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**„Africa is here!”: Interplay between media representations and
lived experiences of mobile Africans in Tallinn**

Bachelor Thesis

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1. INTRODUCTION: „AFRICA IS HERE!”

.. says Godfrey with enthusiasm when I tell him jokingly that if I had the resources, I would be conducting my study somewhere in Africa. I had met Godfrey and John briefly before, but officially, it was our first meeting. Leonce and I are introduced. Because they all tell me that they have been living and studying in Estonia for two years, I am curious if they knew each other from before. Even though they did not, they are not surprised at all by my question. “Yeaah, one big family” they say. Leonce states: “We are just one... so, we are from Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, Tanzania- we are all Africans”. “We feel we are one blood” says Godfrey with a little grin of his face. Leonce goes on: “And I am sorry, but that’s what most Europeans don’t have (Godfrey injects saying “Yes!”). We have that mentality. John is my brother, in this time together, sometimes I don’t remember that he’s not from Nigeria. Also happens with my Ghanaian friends, with my Tanzanian friends”. Godfrey adds: “We adopted one Bangladeshi too”. Rest of the guys laugh and approve.

This thesis explores the tension between how mobile Africans are represented in local media and the lived experience of negotiating personhoods of three African men. Based on anthropological mobility studies, examination of news in written media and ethnographic fieldwork with individuals, this dissertation examines the interrelation of the agency and the structure, constant reconciliation of the global and the local, the isomorphism of place, culture and individual, and conditional racialization. The thesis will draw attention to the individual empirical experience of dislocation and how it can be observed in peoples self-presentation through negotiations of mimicry and alterity, being the same and different, being African and European, being Self and the Other in Tallinn.

This dissertation has importance on three main levels. Firstly, it contributes to the body of anthropological study of mobility through its regional specificity. It aims to do so drawing on cosmopolitan approach, whereby humanity is shared value of all individuals and the basis for egalitarian treatment of cultural phenomena. This thesis shows evidence that contemporary migration should not be explained only by push and pull factors, but as personal decision to fulfil a life-project.

Secondly, this thesis contributes to anthropological study of individuals. Something as particular as personhood is possibly the core of understanding social processes and phenomena. The study of individuals is not cut off from wider social processes and meanings, but dignifies the lives of our informants by not generalizing them into a whole.

Thirdly, this dissertation is interesting in its contribution to Estonia studies. It adds to the discourse of Tallinn as a plural, or perhaps even cosmopolitan, space. While this thesis brings out some of the anxieties and desires surrounding notions of diversity and integration, it also suggests that Tallinn city already is complex and globally interconnected. The thesis provides empirical data of how life-projects of different nationals can coexist and contribute to local society through participation in social practices and adding alternative perspectives to existing discourses.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter introduces the choice of methods used and the concepts in anthropological mobility studies that have inspired this thesis. The first section argues for person-centred approach, referring to autobiographical approach from Michael D. Jackson, multi-sited ethnography by Marcus and Fisher and participatory methods articulated by Clifford Geertz. In the second part of the chapter, I will consider transnational theory introduced by Nina Glick Schiller, concentrating on negotiating identities as part of “cross-border, multi-local processes and practices” (Vertovec 2007:968). I will take advantage of Paul Gilroy’s concept of transatlantic spaces to present an alternative to state-bound place. With the intention to place subjective individual in the central role, I will critically address concept of identity, and the implications I associate with it, when studying personal, individual and subjective experience. To offer an alternative that would indicate a more subjective experience of being, I will suggest the concept of personhood as more fitting. I consider Nigel Rapport’s cosmopolitan take on individual and self, and will briefly discuss how it relates to identity-based approach. My understanding of personhood is inspired by Marilyn Strathern’s articulation of dividual person. I believe reciprocal and relationship based dividuality to be a compelling concept in understanding migration experience. Personhood, in this thesis, is an interplay of individuality and dividuality.

In order to emphasize both structure and agency, as it has been suggested by Caroline Brettell, Chapter 2 addresses media as a structural agency (Brettell 2003:7). Chapter 2 is divided into three sections. First section addresses scholarly approaches to media and power. The second chapter provides a short discourse analysis on representations of African immigration in local media and the final section gives voices to individuals creating the media. I have found Michel Foucault’s approach on power and knowledge inspiring in understanding the role of media. By positioning media as simultaneously reflective and constructive of societal structures, I see Stuart Hall’s theories as dismantling

the power of structure. Considering the studies on indigenous media, I was compelled by Faye Ginsburg's idea of how images of diversity and homogeneity of a ethnic groups and nation state are constructed in media. When doing a discourse analysis, I found Edward Said and his work on Orientalism valuable in understanding how discourse of the Other is constructed. I will look at the nature of migration discourse in connection to nation-building project as it is articulated by Liisa Malkki. In addition, I have interviewed two editors of international news, one editor of opinion column and one editor-in-chief, that are working for four different publications in Estonia. However, as I will elaborate in the final section of Chapter 2, the interviews I conducted allude that media and information it conveys is rather a product of negotiating and performing individual agencies than social structure.

In the third and final chapter of this thesis I will provide ethnographic montage of instances where personhoods are negotiated in relation to structural markers. Borrowing the concepts of mimesis and alterity from Michael Taussig and James G. Ferguson, I will share my interpretations of these instances. I am suggesting that personhoods are negotiated through mimicking and altering practices, through emphasizing sameness and difference creatively in connection to subjective self. Ethnographic material in this chapter is allocated according to five themes that are based on biological aspects of mimicry. The sections explore how personhoods are negotiated through presence and representations, strategic essentialization of behaviour, music as transnational sound, tasting and consuming Africa in Tallinn and finally through nostalgic longing for home.

While I have referred to numerous authors that are continuously contesting the power of structural indicators, even for them, the notions of identity, place, race, gender are still present and reproduced. For me it poses a paradox, meaning that while the arguments seem to disarm social structure as determining peoples possible life-journeys, it still seems to occupy a position of the provider in the field of meanings. This tension could be sometimes observed as individual versus system or as cited before- structure versus agency. When asserted as such, it rings as if a person is up against well thought-out oppression, domination, hegemony. My reading of given authors does not imply the "versus" situation, but rather a continuous interplay, perchance negotiation. I have taken up the word negotiation intentionally, because for me it is best descriptive of the relationship I believe my informants to have with social structure. Therefore, the following chapters reveal an

interplay, where power of structure is constantly and creatively contested and used, in the process of negotiating personhood.

1.1. Methods- “Next!”

The first African in Estonia I ever met was Salim. Knowing that I was a student, he was more than gladly willing to help me out. During our first meetings I felt that the questions I had prepared were most helpful to keep the conversation going. I could sense that Salim was not sure what was expected of him, but he would happily try and tell me whatever I wanted to know. Perhaps it was our third meeting when I finally realized that the moments of silence were not initiating for the next question, but Salim was thinking about many things that he had not considered before, as well as things he had forgotten. I needed to change my pace. I also considered my prepared questions useful when meeting with Godfrey and his friends Leonce and John. The first interview with them took place at a pub in Mustamäe and, while the atmosphere was quite relaxed, I got the sense that the guys were fairly excited. They were doing their best to give me straightforward and witty answers. When they felt they had succeeded, they encouraged me to continue with the next question by literally saying “Next!”. I tried to break that question-answer cycle by making comments, expressing my personal opinions or thoughts and making rather silly jokes.

