example. The leading question is what these xenophobic sentiments actually mean, who authors them and how the play of attraction and repulsion is to be perceived in relation to liberal discourses in society, and the settlement of foreigners in the country?

## LOCALISATION AND STRANGERS IN THE BOTSWANA NATION-STATE

In his famous dictum on nations and nationalism, Hobsbawm (1990: 10) maintains that 'nations do not make states and nationalisms, but the other way round', thus turning it into a question for further study: does a nation produce xenophobia or xenophobia the nation? This highly debated dictum (see Hastings, 1997) places the rise of nationalisms and xenophobias in a historical perspective and at the same time questions the rise of citizenship in its exclusionist tendencies. Most theories such as these on the relationship between nationalism, xenophobia and the rise of the modern state have been developed and debated in the context of the North Atlantic histories of state-formation. As Hastings (1997) has rightly argued, the question remains as to what extent similar notions are applicable in the African situation.

Mamdani (1996) argues that colonial and legal distinctions between the citizen and the subject have given way in Africa to a 'bifurcated' state struggling to guarantee equal rights and access to resources and public goods to all of its citizens while at the same time recognising the rights of its constituent (ethnic) groups in the post-colonial situation. Some states, such as Botswana, have been busy until recently amending their constitutions, which for instance would only grant land rights to 'tribal' subjects whereas otherwise equal rights for all citizens have been guaranteed under the rule of law. Emerging states in Africa have been dealing with a situation where, in some domains of social and political life, the inhabitant may be considered the quintessential citizen (inclusive of perhaps all the connotations of nationalism and xenophobia this entails) whereas in other domains an ethnic subjectivity has emerged as the most relevant identity marker. As Mamdani, but also others (see Durham, 2002; Geschiere and Nyamnjoh, 2001) have shown, these uncertainties about status and identity are produced by the fact that citizens are subjects and that contradictions arise precisely because of the fact that there is unequal access to power, political participation and presence because of a subjective identity. However, the crucial point to be made here is that in the case of foreigners and aliens, uncertainties may arise because of them being neither the one nor the other: neither a citizen in a given country, nor a subject in an ethnicised meaning of the word as Mamdani proposed. Hence, in this context xenophobia does not necessarily relate exclusively to questions of citizenship, but must be analysed as arising from a context where multiple and contradictory models of identity exist.

In addition, xenophobic sentiments may have been entirely absent in the process of African state formation or rising nationalisms. From pre-colonial times histories in Africa are marked by migratory movements, whereby often processes of incorporation of the stranger occurred. Local populations, such as those of the Tswana in Botswana, became highly ethnically diverse, allowing people with other ethnic identities to come and settle by giving them a hierarchically subject position in society. Although colonial authorities in the pre-Independence period made deliberate attempts to control migration and make people stay put, this

assimilationist tendency of ethnicity as such provides little ground for the expectation that *a priori* xenophobic sentiments might emerge.

And yet nationalist sentiments emerged in the pre-Independence period and nation-states were formed, overriding in terms of identity their often varied ethnic composition. A conclusion therefore may be that in Africa specific situations show that nationalism can arise without the presence of xenophobia so that these sentiments do not surface as a *conditio sine qua non* for the arrival of an exclusionist citizenship. Hence, as Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (1998) also show for the Cameroonian situation, it is only after Independence that African states begin developing policies that would stress 'belonging' in its exclusionist tendencies. A struggle for the recognition of group rights within the boundaries of the nation-state emerged in many African countries, a struggle waged against the denial of group rights for the foreigner, i.e. the prototypical individual seeking access to the public goods of a society not by claiming group membership, but on the basis of personal endeavour and initiative.

Interestingly, although exclusionist tendencies often would exclude foreigners in cultural recognition, the general public did not only react in terms of sentiments of repulsion to the presence of foreigners but often and increasingly so also with a mixture of attraction. This is the second important problem with the Western production of notions of xenophobia, namely the possibility of attraction despite government policies aimed at exclusive citizenship. Theories such as those by Hobsbawm exclude the possibility of studying xenophobia as a *particular* type of rhetoric that may produce feelings of attraction and fascination as a suppressed and therefore more or less hidden, surreptitious sentiment. While the state may have a political interest in uniting its internal divisions by creating an exclusionist citizenship and fostering front-stage xenophobic feelings, underneath this unity there might still be feelings of mutual attraction and fascination in daily relationships.

In Botswana, authors such as Werbner (2002a, 2002b, 2002c) and Selolwane (1998) argue that, for political, economic and cultural purposes, a broad, working consensus was established at Independence, something that can be called the 'One Nation project'. Backed by the party that has ruled the country ever since Independence, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), and inspired by the first president Seretse Khama, a one-nation ideology was preached to the country's various groups. These comprised not only a majority consisting of Tswana-related ethnic groups but implied in actual practice what Werbner (2002b: 676) has called a Tswanification of the public sphere, for instance where language is concerned. It gave the Tswana-related groups dominance in politics and in the running of the economy. Although not uncontested by the other groups concerned, government policies, for instance in education, were aimed at creating homogeneity, and the gradual fading away of tribal identities in exchange for a uniform Botswana nationality. Foreigners were considered to be subservient to this overall political culture and policy, and their labour-power only

increased in importance for Botswana when the economy started to boom towards the end of the 1970s.