In following section I will elaborate on how and why I am approaching the topic through individual stories and the methods I used to gather ethnographic data. As my choice of methods is embedded in biographical approach, I used qualitative methods to gather data. Throughout my fieldwork I conducted structured and semi-structures interviews, I did participant observation and also used ‘deep hanging out’ in informal settings as a form of participant observation. All my ethnographic data is collected in the city of Tallinn in variety of locations such as homes, dorm rooms, pubs, restaurants, cafeterias and bars, according to convenience of my informants. To present gathered ethnographic material I decided to experiment with montage writing. I will also explain my personal interest in the particular topic as well as person-centred approach.

Only three?

I consider the beginning of my ethnographic fieldwork to be 30th of October 2014, when I first met with Salim. I chose to do my fieldwork in Tallinn because it would fit my other obligations and give me plenty of time to spend with informants. When I was coming up with my research plan I did not know any Sub-Saharan Africans in Estonia and I spent at least a month trying to track them down. Finally I shared the problems I was having with my classmates, admitting that I have a plan for fieldwork but no informants in sight. Within two days I had two contacts that ended up being two of my main informants. I conducted my fieldwork over a three months period and it involved eight people from four different African countries. In my thesis I consider three of them as my main informants, but at times I will also refer to other five. The reason why I chose to use mainly the information from these three people is the kind of relationship we developed in that short period of time. I believe it was about one and a half months into my fieldwork when I realized the different levels of communication we had reached with all the informants, and made a conscious decision not to push towards more generalized work and to concentrate of the very complex and individual realities of Salim, Godfrey and James.

As said, the first informant I met was Salim. He is a 32-year-old DJ, currently working in Tallinn. He was born in Tanzania, but has been living in Finland since he was 18 years old. He cannot remember exactly the time he first came to Estonia, but he thinks it could have been between years 2005 and 2006. Since then he has been having gigs in Estonia, on and off, about every month. In 2011 he participated in an student exchange program with Erasmus in Estonian Information Technology College. Salim moved to Tallinn in July 2014.

Few weeks after my first meeting with Salim, I met with Godfrey and his friend John. Godfrey was born in Nigeria and has been living and studying in Tallinn University of Technology for two years. He is doing his undergraduate degree in International Relations and has told me that he is planning to go into politics in Nigeria one day in the future. He stumbled upon Estonia when looking for a good level of education in Europe in a place with affordable living costs. Godfrey is the only one of my informants who has surrounded himself with mostly African students. In the third chapter, where Godfrey is one of the main characters, his friends Leonce, John and Omar are also mentioned several times.

Since at times we spent time together as a group, I consider them to be part of the fieldwork experience as well as Godfrey's migration experience.

More than a month after meeting Salim and Godfrey I finally met James. James has been living in Tallinn for 6 years already. He was born in South-Africa and lived in Cape Town for most of his life. He is currently running a private school in Tallinn and is employed by European Union. However, he first came to Estonia for romantic reasons. Now he is married with an Estonian woman and they are raising a little daughter in Tallinn. With James I never used the interview format, but rather he would tell me stories illustrating and elaborating his past and present experiences.

I find it important to mention that Salim, Godfrey and James do not know each other and have, according to my knowledge, never met. In my observation and experience, they do not move in the same circles in Tallinn. I was also keeping in mind that they come from very different parts of Africa, whereas each has a distinct historical, political and ecological setting. I am using the word "Africans" because the connection to continental Africa, and current residency in Estonia, are the only obvious connections they have with each other.

In addition, it has to be said that the names of my informants, as well as journalists, have been changed to avoid any inconvenience for the participants. The exclusion here is Allar, an editor I interviewed, who makes his appearance in the end of second chapter. When I offered him to stay anonymous, he answered that there is no reason for it and that the publication he is working for is too easily distinguishable in Estonia for that to work.

In the first months I was excited about the whole project but also worried, because I was afraid that I should involve more people in the research. The notion of personhood has not always been on my mind. While it now seems like all my interviews and field notes are implying it, I was actually often following my intuition. My supervisor told me since from the beginning that I will recognize what fires me up when I am talking to people. Well, I think neither of us anticipated that everything about my informants would get me fired up. As I kept in mind that I am interested in migration experience, I could not define a common aspect of my informants' lives to be conceptualized. Looking back, I think the reason why I ended up working only with James, Salim and Godfrey is because I was reluctant to generalize their experience to that of a wider group. My initial idea to conduct research with African immigrants in Estonia became challenging once I became aware of

the unique life stories they are all creating- when African immigrants became persons to me. In my quest for figuring out if individual-based ethnography is justified, I encountered two approaches that I found encouraging: multi-sited fieldwork as articulated by Marcus and Fisher and biographical approach as it is argued for by Michael D. Jackson

Multi-sited ethnography and biographical approach

Initially I was not planning to do multi-sited ethnography and I am still hesitant to adopt this concept. However, the discourse analysis done with printed media publications and interviews with journalists turned out to be more than background research. Therefore, I took the notion of African mobility and immigration and looked at it in two, for the lack of a better word, sites. One of them being the structural site constituted through discourses and by media actors. Second is the lived experience of individuals by looking at how they are negotiating their personhood through notions of sameness and difference in Tallinn. With this approach, I am hoping to understand the tension between the universal and the particular or micro and macro levels.

With the notion of multi-sited ethnography, Marcus and Fisher encourage ethnographers to follow connections, people, relationships as substantially continuous and spatially non-continuous, “as a method to pursue the more open-ended and speculative course of constructing subjects by simultaneously constructing the discontinuous contexts in which they act and are acted upon” (Marcus 1998:82). The way I understand multi-sited ethnography as a method is suggestive of subject-analysis through close-up studies of individual experiences with a particular phenomenon, rather than imagining and then studying a shared group experience.

Using biographical approach, as argued for by Jackson, has proven particularly useful for me in the ambitious project of exploring the constructing and performing of personhood. When collecting the data, especially preparing topics for interviews, I paid closer attention to different periods of peoples’ lives according to the context in which they had migrated. For example, since Salim moved to Finland being only 18 years old, we talked about his childhood more than I did with other informants. His lived experience in Tanzania is embedded in that period of his life, and as his story unravels, it is ever-present in the way he presents and perceives himself. In my opinion, in the context of displacement, the biographies of people allow the anthropologist to access times and places that are out of

reach but offer a significant insight into occurring self-presentation. For instance, the career that James had been pursuing for years in South-Africa has little to do with his current ambitions. However, it does have everything to do with what James believes himself to be capable of. Therefore, his “biographical” self influences largely who he considers himself to be in this particular moment and location.

For me, Michael D. Jackson makes a convincing case of how ethnographic biography (Michael Herzfield’s notion of it) can be used as a method to overcome the dichotomy or antinomy of the particular and the universal. Jackson introduces his view as one that does not see societies as essentially different but their disparities lay in the “ways in which they manage universally identical existential issues- keeping body and soul alive, bringing new life into the world, coping with separation and loss, creating ontological security” (Jackson 2008: 379) My reading of Jackson is that there cannot exist a subjective experience separated from the conditioning factors like the influence of society and perceptions of cultural patterns. The biographical study of a person, in that case, should not be seen as extracting a person from a social setting and making his/her life *the* setting, but rather a way to “do justice to the realities of the people we encounter, what is at stake for them, as well as render those lives readable” (ibid. :391)

In other words, rather than simply identify the general conditions governing the possibility of a particular human relationship, or risk reducing complexities of lived relationships to determinate causes, cultural rules or classificatory categories, one seeks to explore the experiences that transpire in the transitional spaces of intersubjectivity- experiences that often confound our formal descriptions and overflow our conceptual frameworks. (ibid: 392)

Ruokonen-Engler makes the case that biographical approach, as methodological and theoretical one, enables the researcher to re-establish the subjective individual and social structures through narration. As she has used biographical approach in studying ethnicity amongst immigrant women in UK, she proposes that the personal narratives and biographies offer empirical data that are well suitable for studying how “multiple social positionings and transnational social space” are constituted (Ruokonen-Engler 2009:253) She suggests that “ethnicity is biographically constructed as transnational positionality” and it is constructed strategically as a result of negotiating “trans/national location and dislocation in relations to the social positioning and constructions of difference at the intersections of ethnicity, gender, class, nation and racialization” (Ruokonen-Engler 2009:

251). I believe the notion of „strategic construction” could be applied to the concept of personhood as it is a confluence of multiple identities

Participate to observe

My informants did not emerge organically and I had to introduce myself and my intentions with hopes that they would agree to meet with me and spend their time with a complete stranger. During the first month, I used semi-structured interviews with a certain amount of prepared questions that always led to improvised questions and conversations. Due to the fact that I chose to approach the process of self-making through biographies and life-stories, my fieldwork involved more informal interviews than participant observation. Hume and Mulcock state in their book introduction that “participant observation, requires that researcher simultaneously observe and participate (as much as possible) in the social action they are attempting to document” (eds. Hume and Mulcock 2004:XI). However, in my opinion the only way to observe how personhood is negotiated and performed, as a social action, is by seeing it in the subjective and creative context where it is articulated. The act of performing personhood is so deeply rooted in peoples’ ways of understanding themselves, skills and wishes to present themselves, that interviews- structured, semi-structured and informal- became integral part of my fieldwork.

By the end of the first month, I prepared the topics I wanted to discuss, asking very general and arbitrary questions. In my observation it gave the informants more freedom to make associations that I at times would not have thought of, without them having to worry that they are not giving the “right” kind of answers. This method proved to be especially successful in group interviews where the participants entered in a heated discussion and I accidentally became rather a participant observer instead of an interviewer. However, the recording device often disrupted creating that atmosphere. For instance, every time when someone accidentally swore, he would turn his eyes to the recorder apologetically. I realized that while no one seemed to pay attention to it, it was still kept in mind that our chats were recorded. Eventually, a couple of times I turned it off “officially” in front of everybody. I tried to indicate that the whole project is actually very informal, relaxed and if anything, it is about getting to know each other.

During the second half of the fieldwork, I hardly used interviews as a method, and besides having unstructured discussions with the informants, I did more participant observation

and deep hanging out. I participated in different gatherings like meetings, wine tasting, housewarming parties etc. I consider these events as occasions where participant observation in its traditional sense was very effective, but at times ethically very confusing. For instance, at the housewarming party I attended, I was seen as any other guest, even though my informant clearly knew that I am in the middle of my fieldwork. I found it perplexing to find the balance and clarity between a friend and a researcher in myself. I felt like the only way to observe is to participate. There were moments when a part of me wanted to stop observing and just be present, but I could not help it anymore.

Another form of participant observation is 'deep hanging out' as it is articulated by Clifford Geertz (Geertz 1998). The way I would distinguish the two in my own fieldwork is that I consider deep hanging out what I do when there is no particular activity or event involved. For example when I would be invited to play pool with Godfrey and his friends, have tea or a drink with James or Salim, and we would just hang out, talk nonsense, joke around- just "be there" (Geertz 1988). In that second half of the fieldwork, Godfrey and James would all reveal different details of their personal lives or thoughts that they decided to keep to themselves at first. While most of these details might not be mentioned in given thesis both for their relevance and for ethical considerations, for me they speak of a new level of trust and connection, and are valuable in understanding the ways in which Salim, Godfrey and James have presented their lives to me during different stages of my fieldwork.

Montage

In the writing process I wanted to embrace how convoluted and disorderly I understand self-making to be. Hence, I unwittingly found myself adopting montage-like writing, where the main bodies of ethnographic sections are based on vignettes and field notes. These are organized according to themes, rather than course of events in the fieldwork. This kind of fragmented style, breaking linear narrative, is argued for by Walter Benjamin saying that it "interrupts context into which it is inserted" (Hanssen 2006:82). Anthropologist and ethnographic filmmaker Lucien Taylor has written about montage style in connection to experimental ethnography. According to him, attributes like multiperspectivism, simultaneity and discontinuous narrative can be traced back to influences from cinema and as aiming for greater reflexivity, polyphony and

fragmentation. He brings Taussig's work as an example of cinematic imagination and paraphrases Taussig saying that montage is the "ultimate reflexive operation" (Taylor 1994:45-47). Karen Lisa Salamon also made the case that montage leaves certain gaps between the fragments that allows open reading and de-signification of meanings (Salamon 2013:147-148). In his essay, George E. Marcus brings out particular requirements for ethnographic text as a response to Crisis of Representation, to explore how "cultural identities are created from turbulence, fragments, intercultural reference and the localized intensification of global possibilities and association" (Marcus 1990:6). According to Marcus, the requirements for reflexivity could be met by employing cinematic narrative technologies, especially montage, into ethnographic text (ibid. 1990:7). Acknowledging aforementioned thoughts on montage, the ethnographic material in this thesis could be considered as experimental attempt to provide images that will allow the reader to compose inherent narratives. In the final section of the second chapter, the information gathered from news, as well as that of the interviews with journalists, are both presented according themes rather than following a clear narrative or chronological storyline. Montage writing is also used in third chapter, whereby, anecdotes, quotes, stories and vignettes from my fieldwork are organized into thematic sections inspired by performative and sensuous implications of migration experience.

When I was an immigrant...

I must admit that my interest in studying personhood within migration experience and the ways in which it is contesting categories, structures and power relations, has ended up being a therapy and exercise, an attempt to resolve and make peace with my own migration and human experiences.

My interest in anthropological approaches of researching migration are deeply rooted in my personal experience in both United Kingdom and Malawi. Over a period of two years I found out that my nationality, for others, indexed characteristics, skills, worldviews, identities and categories that I had never before considered as part of my selfhood. I found out that being Eastern European did not only indicate my geographical roots for the people who were just getting to know me, since being born in as post-soviet Estonia had its own implications. My biggest surprise must have been realizing that I am white and that it is not irrelevant, as much as I would have liked it to be. Without a doubt, these experiences are

present and visible in my fieldwork. The similar instance is described by Nina Glick-Schiller in her ethnographic account on Haitian migrant communities in New York, who discovered that the colour of their skin will qualify them as African-Americans. They found out that it also implies a social position that has nothing or little to do with their self-identification (Glick-Schiller 1999:348-349). However, similarly to the cases described by Glick-Schiller, whereas African-American identity was at times adopted for own personal agendas, I too occasionally stressed my “difference” instead of denying it. It was a complicated process of positioning myself. During the six months in Malawi I wanted to fit in and show that my whiteness does not say anything about me. At the same time I was dying to go for a vacation by the beaches of Lake Malawi, since at the end of the day, I felt like as an European in Malawi it is my right and responsibility to explore the country while I can. I felt this even though half of the people I was working with never had that opportunity. I wanted to be the same, but different at the same time for the sake of my personal agendas.