For a long time it was clear that foreigners and expatriate labour posed no threat to the general objectives of creating a one-nation unity. This is not to say that in the public domain occasional discussions would not erupt about the presence of foreigners in the country, such discussions indeed came up once in a while, and thereby seemingly affirmed the success of the one-nation paradigm. As most expatriates came to enjoy certain financial benefits or preferential treatment, there was on the other hand little incentive for them to integrate into society by way of taking up Botswana citizenship. From time to time public debates would deal critically with the benefits the foreigners seemed to be able to accrue, occasionally calling for localisation so that such jobs would fall into local hands.

Over the past few years, however, public debates on the presence of foreigners and expatriate labour have hardened in tone and become more aggressive (Van Dijk, 2002a).<sup>2</sup> Increasingly, a xenophobic dimension to both the public sphere and government policy is transpiring whereby it appears that Botswana is becoming hostile to the presence of foreigners and to the contribution foreign labour is making to its economy. *The Botswana Guardian* reported of the Botswana Parliamentary discussions in February 2001, among others, the following:

#### Aliens Bashed: Parliament Attacks Foreigners

On Tuesday [13 February 2001], Parliament underlined Botswana's hardening attitudes against foreigners with Francistown West MP Tshelang Masisi calling for a campaign to cleanse Botswana of undesirable expatriates. This has set off alarm bells among the expatriate community who feel the line between citizen empowerment and xenophobia has been blurred. [*The Botswana Guardian*, 16 February 2001]

In the early 1970s Parliament discussed how to deal with the much needed, qualified foreign labour in the country, weighing this against the need and the long-term perspective of how 'locals' were eventually going to take over (Maundeni, 1998: 125). Both Parliament and government appeared to take a nuanced position:

Localisation is a long-term goal, but the positive assistance provided by non-Batswana is recognised as essential to achieving national goals ... increased participation by Batswana, in all aspects of the country's economic development is desirable ... but there continues to be a role for non-citizens. Localisation provides career opportunities for citizens, enables more decisions concerning Botswana and its development to be made

<sup>2</sup> There appears to be a vested interest on the part of journalists in the issue of labour immigration into the country, which in the meantime has led to a considerable stream of newspaper articles. For example, under the headline 'Aliens Swamp Botswana', *The Botswana Guardian* reported on Friday, 9 August 2002: 'At least one illegal immigrant enters Botswana every three hours. This costs Botswana two thousands Pula every hour.'

by local officers and in that there is liable to be greater familiarity with Botswana specific situations. [First Presidential Commission on Localisation and Training in the Botswana Public Service, Report 1972, p. 2]

In the 1970s the need for qualified labour in such sectors as business administration and education only increased because of the discovery of large diamond deposits and the subsequent rapid expansion of the economy. From the start of the exploitation of the mines in 1971 until 1990 Botswana was the fastest growing economy in the world (Jefferis, 1998: 300). The diamond revenues gave both government and private enterprise ample room to expand their activities thanks to which qualified positions became available in all sorts of new sectors and companies faster than the educational institutions could deliver candidates. Botswana therefore remained dependent on foreign qualified labour, simply because the country did not have the resources to form and train a local class of professionals, teachers, businessmen, etc. (Oucho, 2000). During the 1970s and 1980s recruiting teams went to places such as Ghana and Malawi to recruit labour (teachers, managers, etc.), offering jobs with attractive fringe benefits.

Most of these professionals found a place in the rapidly expanding urban job market. Concomitant with its economic boom Botswana witnessed not only a population growth among the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, but also experienced an unprecedented growth of its major cities, Gaborone in particular (Mosha, 1998: 283). As Botswana became a developmental state (see Taylor, 2001), it created favourable conditions for financial assistance plans so that a range of private investors could take up loans to start their own businesses, of which many were established in Gaborone. As Selolwane (2001) argues, with a population of presently around 200,000 (which is a considerable share of the Botswana population of 1.7 million) and particularly through its proximity to the South African border, it benefited from many economic opportunities. Nevertheless in this urban area, poverty developed in the midst of plenty, a problem the Botswana government has had great difficulty coping with (see Larsson, 1987, on the area called Old Naledi; Gulbrandsen, 1996).

During the 1990s the period of rapid diamond-led growth came to an end and the revenues from this export stabilised. At an early stage the government recognised the need for a diversification of the economy, and laid out extensive programmes particularly attractive to private business. From the 1990s onwards this meant a gradual withdrawal of the Botswana state as the principal economic actor, thereby leaving more room for all sorts of private companies to adopt economic initiatives. This process of what Selolwane (2001) refers to as a process of 'privatization' meant a reduction in government positions while foreigners could become more active than ever before, in terms of starting a business or competing for a market share.

It is in these years that the controversy about 'localisation', 'foreigners' and 'minorities' increased and has now been placed at the centre of the public's attention and debate, partly due to the attention the public

media devotes to such issues, as Nyamnjoh (2002) has recently shown. Several factors contribute to the general public's and the media's concern over these issues. First of all, due to the favourable economic circumstances, Botswana remains a focus for much of the international immigration from surrounding countries. While legal access can be controlled, the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe in particular has resulted in a growing influx of (economic) refugees.