At the time I was researching opportunities for BA studies I was in a place in my life where I was frustrated by the way my race, gender, age and nationality had a life of their own, sometimes making decisions without me having any say in them and restricting my personal ambitions. I felt like I could not understand how people and society work anymore. How can a person look me in the eye and see a 19-year old Eastern-European white female instead of Karmen? I suppose this is why I decided to study anthropology- to understand how this could happen. I was asked to read *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* by Marjorie Shostak for admissions interview and when I finished the book I was ecstatic. I had finally found a career opportunity that takes people seriously. Therefore, I believe that the very core of this thesis is an intention to understand how structural categories are at work and how they are dealt with by individuals. Through concentrating on individuals, I wanted to create an exploratory study where the individualities and personhoods of my informants would be allowed to appear as controversial, confusing, complex, creative and unpredictable as I consider my own personhood to be.

1.2. Transnational spaces: Who? Where? Why?

In the following section I will outline the framework in which I understand and address migration in this thesis. It examines transnational theory in opposition to economy based theories and explores how space is enunciated in anthropological studies of mobility.

Migratory processes have been articulated through neoclassic economic theories whereby individual decisions can be explained by changes in global capital market and labour market (see Massey et al. 1993, Hagen-Zanker 2008). These theories suggest that the main reason for any voluntary displacement is to maximize economic and social capital. For instance, Jayne Ifekwunigwe pointed out that contemporary African diasporas are predominantly associated with colonization, decolonization or the era of structural adjustment programs (SAP). That is to say that from 1980-s onwards, migration from continental Africa is seen mainly as a result of economic, political, social crisis and the destabilizations of SAP (Ifekwunigwe 2006:86). According to Rouse, immigrant identities have been expected to play out in two binary scenarios: one, whereby new identity will be constructed that will conform to the new locality and other, in which the identity would stay intact with the place of origin and changes would be resisted (Rouse 1995:354). The first suggests to me assimilation and integration, as if being one and becoming another, while the other implying estrangement, disconnection, rebellion and perhaps hostility. Linear proposition that would give one reason, motivation and motive and two possible outcomes did not quite engage with questions of subjective individual experience that I was, and still am, grappled with.

In contrast, a transnational and cosmopolitan method of studying migration presents sets of fluid and complex processes and outcomes in self construction (Glick-Schiller et al. 1995). I found it as a more multi-linear and unbounded approach- one that is more enduring and inclusive of disorder and creativity of the human experience. I have found Glick-Schiller's theory on transnationalism and methodological nationalism particularly valuable in studying how identities are projected on immigrants whereas embedded in place-based thinking. As she argues, nationalist thinking is central in understanding contemporary immigrant discourse, due to its ability to naturalize isomorphism between citizenry, sovereign, solidarity group and nation that are territorially bounded. Transnational immigrants thus pose a great challenge to the nation-building idea where heterogeneity is something to strive towards (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller

2002:309). Gupta and Ferguson also came to question how distinctiveness of cultures, societies, nations and groupings are based upon division of space and isomorphism of space, location and culture (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:6-8). Denaturalization of isomorphism of state, people, languages and cultures (Glick-Shiller et al 1992;Vertovec 1999) , for me, challenges the concept of identity as a categorical way of self-description and argues against belonging to any of these categories as primordial, something that is given and supports the idea that these concepts are socially constructed and context dependent. David Harvey argues that particular spatial practices such as segregation and policing of borders contribute to reinforce and reproduce difference through determining who have access to which political, ecological, economical and cultural resources (Harvey 1996).

Other scholars have suggested alternative approach to spaces rather than isomorphic understanding of place, culture and identity. Gilroy's Black Atlantic argues for an interpretation of Atlantic during the slave trade as space of active cultural production. While offering a counter-narrative to nation-state based history of modernity, Gilroy considers an account that acknowledges the effects of mobile people, goods and ideas systematically between Europe, Africa and the Americas, as more viable. He sees exile, displacement, variety of identities, and experiences of resistance and dispute as culture-making in African diasporas. These, therefore, should be recognized as major processes that have constituted the conditions for modernity (Gilroy 1995). Brah has proposed the notion of diaspora space to scrutinize the potential and mechanisms of culture-making within the context of mobility. „Diaspora space, as a conceptual category, is not „inhabited” not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous” (Brah 1996: 181). The articulation of our social and political surroundings as things evolving across border is critical towards fetishizing the nation, region and the local. Clifford proposes an analysis whereby „location is constituted by displacement as much as by stasis” (1997:2). That is to see travelling, translocality and displacement not as mediums of transferring cultural practices, but rather as creative and productive processes of culture-making. (ibid 1997)

1.3. Identity and personhood: “Who or what a person is?”

While the articulations of self and place as they are configured above, acknowledge the complexities and ruptures in identity making, the concept of identity is still embedded in the arguments. Since identity, as experienced by individuals, has been something I considered as possible key to my research question, I decided to explore its implications. The problem with words like culture, ethnicity, race and identity is that all of them can have multiple ambiguous meanings. Throughout the course of my studies I have encountered quite a few of them that are often referred to in social sciences. To take a step back and look at how identity is interpreted outside academia, in popular discourse, I simply typed it up on Google search.

Identity according to oxforddictionaries.com is „the fact of being who or what a person or thing is” or „the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is”. Identity politics in two different online dictionaries are explained as following: „Political attitudes or positions that focus on the concerns of social groups identified mainly on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation” (freedictionary.com); political activity or movements based on or catering to the cultural, ethnic, gender, racial, religious, or social interests that characterize a group identity (dictionary.reference.com). I have given these examples not to define the meaning of identity or identity politics, but to demonstrate how they are acknowledged in popular discourses. The problem I have with these definitions is that I could not, at any point during my fieldwork, find a characteristic of my informants that would determine who they are. Neither could I pinpoint any particular identity (national identity, gender identity, ethnic identity etc) that could be considered as a fact of being who someone is. It is not my intention to say that identities do not matter, or even worse, that my informants did not have identities. However, if I look at how identity politics is articulated, I see culture, ethnicity, gender, race, religion and social interests as indicators of belonging to a particular group, a group that can be positioned in social structure, if not to say social order. Identity politics does not speak of political or non-political interests, attitudes or positions of a person, an individual as he/she is making his/her way through daily life.

Since I had been suspicious of how and when could the concept of identity be useful, I looked up how it has been handled in anthropology. Anthony Cohen has argued that the stereotypical use of „identity” denied the subjects the self-consciousness that

anthropologists assume for themselves. He sees the simplistic distinction of egocentric Western and socio-centric non-Western as ideological and contends for “decolonization of human subject” in identity studies (Cohen 1994: 162). Cohen’s critique in my opinion suggests that identities are something that can be ascribed to ‘others’, by the ones who are in position of power, something that we use to put people in categories. At the same time, we do not think of ourselves in categorical way- instead we see ourselves as unique wholes where categories are met and also contested for our personal will. According to Martin Sökefeld, “it is impossible to conceive of the actions of individuals embracing a plurality of identities without referring to a self” (Sökefeld 1999:418). He too sees conceptualization of „others” through top-down discourses as culturally and socially deterministic, that is denying agency creativity and self-consciousness in operating with public representations (instead of being determined by them) (ibid. :419). Nigel Rapport, as I later discuss more extensively, denounces the „impersonalisation” of social sciences and argues for a more person-centred approach (Rapport 1997:23). My reading of Cohen, Sökefeld and Rapport is that they are openly inviting anthropologists to give value to the particularity of people we are working with, without reducing their selves into categories.

To my mind, the identity markers presented in dictionary definitions can be translated into structural, top-down, hegemonic classifiers, that are ascribed to people within the social structure they find themselves in. Criticism that the concept of identity has received within anthropology resonates to populist articulation of the discourse. In both cases, I see identity as indicating a static, clearly definable, anonymous human, that can be reduced to statistics and be governed over according to affirmed identification. Every form of identity (gender, class etc) can be seen as socially constructed and every claim for identity should be seen as context dependent. For instance, according to Rouse, the identity discourse in United States is constituted through notions of collectivity, personhood and social struggle (Rouse 1995: 357). In his own study on Mexican immigration to US, Rouse noted that many of his informants moved from a place where their Mexicanness was not of particular importance in their daily lives, to an environment where they felt pressure to ratify new concepts of self-hood in relation to the collective. While they began referring to themselves as “Mexicans” and clearly distinguishing themselves from African-Americans, they still tried to “elude the machinery of identification or neutralize its impacts” (ibid. 1995:372). For Cohen, the interplay between collectivity and individuality, that often are manifested in identifications such as Mexican, student, foreigner etc, are easily

transformed into labels and stereotypes that we do not consider descriptive of ourselves even when we do belong to respective categories (Cohen 1994:16). As already mentioned, similar instances were described by Nina Glick-Schiller and coincide with my own experience (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2011:348).

Consequently, I see identity rather as indicative of a group belonging and implicitly an instrument to negotiate particular place in social structure. The only way to see identity as “who or what people is”, is when our point of departure is that the self or individuality is restricted with particular definable categories that are made available by social structure. During my fieldwork I have come to realize that in order grasp the subjective, personal, individual in selfhood, in the context of migration experience of my informants, I have to look for an alternative concept.

Negotiations

„The abstract nakedness of being nothing but human was their greatest danger.”

- Hannah Arendt (1973:300)

The following section expands on concept of personhood as compelling alternative to understand “who or what a person is”. My interpretation draws on notions of individuality and dividuality as coexisting and complementary.

The way I understand Rapport and his cosmopolitan approach towards person is not completely individualistic but rather along the lines of Immanuel Kant. For Kant, all human beings belong to ‘human race’ and ‘common heritage of humanity’ (in contemporary discourses the word race is often replaced with ‘species’) (Kant 1999). The recognition of the commonality of humans is manifested through capabilities and liabilities of being a human. Cultural differences, then, are a result of free, spontaneous actions and individually substantiating human capabilities and liabilities, while ‘individual’/‘person’ becomes the manifestation of human nature (Rapport 2012; Wardle 2012).

An issue that I kept being reminded of during my fieldwork experience was that each of my informants had their “own agenda”. Exceeding the practices of their daily lives, their work, studies, hobbies, but also the fact that they had decided to migrate to Estonia and not

any other place, there is an underlying life-project. For all of them, many parts of their lives were rather means to an end, or perhaps at times only circumstances, rather than defining features of their self-hood. That resonates with Rapport's argumentation on how a person as an individual is a result of one's subjective imagination and interpretation rather than socio-cultural product. He argues for recognition of peoples' efforts and ability to design and execute their own life project according to their unprecedented perceptions of reality (Rapport 2003). Agreeing with Nigel Rapport, I would argue that Salim's, Godfrey's and James' decision to migrate was a "conscious and creative act" in contemplation of personal growth manifested in career, education or romantic relationships, in opposition to socially and structurally enforced one. To my understanding, this approach towards personhood is not exclusive of social and cultural conditions as elements participating in formation of person as an author of one's own life. Alternatively, it empowers the individual to negotiate these conditions according respective interpretations, will and ambitions.

The way I have understood the notion of personhood, divergent from that of identity, is largely influenced by Marilyn Strathern's analysis of personhood in Melanesia. She proposes dividuality as a way of constructing self through relationships with things external to oneself, such as meaningful social interactions, substances, objects etc. As a result, personhood is something that can be performed and played out. Its reconciliation with individual provides space for inner-workings and uniqueness of particular human's psyche (Fowler 2004:34). Dividuality is often seen in opposition to Western individuality that is considered possessive, bounded and defines itself through subject-object or person-thing dichotomy. A dividual personhood, on the other hand, is founded on reciprocity, constituted of gifts, contributions and detachments by others- therefore, by exchanging goods or gifts, people are transferring and receiving bits of themselves and others (Mosko 2010: 219). As Mosko has critiqued, there is a lingering tendency towards essentialism when using these terms. Dividuality has been regarded as descriptive on non-Western, not Christian, if even indigenous, native societies. Individuality on the other hand is associated with possessive Westernized personhood. However, instead of seeing them as opposites in the way how personhood is constructed, I will consider an alternative (ibid. 216-219). According to LiPuma, personhood emerges from a tension and reconciliation of the dividual and the individual. (LiPuma 1998:63-4). Seeing the notions such as tension and reconciliation implicit to self-construction

experience in any socio-cultural environment, I will look at personhood as constantly negotiated self-presentation and self-understanding. Personhood therefore, is not a static state of being someone, but rather a continuous process of becoming someone (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001:250). Aspects of dividuality and individuality in our personhoods remain often undefined because “only at moments of rupture, when the continuous moment came to abrupt end, that there was any necessity to decide what they had been” (ibid. 2001:247) . For me, it makes perfect sense to unite cosmopolitan understanding of human with Marilyn Strathern’s dividual, as it exhibits the way self is enacted through exchange with other “selves”. During my fieldwork I constantly noticed how my informants negotiate their personhoods through interacting with certain people, through objects and through performing different aspects of themselves in favourable moments. The process-like performative configuration of self was also manifested in the communication amongst ourselves. I was constantly exposed to very different sides of each person, not as an observer, but as a participant of communicative event. The person I perceived, or who revealed himself, changed in relation to my own negotiations of myself as an anthropology student.

In addition, Strathern and Lambek bring together notions of embodiment and personhood. As they point out the body-mind, or body-soul dichotomies that have been present in Western (and other) philosophies, Lambek and Strathern remind the reader the complex questions this binary opposition raises. Where does one end and other start, where do you draw the line? What is more, how is this dichotomy experienced by individuals and does it exist for everyone? (Lambek & Strathern 1998:10) The notion of embodiment was manifested in diverse ways my informants experienced their bodily features enabling and disabling the roles they assumed for themselves. In addition, I find the way how Salim, Godfrey and James intentionally, and at times unconsciously highlighted their bodily experiences, of great importance in their self-presentation. For me, perceiving, seeing, smelling, tasting, hearing and simply being, are all embodied experiences that are configured in transnational context and I am hoping to express that tendency by presenting ethnographic data in sections inspired by sensuous regimes.

In this dissertation I will be drawing from aspects of the approaches I have presented.