A second factor causing public unrest is the highly politicised debate on the position of Botswana's 'internal' minorities as Werbner (2002b, 2002c) argues. Minorities in Botswana are increasingly employing a variety of methods to opt for better political representation, cultural recognition and material entitlements as distinct groups (Nyamnjoh, 2002).<sup>3</sup> Both authors recognise a watershed in what was long taken for granted as an established form of assimilationist nationalism, now becoming the subject of growing public debate. Cherished ideals of unity, harmony and cultural homogeneity for the sake of national unity, the downplaying of opposing claims on tribal lands (a heritage from the colonial Tribal Lands Board system) and the concealment of ethnic discrimination have increasingly become contested. Botswana's human rights record with regard to the plight of the Basarwa ethnic minority (otherwise known as Bushmen) had already raised doubts about the cultural politics of the state, but in the late 1990s public debate further sharpened on the question of the representation of the minorities' voice in national political matters and the recognition of their position under the constitution.<sup>4</sup> While Botswana professed the ideals of a liberal democracy with equal rights for all on an individual basis, the emerging ethnic polarisation appears to renegotiate citizenship in terms of tribal, communal and hence group affiliation. As Werbner (2002c) shows, the capital city has become the major arena for the expression of these various sentiments and the place where the representative associations of ethnic groups have striven to make their voices heard in the public domain and through the public media. Nyamnjoh (2002) shows that this struggle feeds the sentiments concerning the position of 'external' strangers who, in the eyes of the public, should be excluded from the interests over which these internal groups are competing. The pejorative term *makwerekwere* is thus reserved for these external strangers, such as the large number of newly arrived Zimbabweans, who are eager to benefit from Botswana's liberal economy and compete in the rapidly privatising market through the small businesses they establish. Although

<sup>3</sup> In 2000 a conference was organised at the University of Botswana on 'Challenging Minorities, Difference and Tribal Citizenship' which focused for the first time on these issues (19–23 May).

<sup>4</sup> A special commission was formed, the Balopi Commission, to investigate those sections of the constitution that favour the position of the so-called eight principal Tswana-speaking tribes to the disadvantage of the minority tribes in the country. The recommendations of the Commission have since led to sharp public debates between the elites of the various ethnic communities, each perceiving serious shortcomings and pitfalls in what the Commission proposed to the President and Parliament (see Werbner, 2002a, 2002c).

unemployment rates have been dropping consistently (from 19.6 per cent in 1998 to 16 per cent in 2001), in the current situation even the predominance of Ghanaian ownership of hair salons in the city has become a matter for Parliamentary debate (*Mmegi Reporter*, June 2000).

It is in this context of a largely urban-based controversy that 'localisation' has gained in importance and influence. Sectors that have become increasingly closed to employment of foreigners include all sorts of administrative and secretarial work, certain forms of manufacturing such as tailoring, the 'hair business', as well as teaching, particularly in government primary and secondary schools. Foreigners in government employment have lost their former special benefits and privileges, while foreigners running their own businesses are required to employ a certain percentage of 'locals', also as 'understudies' in management positions, and receive regular visits from labour inspectors checking whether these criteria are being met. Foreigners are also required to pay special fees and pay for special permits if they want to establish a business or to employ other foreigners in their places of work.<sup>5</sup> The Botswana police has become more active than ever before in checking on illegal labour immigration in the country and has stepped up its efforts to deport these migrants. Almost every week there are reports in the newspapers of scams involving foreigners and counter measures taken by the authorities to supervise their activities. Occasionally the Ministry of Labour may decide to relieve some of the pressure on controlling expatriate labour, and foreigners are allowed to come in and to take those kinds of jobs in which local Botswana are no longer interested.<sup>6</sup> Generally, however, in the public domain anxieties are expressed about foreigners who have come 'to take our jobs' as many local interlocutors told me. Foreigners are also being blamed for the introduction of HIV/AIDS into the country, a disease many perceive as being of foreign origin and to which Botswana has fallen victim.<sup>7</sup>

In cultural terms, therefore, the effect of both the minorities debate as well the localisation anxiety is a parochialisation of society, i.e. a sense of belonging which is based on a feeling of uninterest in external exposure and on a sentiment which says that 'if foreigners all want to come and live in this country and they all seem to find what they want here, why would we want to travel outside? Our situation is better than theirs!'<sup>8</sup> Hence, despite minoritisation, the foreigner and the stranger, particularly in an urban centre such as Gaborone, figure as a common threat or as a common enemy, capable of uniting both

<sup>5</sup> In some sectors, such as tailoring, these special permits and levies require sums of money as high as Botswana Pula 65,000 (US\$11,000), amounts that represent a real impediment to any foreign investor interested in opening a small-scale business.

<sup>6</sup> This happened recently when it became clear that large labour-intensive farms were unable to find un- and semi-skilled labour locally (see 'Hiring Unskilled Foreign Labour Legalised', *The Botswana Guardian*, Friday 19 July 2002; 'Cattle Barons Hire Foreign Herdsmen', *Mmegi*, 9–15 August 2002).

<sup>7</sup> 'Kick AIDS with Deeply Held Belief', *Mmegi* 19–25 October 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Group interview, 5 August 2002.

majority and minority in a shared anxiety over the headway these outsiders apparently are able to make in society and the economy at the expense of the 'locals'. Or is this conclusion too easily reached in the eyes of a superficial beholder of urban myths? Can these anxieties, so easily expressed in the environment of the café, the market or the newspapers, perhaps be analysed from a different angle as well, an angle from which greater ambiguities emerge in the relationships that include and perhaps foster notions of mutual attraction and fascination?