According to Caroline Bretell:

”an anthropological approach to migration should emphasize both structure and agency; it should look at macro-social contextual issues, micro-level strategies and decision-making, and the mesolevel relational structure within which individuals operate. It needs to articulate both people and process.”(Bretell 2003:7)

or as Vertovec puts it „relationships between macro-contexts or conditioning factors and micro-practices, social formations or cultural institutions.”(Vertovec 2007:968). Interpreting Bretell’s and Vertovec’s statements as suggestive to see instances of migration as interrelation and negotiation between structure and agency, I tried to include both in my dissertation with emphasis on agency. It was my intention to address media to approach “macro-contexts” or “structure”. However, as I will discuss in following chapter, my interpretations of the interviews conducted with people working in media have not given me proof of media as structure, as something that lies outside of individuals. Rather than that, media itself could be seen as a field where personhoods are negotiated. To articulate the notion of agency I first looked at the concept of identity. I have explained how the notion of identity comes off as a tool for classifying and categorizing people by characteristics that are determined by biological, cultural and social factors. With hopes to go beyond the role of space, gender and ethnicity in individual experience, and instead to explore how creatively they are utilized in negotiating one’s self, I have suggested to use personhood as an alternative concept. The reason why I find the issue of embodiment relevant here, is that to me it speaks of how arbitrary the above mentioned identity categories become in subjective lives. While gender, race and ethnicity are directly embedded in body by their popular definitions, they are context dependent and do not carry same meaning for all who appear to fall under the same category.

2. MEDIA AS STRUCTURE

In this chapter I will discuss the discrepancy between the idea of media power, existing media representations and the self-image of individual actors who constitute and produce media.

Accordingly, this chapter is divided into three main parts: first part explores theories from cultural theory and anthropology, concentrating on scholars like Foucault, Hall and Ginsburg. The second part looks at discourses about African mobility that are present in Estonian media. The third section investigates the process of how and why certain information makes it to our news pages by considering the information gathered through interviews with news editors. I will look at some perspectives on knowledge and power as constructive of discourses of the “other” and also to define self through knowing the other. I will juxtapose these ideas with examples of how image of Africa as a violent, poor and child-like continent emerges and how the image of exotic is created. To continue, I will address discourse of mobile Africans in relation to economy-based theories, whereby mobility in Africa is seen conditioned by post-colonial processes as argued by Ifekwunigwe and Massey. Africans on the move in Estonian media are represented by refugees and illegal immigrants, therefore, their prospective reasons for movement are interconnected with the image of violent, poor, post-colonial Africa. Finally, I will look at how migratory processes are seen as a source of anxiety and desire by Fortier and Appadurai, and how it resonates to discourses on population decrease in Estonia and ideas of “foreigners” as useful or dreadful for local society. The third part of this chapter provides condensed summary on the interviews carried out with four particular editors. I will first look at who, with which experience and qualifications, are in the position to mediate and produce news. Secondly, I will address the process of sourcing out for news and how news get chosen, processed and published. Finally, I will elaborate on how the significance of migration discourses in media is perceived by those who are constructing them as a daily job.

2.1. Media and power

My decision to see particularly media as speaking on behalf of structure is inspired by Foucault, his analysis on power and knowledge interrelationship and the concept of

discourse (Foucault 1977; 1989). To Foucault, to have knowledge about someone or something suggests having power over it- we control and come to terms with particular situations through our way of knowing it. Therefore, whoever occupies the position to produce discourse can manipulate, if not to control, the power relations. (Foucault Power/Knowledge 1972-1977). The nature of discourse, as I understand it, is therefore always a result of the dynamics of power/knowledge relationship. I found it interesting to look into the mechanisms of how immigration discourse is constructed within written media, particularly news, as it suggests claims of knowing the reality. In anthropology of media I have found four distinct ways of regarding media that I find worth mentioning and that support the idea of media as a structuring agent. As I will illustrate in given thesis, my own fieldwork has made it rather difficult to understand how are we to study media, or anything at this point, as a structure.

The approaches mentioned above can be concluded as following: media as power elite, media as reflexive and illustrative of existing society, media as producing and constructing society and finally, media as means for empowerment. To my recognition, these four articulations are constantly overlapping and resonate with the ways I have understood my informants to experience the role of media in their own lives. While at times, the representations, especially of Africa as a continent, have been judged as inaccurate and even demeaning, in other moments my informants have expressed appreciation of hearing that some events from back home have been attended in Estonian media at all. The ways in which media participates in society are complex and taking variety of forms for different people according to the context. In hopes to express that complexity I wanted to have different scholarly approaches present and not to choose one that would become the theoretical basis for my understanding of media and its role.

Stuart Hall has articulated the role of mass media as following:

The mass media have progressively colonized the cultural and ideological sphere. As social groups and classes live...increasingly fragmented and sectionally differentiated lives, the mass media are more and more responsible (a) for providing the basis on which groups construct an 'image' of the lives, meanings, practices and values of other groups and classes; (b) for providing the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality, composed of all these separate and fragmented pieces, can be coherently grasped as 'whole' (Hall 1997 in Spitulnik 1993:295)

To me, this speaks of media not as only constructing or producing society, but having power over it. Shohat and Stam have concluded the role of media as “not only set agendas and frame debates but also inflect desire, memory, fantasy” (Shohat & Stam 1994: 356). This suggests the information available to us is distributed top-down and the consumers have access only to knowledge that is provided for them. One can ask, who is the master-mind behind media then, deciding what and how the people should know? In his book *Policing the Crisis*, Hall makes the case that media is really an ideological state apparatus and serves mainly to reproduce dominant ideologies (Hall et al. 1978)

Media theorist Roger Silverstone considers media audience and users not as subjected to media power elite, but active consumers and participants who use tactical strategies to resist hegemony of the latter. However, later in his career he became more sceptical, writing:

insofar as ...our media's representation of the other, remains unchallenged... then those who receive and accept them are neither mere prisoners of a dominant ideology nor innocents in a world of false consciousness; rather they are willing participants, that is, complicit, or even actively engaged, that is, collusive, in a mediated culture that fails to deliver its promises of communication and connection (Silverstone 2002: 762).

I believe his view to resonate with ‘mirror-theory’ which argues that news are determined by current events. The ultimate purpose of journalists is to hold a mirror over their audience, offering a mediated reflection of society (Gans 2005:79). I find it very useful in understanding the process of how and what kind of information will be distributed. As I will elaborate later more extensively, the editors that I interviewed expressed their views of shared responsibility between the reader and the journalist. Even more so, it was stated that when it comes to online-news, the number of readers for news-pieces is taken into account in deciding which topics are of more interest and therefore, should be concentrated on.

While Hall notes the responsibility and role of media in constructing meaningful representations, he sees “signifying practices” as central to meaning making. Meanings are not given nor are they fixed, but depending on how the spectator interprets them. There is no reality that exists outside of the process of representation. The interpretation for Hall has to do with self-identification and how we relate to the subject (Hall 1997). Hall argues that ‘difference’ plays a major role in making meanings, since things are not defined or interpreted because of their essence, but rather in relation to what they are not (ibid

1997:234-235). Acknowledging “dominant regime of representation” that has some power over what kind of meanings are available for us in the form of knowledge, Stuart Hall also offers a class and ideology-based “negotiated reading” concept. “Decoding within the negotiated version contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules- it operates with exceptions to the rule" (Hall 1973:507-517)

Media has been also considered as a powerful tool for empowering marginalized groups of society. In anthropology of media there has been special interest in indigenous media. For instance, through ethnographic studies of indigenous media, Faye Ginsburg addresses the role of media in developing discourses that are forming concepts of diversity, and the idea of Australia as a multi-cultural nation. When going through different publications and interviewing media workers I came across rather Janus-faced view on Estonia in terms of emigration and immigration. One, where Estonia is depicted as a victim of its Soviet past- of invasion, occupation, russification and oppression. That is to make the case that due to violent history of Estonia, migration and immigration poses a threat to Estonian cultural heritage and identity. The other one is where story of Estonia is about progress, becoming part of the liberal cosmopolitan democracy and is to pursue a place amongst economically and politically stable Western countries. In this scenario, Estonia should be able to accommodate its migration policies to fit with her fellows in EU and, to become a desired destination for immigrants, could be regarded as an accomplishment.