CHURCHES AND SALONS:  
VENUES OF A MORAL AMBIGUITY OF ATTRACTION

The ways in which localisation anxieties affect the position of communities of foreigners living in the city of Gaborone can most profitably be studied by taking a closer look at the community of Ghanaian migrants. The reason for a special focus on this particular community is that it stands out in a number of ways compared to that of other communities of foreigners in the city. One reason for their special position in Botswana society is the longevity of their stay in post-Independence Botswana, and being a group originating from much further away than the immediate Southern African region. Ghanaians began arriving in the country in the mid-1970s and found other migrant groups who originally had come from surrounding countries in the region which had been part of the longer history of labour migration to and from the industrial and mining areas in South Africa.

Another reason for their special position is the influence many Ghanaians began to wield in certain sectors of society and the economy because of their relatively high level of training and because of the high positions they were able to fulfil in the public domain. In this respect Ghanaians were not only employed as university professors and lecturers but were also appointed as judges and attorneys in Botswana's legal system. As Otlhogile (1994) shows in his history of the Botswana judicial system, Ghanaians were even appointed as high court judges and to similar top-level positions allowing them in certain cases to take decisions and to pass verdicts with important consequences for government policies.<sup>9</sup> Other Ghanaians began to open law firms and offered services to the general public by being lawyers, attorneys, notaries and insurance brokers. In addition and following the forced expulsion of nearly two million Ghanaians from Nigeria in the early 1980s, another class of Ghanaians began entering Botswana who were less inspired by cosmopolitan aspirations, who were less well trained and who were more focused on a kind of risk-taking entrepreneurship. The background to this was the worsening socio-economic and political situation in Ghana

<sup>9</sup> A well-known example was the Ghanaian president of the Court of Appeal, Judge Austin Ammisah, and his rulings with regard to the implementation of the Citizen Amendment Act in 1992, which regulated marriages of foreigners with Botswana citizens and eliminated a gender-bias in previous government policies.

where after a series of coups Rawlings took power to establish a military dictatorship. Ghana's economy, largely based on the export of cocoa and gold, had spiralled into a deep crisis mainly because of sharply declining world-market prices and political instability. The profound economic and political deterioration gave way to massive emigration, which initially was focused on the West African region, countries such as Nigeria that seemed to be surviving the effects of the world market. Whereas Ghana internally had been experiencing a massive migration of unskilled labourers from its northern regions to the southern urbanised parts of the country, these southern areas now appeared to fuel a massive outward migration of those faced with unemployment in the city on the one hand and a very limited if not non-existent access to the rural areas. It is therefore estimated that in the course of the 1980s about 15 per cent of the total population began drifting, seeking greener pastures beyond the West African region and largely attracted to places in Europe, Africa and the booming Asian economies where semi-skilled jobs were available in large numbers. As the West African economies shifted their emphasis from production to consumption and new consumer appetites and consumptive styles developed on a large scale amidst a situation of scarcity and outward migration, a fascination for small-scale entrepreneurial activity developed, including trading, retailing and services. Rapidly, all sorts of small-scale but highly transnational business networks developed, operated by Ghanaians, and often based on the international multilocality of kinship networks and therefore usually comprising business relations with Ghanaians living in various parts of the world. Ghana quickly became a centre for the trade in second-hand cars, clothes and cloth, cosmetics and music, money-transfers and building and construction activities. It was as part of this particular migration wave, which involved a transnational search for entrepreneurial livelihoods, that Ghanaian women came to settle in Gaborone introducing West African hair salons and boutiques. The first Ghanaian salon was established in the late 1970s by a prominent member of the community who has now lived in Botswana for more than twenty-five years. Her initiative was followed in the early 1980s by Ghanaian ladies establishing salons and clothing boutiques at or near the emerging shopping areas in the city (known as 'Main Mall' and 'Broadhurst'), while later more shops were established in other parts of the rapidly expanding city. During a stint of fieldwork in 2002, I was able to list thirty-one Ghanaian-owned salons and/or clothing boutiques most of which had been established from the mid-1980s onwards, each employing somewhere between one and six Ghanaian hairdressers and tailors.<sup>10</sup> These salons and boutiques are owned by twenty Ghanaian women, meaning that some of them own more than one shop (some even own three or four). Most of them hail from the Ashanti region in Ghana, which in this sense forms a continuation of the same ethnic preponderance in entrepreneurial activity found in Ghana, and these

<sup>10</sup> This list is not exhaustive as it does not include a survey of Gaborone's suburbs.

women are now in their late thirties and early forties, often employing much younger workers in their shops. In the cases of those owners I was able to interview in depth—most of them travel quite extensively to West Africa and other places for buying materials and for updating themselves on the latest fashions, techniques and skills—it appeared that they had all arrived in Botswana in the 1980s as dependents of their Ghanaian husbands. These Ghanaian men had been able to secure jobs in the expanding job market, as teachers, professionals and the like, while their wives had typically faced difficulties in finding employment. In some cases these husbands played a part in providing the capital necessary for their wives to start in business; neither now nor in the past are businesses established through partnerships with 'locals'. In terms of the business investment, therefore, owners neither depended upon nor engaged in enduring relations with the host society, but rather bought and sold shops, equipment and materials from one another within the local Ghanaian community (ownership of some salons could change hands quickly from one Ghanaian to another) and relied on skilled labour flown in from Ghana.

Ghanaian shops and salons have remained one of the most important visible and tangible markers of Ghanaian presence in the city. Ghanaian women appear to be highly successful in establishing these shops and companies, running them by employing both Ghanaian labour skilled in hairdressing techniques and West African clothing styles and remaining at the centre of much local attention for style and fashion. These salons and boutiques began to function as meeting places for Ghanaians and locals where not only clientelist relations were established, but local hairdressers began to learn the tricks of the trade, to find employment in a booming sector, to address and fashion consumptive orientations and to express a much more cosmopolitan aspiration with regard to style, appearance and posture. In addition to finding employment local women and occasionally men began working in Ghanaian salons and boutiques to learn West African styles, after which they would leave to set up on their own. In discussions with some of the Ghanaian owners it transpired however that while they understood the fascination for their trade on the part of the 'locals', only rarely would friendships develop on the basis of this shared interest. During the 1990s Ghanaian shops began to experience increasing competition from local salons and found themselves dis-privileged when the government decided to 'localise' this business sector. From the late 1990s onwards Ghanaian shop-owners needed to acquire special permits to run hair salons and boutiques and were also required to obtain special work permits for the workers they needed to recruit in Ghana particularly for the highly specialised skills that some of the hairstyles require. However, whereas the salons became an element in the government's localisation policies aimed at creating more employment opportunities for its 'own' population, the general public still maintained a high level of fascination for what the Ghanaians were able to offer.

By virtue of being a bodily contact-zone between 'locals' and 'foreigners', the Ghanaian shops and boutiques can also profitably be perceived

and analysed as a kind of social compression chamber where all sorts of moral valuations of one another are exchanged. As also Weiss (1999) has shown for barber-shops in Tanzania, these are the places for the bodily expression of identity and morality, a location once more where all sorts of intimate exchanges take place in which perceptions of one's place in society, one's aspirations and ambitions are expressed and where a positioning vis-à-vis other, perhaps less fortunate, groups in society is given shape and meaning. Hence, a shared morality is being produced in the process of shaping one's appearance according to what is fashionable and acceptable. Ghanaian shopkeepers are dependent on local customers and local workers, and therefore need to be acutely aware of how they and the businesses they run are perceived in their eyes. They need to satisfy customer appetites and to fulfil government regulations with regard to the number of locals they employ, the opportunities they give for in-service training and the taxes and fees they are supposed to pay. The local workers need to satisfy the demands of the customers as well as those of their Ghanaian employers and need to understand how the Ghanaians perceive style, appearance and beauty. The question then becomes how perceptions of the one with regard to the other are being constructed in the triangle between shop owner, local worker and customer, and to what extent these are informed by preconceptions, perhaps even including xenophobic sentiments. In that sense the hair salon is a place where xenophobic sentiments can be transcended by the sheer economic necessities of having to 'make business' and by the social urge to appear as cosmopolitan as possible. After all, looks do matter in an urban economy where jobs are always scarce and where first appearances count in terms of chances and success.

From the perspective of the local workers, the Ghanaian salons are the places where one should have 'a long heart' (in the vernacular: *pelo e telele*), as particularly the women explained. Both the Ghanaian owners and the customers are highly demanding, perceiving a hair-do as a costly investment (and costly they usually are), which risks being destroyed if not properly handled. 'Having a long heart' thus acquires the meaning of being able to have patience with the high-handedness of the Ghanaian owner and the critical demands of the customer. It also means having the resilience and the stamina to deal with the blows and insults one may receive, of being called names, of being perceived as 'lazy' and of never being able to meet the high standards that Ghanaians have set for themselves. It is a relationship of distrust as the local workers occasionally find themselves ill-treated which may include physical abuse and punishment if something has gone terribly wrong. It thus requires a strategy of putting the customer at ease, 'to work not only the skull but also the mind', as one lady explained to me so that a real relaxation almost akin to a massage can be provided. This in turn will then also please the owner as the customer may leave satisfied, happy to return in future.

Local workers, however, hardly ever make a career out of hairdressing itself. The actual hairdressing is mostly reserved for the expatriate Ghanaian, flown into Botswana for that specific purpose. The local



worker commonly works only as the prototypical 'shampoo girl', the one who touches the skull of the customer in the first instance, rinsing it with water and soap. Only then will the Ghanaian hairdresser perform his or her magic tricks of transforming the hair into something else so as to create a new appearance. The shampoo girls form the first contact-zone with the customer and the basic reason for this is the fear of HIV/AIDS and the Ghanaian preconceptions of local sexual morality. The general feeling among the Ghanaian hairdressers is that they do not want to be the victims of what they perceive as an inferior sexual morality and be endangered through their work and contacts with HIV infection. If the shampoo girl discovers wounds or sores on the skull of the customer she will then be placed in the position as the bearer of bad news. She must inform the customer that something is wrong and that there is a choice of either leaving the shop or being dealt with by somebody who would need to wear rubber gloves. This latter option signals the risk of public shame as it will be clear to the other customers and workers in the shop that there is a concern about HIV/AIDS, an embarrassment of unimaginable proportions. If the customer, however, still insists on receiving a proper hairdo, the shampoo girl will be the one to take the risk, often without wearing gloves as a way of protecting herself.