Looking at how the aboriginal people in Australia strive for self-representation and the role of respective productions, Ginsburg argues for the significance of media and those who produce it, to comprehend the ways in which the states and citizens negotiate diversity (Ginsburg 2005). She has argued that media can be used “to recuperate their own collective stories and histories- some of them traumatic- that have been erased in the national narratives of dominant culture and are in danger of being forgotten in the local worlds as well” (Ginsburg 2002: 40). Media therefore, can be considered as an appliance to negotiate a particular image of a group. Be that the image of minority or majority, it indicates a struggle for power.

I found preceding approaches useful in understanding and analyzing the role, uses and influence of media in peoples’ daily lives and I met bits and pieces of these throughout my own fieldwork. However, I must confess I have difficulty of seeing the people I have

interviewed as a power elite, mirror-holders of reality, constructors of reality or social activists. Instead, I met people with different educational backgrounds making a career, making a living, making subjective choices and decisions, in their very own particular context.

2.2. Media and Discourse: “Hungry, brawling and exotic Africa”

Stuart Hall articulated discourse as a „group of statements which provide a language talking about- i.e. a way of representing- a particular kind of knowledge about a topic.” (Hall 1992:201). Provided articulation of discourse was my point of departure when I first started looking into how mobile Africans are represented in printed news media and could be considered as the basis of my analysis. I asked myself: What would I know about international immigration from Africa if I would rely on newspaper stories? The images of Africa as a wild, violent and child-like continent presented illegal immigrants and refugees as delineating the image of mobile Africans, and migration discourse through articulations of immigration and emigration as a menace to the nation-state.

My interest in how Africa and Africans are represented in Estonia goes back to the autumn of 2013 when doing research for an essay. I explored online news agencies of *Postimees*, *Eesti Päevaleht*, *Delfi*, *Eesti Ekspress* and *ERR* to find out what kind of image about migration from Africa emerges for Estonian readers. The process was rather frustrating, because reading all the daily news of the past months was significantly more ambitious and less fruitful than anticipated. What is more, I was perplexed by which would be appropriate time frame to look at to make any conclusions and ended up doubting whether my approach gives me any reliable insight.

James Paul Gee has concluded the nature of different versions of discourse analysis by saying „research/.../ in discourse analysis is not an algorithmic procedure; it is not a set of „rules” that can be followed step-by-linear-step to get guaranteed results” (Gee 2014:11).

In September of 2014, when I started collecting data for this thesis, I had developed a method of looking for news and stories resonating to the question posed above. Consequently, using the search engines of *Eesti Päevaleht*, *Postimees*, *Delfi* and *Eesti Ekspress*, I looked for keywords like immigration, migration, African/s, Africa and African immigrant/s. Depending on inserted word, I found wide variety of articles, from which

many were not engaging directly to my research questions. For the purposes of this thesis I have organized my findings under themes like: general mentions of Africa, mobile Africans and migration generally. Thence, the conclusions about media discourses are based on year-long following of news related to Africa and mobility, as well as additional investigation of above mentioned keywords in local news media.

Opening a more recent news piece, I was automatically suggested other relevant stories by the web page and therefore, I was often distracted from the chronological order of news pieces. As a result, I decided not to include stories older than 10 years to my analysis. In addition, the choice of articles and news stories that this analysis is based on, is largely influenced by search engines of above mentioned news agencies.

I also addressed printed papers, as they are more selective in the stories that will be published. In September 2014 I had already contacted editors from different newspapers to schedule interviews. Taking that into account, I decided to work through two weeks worth of *Postimees* and *Eesti Päevaleht* that are daily national newspapers and two months worth of *Eesti Ekspress*, a weekly national paper. With the intention to have rather fresh material in mind, all the studied newspapers were printed in August.

The idea to interview editors of different news agencies came to me already in autumn of 2013, as I was in disbelief of my findings (and non-findings) and sure I had missed some aspects of African immigration discourse. The same thought was reinforced in the spring of 2014 and led me to conduct the interviews included in this chapter. For instance, Colleen Cotter has taken similar approach saying that the two key components of discourse in news media are the text itself and the process in which it has been produced (Cotter 2010).

With regards to the ideas of discourse and power, my main focus point in the analysis was, which words and concepts are used in different publications, which statements are made and what is talked about in relation to Africa and immigration. I will quote and comment on some of the statements I have found illustrative, however, it should be kept in mind that in this thesis they will be read out of their original context and while I will provide background information, it will be my personal reading of given pieces. These quotations do not intend to give a general picture of Estonian media or attitudes of Estonians. What is more, some statements have resulted in public debates where they have been disapproved. That said, they are present and while being somewhat extreme, I would argue not

exceptional and contradictory with more subtle articulation, especially, of immigration. It should also be noted that all articles are translated from Estonian to English by me.

Africa as a violent place

Going through news and articles, I identified a pattern, whereby the discourses related to Africa, Africans and immigration were embedded in, and reproducing, essentialized notions of difference. Similarly to Stuart Hall, I too turned towards Edward Said and his *Orientalism*, where he elaborates on Western eurocentric prejudice on non-Western, especially Arab countries, and how given discourses participate in creating cultural representation by essentializing the Orient. For Said, this is evocative of defining the Self through the essentialized difference with the Other, saying that how selves are imagined is interconnected to their juxtaposition with the image of the others (Said 1979). The emphasis on disease, war, terrorist attacks and extreme poverty create an image of a wild and violent continent that in itself seems to be aggressive and destructive towards its inhabitants. The generalizations of Africa, as one big 'place' are not uncommon and for example, the fact that ebola has been spreading in a very little part of continental Africa, goes often unmentioned. I have found that Africa is represented as a violent 'place', the countries and people there appear victimized, underdeveloped, irrational and due to all that also child-like. The discussions whether Western countries should be sending their doctors and troops to help out, place the West into opposition to the rest, or in that case to Africa. The narrative of the West is rational, developed, stabile, civilized and therefore, in a position to decide whether or whether not to help out people in Africa.

For instance, going through two weeks worth of printed daily newspapers of *Eesti Päevaleht*, I felt frustrated, because it seemed like Africa is not mentioned in any of them. Finally, I found three stories related to Africa in two following days. One of them being an article: „The crowd that attacked Ebola hospital took the deadly disease home with them” (Delfi Forte column in *Eesti Päevaleht*, 27.08.2014). The news piece goes on to explain that the hospital was located in a slum, where sanitary matters were unfamiliar to people who are easily roused by conspiracy theories due to their illiteracy (stating that only 43 percent of the local population is literate). The final statement of the piece states following “Many residents believe in conspiracy theory, saying that ebola is just a big scam, well now they have a personal experience”. I note that the first article in a month that includes

anything African is about ebola. The article suggests that since people are illiterate and uneducated they are also gullible. The story ends with ironic comment, suggesting that by attacking the hospital they now deserve what is coming. On the following day there is an article called „Exotic diseases are brought from exotic countries” that mentions African states as belonging to exotic countries (Kalberg, Eesti Päevaleht, 28.08.2014). The online version is illustrated with a photo and its description, saying it is Arne Uusjärv talking to a local girl in Benin about online voting and validating green transportation cards in Estonia. I was wondering why that image appeared as an illustrative one for the editor. In my opinion it reinforces the idea of West, and Estonians included, as more technologically advanced and in that sense, superior. However, I did not understand how it relates to the topic of exotic diseases and what is that image meant to tell the reader. I also wondered why it was so hard for me to find any news about Africa, a massive continent, and when I finally did it was only related to disease and war. Questions like that encouraged me turn to journalists and find out.