This repulsion on the part of Ghanaian hairdressers to working on unclean scalps is strengthened by another factor that increases their dependence on the local workers being at the forefront of contact with customers. From the Ghanaian perspective, hair is also the place where spiritual powers can manifest themselves in the daily world. As hair is perceived to grow from within the skull into an outer world, it is also an index of the mind and the spiritual powers that can be located there. Ghanaian hairdressers declared adamantly that they would never ever be prepared to do dreadlocks as these are the ultimate sign of a demonic influence manifesting itself in the outward appearance of the person. While dreadlocks in that sense form an extreme case, the relationship of hair with thought, spirit and personal intentions makes doing hair a business for which additional spiritual strengthening and protection is required. Ghanaian hairdressers fear *muti*, and all the stories they hear leave them uncertain where to locate its bodily manifestations. Local customers therefore can be suspected of bringing into the shop, perhaps unconsciously so, certain powers that may destroy the business, the good health or the success a hairdresser is enjoying. This is a second reason why the local shampoo girls are put at the forefront, in the hope and expectation that whatever the customer's hair may bring will come to them in the first place. The Ghanaian hairdressers assume and expect their shampoo girls to find their spiritual and protective *materia sacra* locally, something most of the Ghanaian hairdressers feel is not readily available to them.

It is in this respect, the domain of ritual protection and strangerhood in a spiritual sense, that another meaningful development took place in the Ghanaian community. Over the last decade Gaborone has witnessed the emergence of Ghanaian Pentecostal churches, Pentecostal churches

under Ghanaian leadership, with a substantial membership from within the Ghanaian migrant community and with specific ties to the transnational Ghanaian Pentecostal circles as these have been described by Van Dijk (1997, 2000, 2001a, 2002d). As has been documented elsewhere (see Van Dijk, 2001b, 2002b, 2002c, for Ghanaian communities in the Netherlands; Manuh, 1998, for Ghanaian communities in Toronto), these Pentecostal churches play a pivotal role in the community and appear as places where the contradictions and challenges of exposure to other economic, political and cultural circumstances are mitigated and mediated.

This development took place in the context of a wider and rapidly growing fascination of the general (urban) public for this particular brand of Christianity, but also tied in with the marked characteristics of the profile of Ghanaian identity in the city—the overall Ghanaian entrepreneurial positioning in the local economy, society and its culture. In other words, the Pentecostal churches have become new spiritual havens for the Ghanaian business community, comprising to a large extent salon and boutique owners and their Ghanaian hairdressers. Almost every Ghanaian shop owner—almost without exception a woman—is a member of one of these churches and has been able to establish a close relationship with their Ghanaian leaders. These pastors are invited on a regular basis to come to perform prayers and ritual sanctifications of salons and boutiques, a kind of religious 'sealing off' from external afflicting powers, known in Twi as *nteho*. In addition, from time to time special prayers are held for all the staff working in a salon or boutique, meetings in which the local workers are also expected to participate. Whereas this present paper leaves much of the modernist meaning and signification of Pentecostalism undiscussed (see Meyer, 1998, 1999; van Dijk, 1997, 2002c; Maxwell, 1998; Marshall, 1993; Marshall-Fratani, 2001, on many of the cultural and political dimensions of Pentecostalism in Africa), one of the significant issues in terms of xenophobia is that these churches strongly promote the inclusion of 'locals' in their membership. All make special efforts to include 'locals' for instance on the boards that formally govern the activities of these churches, and organise so-called crusades to attract a larger following of locals among their rank and file. They explicitly study the ways in which a meaningful relationship can be established with some of the important rituals in the lives of their local membership (such as those relating to births, marriages and funerals). Interestingly, some of the Ghanaian hair salons have come to act as unofficial 'outstations' for these churches, in the sense that they help to bring local customers into contact with these churches or at least make them aware of their existence. The reasons for this and for the willingness of owners and hairdressers to be active in this regard are obvious. First of all, it is regarded as an act of faith, highly esteemed, if a non-believing 'local' starts visiting a church through one's actions and persuasive talking. Doing the hair of a regular customer provides the time and the intimacy to discuss such matters on a recurring basis, such that the customer becomes a new person, not only in outward appearances, but also

transformed internally by becoming 'born again'. Secondly, and perhaps even more importantly, demonic threats need no longer to be feared from confirmed Pentecostal believers. Building such relations with regular customers is considered vital for the economic survival of a salon or a boutique, particularly in view of stiffening competition from 'local' owners. If, therefore, this relationship remains free of any form of demonic influence which might have an adverse effect on the economic prospects of the business, attempts at conversion may prove to be more worthwhile in several senses.

From the perspective of the locals, the type of charismatic Pentecostalism which these Ghanaian-led churches represent appears to be particularly attractive to those that belong to the emerging urban middle classes. These Ghanaian churches belong to a wider movement of Pentecostalism that is gaining ground in Botswana society mostly at the expense of the established mission churches but also of the large number of usually very small prophetic healing and Zionist type of churches. The fascination for Pentecostal churches arriving from elsewhere on the doorstep of the middle classes in Gaborone is not very different from similar processes recorded in other countries (see Van Dijk, 1992; Englund, 2001). Much of the attraction, as some talks with local members of these churches revealed, relates to notions of individual success and prosperity, the ways in which Pentecostal ideologies proclaim both a defence against, as well as a deliverance from, evil spiritual powers, and the ways in which Pentecostal practices emphasise the nuclear family as a break with the responsibilities any successful person may have with regard to the extended family, which is increasingly perceived as a liability. In local perceptions, the foreignness of these Ghanaian-led churches and the imagery of Pentecostalism only add to their spiritual powers. The modern outlook of these churches, combined with their external origin and sources of inspiration, seems to promise disentanglement from local restrictions and tribulations, a disentanglement many of the local members no longer seem able to find in either the established or the African Independent churches which have become deeply embedded in local circumstances and power relations. In addition, local members express awe and respect for Ghanaian business acumen and entrepreneurial initiative which are reaffirmed for them by the claims to superior spiritual knowledge and power these Pentecostal churches appear to make. These 'claims to fame' work in tandem, despite the fact that Pentecostal churches have also been the subject of criticism in the public domain and the media. Whereas the presence of foreigners is criticised because they occupy jobs that should fall into the hands of the local population and they take business initiatives that leave little room for ordinary Batswana, in these popular views the churches sometimes face criticism for being 'money-making machines', foreign-owned and fishing in the mission ponds of the established churches for new membership. Despite these popular concerns the middle-class expectations of local professionals and businessmen who have taken up membership of the new Pentecostal churches are high in terms of the kind of security and success they will receive from

the powers which the leaders have brought them into contact with. The local members I talked to therefore look down upon and hold in contempt much of the popular expressions of distrust.

Hence the salons, the churches and their owners, leaders and members are acutely aware of the kind of criticism levelled against them, leading as was explained earlier to questions being asked in Parliament with regard to both the foreign influence in hairdressing and church life. One may therefore reason that the interest both churches and salons show for interacting with the local population is motivated only by self-interest: the more interaction and commitment the less likely that localisation will become any worse than it already is. Many of the Ghanaian actions, views and ideas appear to be inspired by notions of economic, spiritual and even moral superiority which unfortunately could lead to the conclusion that their attitude is one of outright xenophobia. It is as if the treatment of the shampoo girls and the perceptions of 'lower' sexual morality play on sentiments of 'repulsion' without any room for genuine fascination with forms of local social and cultural life. Interestingly, however, the Pentecostal churches seem to play a role as places where cross-cultural marriages can be established with a kind of moral backing, something these marriages otherwise would have lacked. A small number of Ghanaian men have started to marry local, not Ghanaian, women, and have asked the Ghanaian church leaders to act as surrogate family marriage guardians, responsible for negotiating the terms of the marriage on the man's behalf. They have introduced their local wives to the churches and the women's fellowships where there is usually much interest in the business and entrepreneurial acumen the Ghanaian women seem to espouse.

Furthermore and most importantly the Ghanaian churches and their leaders try to decentre a Ghanaian-versus-local type of discourse within their congregations by stressing their multinational composition and transnational way of operation. On the one hand, a further understanding of local cultural styles is deemed necessary in such circumstances while, on the other hand, a critical stance is developed with regard to Ghanaian cultural practices relating to birth, marriage or death. There is no uncritical embrace of Ghanaian culture and the churches cannot be perceived as the custodians of Ghanaian cultural heritage in the diaspora. Instead, such cultural practices are perceived to be in need of 'Christianisation' and the practices that are developed with regard to marriages, funerals or birthing ceremonies are meant to be 'universal' and thus applicable to the multinational and multicultural membership of these churches. Unlike the mainline churches these Pentecostal churches do not strive towards 'enculturation', a project they despise because of its inclusion of local cultural practices that may have all sorts of 'heathen' if not evil roots. The Pentecostal identity is one that must transcend national identities and is proclaimed to be capable of uniting their Ghanaian, Batswana, Zimbabwean, Malawian and Kenyan membership by becoming part of a transnational community of confirmed believers. This ideology—very much an ideology, since within the church actual practices may still include and favour

Ghanaians—can be read as a form of cultural critique proclaiming to the general public that these churches do better in preventing xenophobia than government policies.

#### NEGOTIATING XENOPHOBIA IN A LIBERAL SOCIETY

One of the first conclusions to be drawn from the Botswana–Ghana encounter is that important sections of the Ghanaian community do entertain xenophobic sentiments in their perceptions of the host society. The dominant opinion is that (work) relations with locals can never be trusted and, because one is a Ghanaian, one must take care in physical as well as in spiritual matters when in contact with ‘locals’. These sentiments extend beyond superficial preconceptions that tend to view ‘locals’ as being lazy, apathetic, dependent, spiritually inferior and lacking initiative and style. It involves exclusion of the locals from certain jobs, such as hairdressing, and perceives certain of their morals and habits as repulsive. Hence a minority, such as Ghanaians, may foster its own repertoire of xenophobia, that may or may not be related to the policies or attitudes of the state or the dominant groups in the host society. The obvious point to be made is therefore that it is not only the dominant group in society that is the producer of preconceptions, stereotypes and outright xenophobic sentiments; the stranger can be engaged in the same.

A second point, however, is that much of this lives on at the level of discourse and rhetoric. In daily life, even that of a migrant minority such as the Ghanaians, much interaction leads to resemblance and mutual concerns through the attractions and fascinations that are produced in the relation between minority and dominant society. ‘Local’ women are attracted to Ghanaian/West African styles, ‘local’ men find the relative independence of Ghanaian wives (in the businesses and trade they do independent of their husbands) fascinating, whereas Ghanaian men are increasingly interested in marrying ‘local’ women as a way of entering Botswana society and gaining the exclusive citizenship rights of the country. In this particular situation, xenophobia emerges as a particular discourse of attraction and repulsion, a discourse in which elements of fascination with the xenophobed are as important as what is commonly assumed in terms of rejection and abhorrence. This subtle and at times surreptitious play of attraction and repulsion is, as this Botswana case shows, not necessarily a popular endeavour of the masses, but may be located in specific sections of the general populace, such as—in this example—the emergent urban middle classes who may share a common outlook and perception of society, culture and the economy with their Ghanaian counterparts.

The specificity of this relationship emerges in the context of a liberal society that features entrepreneurialism (Werbner, 2002c), promotes private initiative and harbours the rights of the individual qua citizen. Much of these are the domain of middle-class fascinations and aspirations and belong to the world of enterprising businessmen and women,

professionals, traders and so on, very much the hallmark of the Ghanaian community as well. Ideas and images concerning opportunities, business ventures, setbacks and dangers live across xenophobic divides and thus may create a commonality also in situations of anti-foreigner sentiments. Botswana displays all the signs of being a liberal society and economy par excellence, not only in the way the general economy is dealt with in a very specific entrepreneurial fashion, but also in the way identity politics are shaped according to circumstances and cultural histories (see Helle-Valle, 2002; Durham, 2003, on how these perceptions of the state also permeate from the capital city to the village-level of existence). These identity politics indulge in a liberalist democratic rhetoric in which an undifferentiated citizenship is promoted by the state on the one hand concealing inequalities between various ethnic groups in the country (see Durham, 2002, 2003, on the case of the Herero), but on the other hand defending the exclusive interest of all ‘Batswana’ against foreign influence through the enactment of a localisation policy (Werbner, 2002a, 2002b). Liberalism might be hegemonic in its tendencies,<sup>11</sup> but it may fail to live up to its promises of becoming omnipresent. Questions have been asked in the Botswana Parliament about foreigners marrying locals, which might signal a breach in liberal policies concerning citizenship. Such ‘domains of attraction’ may escape the possibilities of supervision throughout, produced as they may be within specific sections of the population. So whereas the story of the barking dog in a superficial reading may be understood as a pathetic expression of xenophobic feelings on the individual’s part, its underlying message may have little to do with the dislike of the ‘locals’ and their sinister and threatening dealings of *muti* as such. Its message may instead be that contrary to the rhetoric of xenophobia there is the possibility of ‘loving’ a ‘local’ more than others, an attraction in this case produced beyond the control of one’s own powers and against one’s own free will, i.e. an unexpected outcome of the play of repulsion and attraction because of ulterior powers. The story opened up the possibility of becoming more local than existing anxieties would permit and Pentecostal beliefs would allow for. No wonder the other women listened in amazement. Although perhaps the full significance of the story may have escaped them, pressed for time as they were to engage in another ecstatic prayer session.

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<sup>11</sup> Some even speak of ‘market fundamentalism’ in this regard (see Evers and Gerke, 1999).

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## ABSTRACT

This contribution considers the current position of the Ghanaian migrant community in Botswana's capital, Gaborone, at a time of rising xenophobic sentiments and increasing ethnic tensions among the general public. The article examines anthropological understandings of such sentiments by placing them in the context of the study of nationalisms in processes of state formation in Africa and the way in which these ideologies reflect the position and recognition of minorities. In Botswana, identity politics indulge in a liberalist democratic rhetoric in which an undifferentiated citizenship is promoted by the state, concealing on the one hand inequalities between the various groups in the country, but on the other hand defending the exclusive interests of all 'Batswana' against foreign influence through the enactment of what has become known as a 'localisation policy'. Like many other nationalities, Ghanaian expatriate labour has increasingly become the object of localisation policies. However in their case xenophobic sentiments have taken on unexpected dimensions. By focusing on the general public's fascination with Ghanaian fashion and styles of beautification, the numerous hair salons and clothing boutiques Ghanaians operate, in addition to the newly emerging Ghanaian-led Pentecostal churches in the city, the ambiguous but ubiquitous play of repulsion and attraction can be demonstrated in the way in which localisation is perceived and experienced by the migrant as well as by the dominant groups in society. The article concludes

by placing entrepreneurialism at the nexus of where this play of attraction and repulsion creates a common ground of understanding between Ghanaians and their host society, despite the government's hardening localisation policies.

## RÉSUMÉ

Cet article s'intéresse à la situation actuelle de la communauté migrante ghanéenne dans la capitale du Botswana, Gaborone, alors que les sentiments xénophobes et les tensions ethniques se développent dans la population. L'article examine les éléments anthropologiques de ces sentiments en les plaçant dans le contexte de l'étude des nationalismes dans les processus de formation des États en Afrique et la manière dont ces idéologies reflètent la situation et la reconnaissance des minorités. Au Botswana, la politique identitaire donne libre cours à un discours démocratique libéraliste au sein duquel l'État valorise une citoyenneté indifférenciée, en dissimulant d'un côté les inégalités entre les différents groupes du pays, tout en défendant d'un autre côté les intérêts exclusifs de tous les Batswana contre l'influence étrangère à travers la promulgation de ce que l'on a appelé une «politique de localisation». Comme beaucoup d'autres nationalités, la main-d'œuvre ghanéenne expatriée a été l'objet croissant de politiques de localisation, mais dans son cas les sentiments xénophobes ont pris des dimensions inattendues. En se concentrant sur la fascination populaire pour la mode ghanéenne et ses styles d'embellissement, les nombreux salons de coiffure et boutiques de vêtements gérés par des Ghanéens, en plus des nouvelles églises pentecôtistes dirigées par des Ghanéens qui font leur apparition dans la ville, on peut démontrer le jeu ambigu et cependant omniprésent de répulsion–attraction dans la manière dont la localisation est perçue et vécue par le migrant, mais aussi par les groupes dominants de la société. L'article conclut en plaçant l'entrepreneuriat au point précis où ce jeu de répulsion–attraction crée un terrain d'entente commun entre les Ghanéens et leur société d'accueil, malgré le durcissement des politiques de localisation du Gouvernement.