Around the same time in August 2014, main Africa-related topics or news in *Postimees* and *Postimees.ee* were either about ebola or Estonian soldiers in Central-African Republic. African swine fever virus was also addressed and the sports section of *Postimees* mentions different athletes and teams from Africa in relation to sports events. There were also news about new virus spreading in Congo Democratic Republic. Ebola related news mainly elaborated on how many people are infected, in which countries the disease is spreading and how it is transmitted. Following months, during September and October, many cases of Ebola in Europe were discovered, that later turned out to be false alarm, for example an article „Ebola has had its first victim in Europe” (Postimees, 12.08.2014). As I kept on following the news and articles throughout September and October, the main issues remained the same: the spreading of ebola, whether it will reach Europe and cases of Europeans and Americans who had been infected. Reading the news again I notice something that was written down in my notes from December 2013- *Postimees* often refers to doctors, professors, scientists and professionals (in Estonian- asjatundja). Amongst generally report-like stories few distinct articles caught my eye. On 29th of September a story titled „Entrepreneurs: Estonia has what it takes to export to Africa”. Since it is a report from a seminar called Export morning, different statements from performers are quoted. It is said that according Kaspar Ilves (from Gateway Baltic), even though Africa for most people is seen in connection to poverty and low living standards it is a prosperous

place for doing business. Referring to another speaker, Erik Ehasoo, “regular people” who associate Kenya with mostly savannahs and safaris would be surprised by how innovative it is. However, Kenya is said to be very unpredictable and things might end up taking longer time than they normally would. It is also brought out that Africa is a good market for water cleansing technologies. The article is illustrated with a photo of a woman and her four donkeys who are said to be “looking for water” (Postimees, 29.09.2014)

Based on my readings, the image *Postimees* is constructing comes off as more subtle than that of *Eesti Päevaleht*, and in doing so, establishes a different level of validity. Here, the discourses in relation to Africa are presented as relying on facts, statistics and ‘professionals’. Since *Postimees* does not come up with as straight-forward statements, the discourses of poverty, disease and danger as descriptive of African countries appear as factual truth. According to Foucault, the presence of professionals and specialists is essential in shaping the power-knowledge relationship (Foucault 1980). What I found curious was how the news of ebola cases in Europe and United States were a central part of the discourse. To my mind, the provocative titles and false cases of ebola seem to contribute towards assumption that everything coming from Africa could possibly carry ebola and therefore, be dangerous to Europeans. The business conference piece illustrates a phenomena also described by Said in *Orientalism*- while being dangerous and violent, and therefore, repulsive, Orient (similarly to Africa) is also constructed as child-like and needy and therefore, alluring and somehow charming. These antithetical images of the Other are what identifies the Other as exotic and simultaneously functions as means to define the Self in opposition or juxtaposition (Said 1979). In addition, Mudimbe has outlined a genealogy of how Africa has been imagined by Europeans since colonization (Mudimbe 1988;1994). Referring to Foucault, he makes the case that knowledge is “the epitome of European power” against which to judge and compare all “others” . The invented image of “primitive Africa” serve to justify Western hegemony and power. Therefore, essentially the image of the Other also constitutes image of the Self.

Many of the discourses that were present in August continue to be discussed. Only about a month ago, when my research about media representations was officially done, another news piece concerning Africa caught my eye:

Why have Estonian soldiers any business in Africa? Shortly: Mali cannot handle the uprising people and islamists in the northern part of the country by herself. It is clear, that we cannot just sit and watch how another conflicts evolves in the middle of Africa, because otherwise, African problem will quickly reach Europe (Jõesaar,

epl.delfi.ee, 25. February 2015, titled: "TOMORROW IN PÄEVALEHT: Why are Estonian desert soldiers sent to „fix” Africa?")

This example to me implies all the above mentioned notions: unstable, violent, inadequate, underdeveloped, wild, dangerous, child-like. The first article suggests a dangerous, disease-struck, illiterate Africa that due to its poor conditions shapes its population to be irrational and gullible. Due to the contradicting images, the anxiety between repulsion and attraction, Africa then takes the form of the symbol of exotic. When child-like Africa provides opportunities for Europeans, the danger, chaos and instability is still present. The final quote concludes that anxiety with the question whether Estonians (and Westerners) should interfere? The answer is yes, firstly, because they are able to handle the situation (in opposition to Mali) and secondly, because otherwise the problems could reach Europe. I wonder how is it that the problem is going to reach Europe and how should it be understood by the reader.

Africans on the move

When going through articles, I noticed a lingering pattern whereby news about African origin people in, or coming to, Europe, talk about refugees and illegal immigrants. Refugees are commonly looked at in terms of forced migration, in relation to mental and physical violence or extreme poverty. The image of African migrants being mostly refugees is in accordance with Ifekwunigwes articulation classical approaches explain African diasporas with emphasizing either transatlantic slave trade or socio-historical processes of imperialism and (post)colonialism- as a result of economic, political and social crises. According to Massey et al. the neoclassical economy theories have been widely used in studying migration in social sciences, and they are also considered by governments to try and control migration (Massey et al. 1993:436). I will introduce some of the examples from what could be called „mobile Africans discourse” and then elaborate on how these examples could be seen in connection in some of the theoretical approaches to migration from Africa, and how it contributes to the African immigrant discourse.

Four years ago, at the same time when I was getting ready for my volunteering job in Malawi, I encountered a piece in the local newspaper of my home town Viljandi:

The biggest problem of Europe is hungry and brawling Africa, where hauls of refugees arrive to the beaches of the Old World. They have created huge problems

for Spain, Greece, Italy and Malta. Probably there is no overview on how many boat refugees have found their wet grave in the stormy sea. New fortune hunters come to take their place. What can Europe do to decrease the problem even a little bit? Without a doubt the countries who already are economically in trouble do not need extra mouths- even more so since mostly uneducated Africans are of no use in labor market. Instead they burden the social care that is already in bad shape. Probably the right thing to do is to help African countries economically so that people would stay in their homelands and would not make their way for better life in Europe. (Kukk, Ajaleht Sakala, 07.04.2011, title: „A comment: These troublesome immigrants)

Around a year ago there was an article about Sudanese illegal immigrant who died in Piusa River. The article elaborates mostly on the cause of this accident and human trafficking in general. It also offers its explanation to immigration:

Migration to Europe is mainly triggered by poverty and war. When a person has a wish to leave his/her homeland, but his/her homeland is not a country where you can just buy a ticket to leave, a service will be created that is essentially human trafficking. Like that, a resident of a poor country meets with someone who would offer him/her transport to a more calm and wealthy country. (Jõesaar, Eesti Päevaleht, 16.01.2014)

In August *Postimees* writes: „Africans organized an incursion to Spanish enclave”. The news state that there were 700 immigrants involved and most of the refugees come from North-West of Africa. I find it significant to note, that words such as Africans, immigrants and refugees are used as synonyms here (Postimees, 12.08.2014). News piece like that is accompanied by several very similar ones, where numbers of African immigrants are in hundreds and their behaviour is desperate, irrational and perhaps wild. The words for different kinds of mobility have lost their meaning- even more, in given context the word African itself refers to either a refugee or illegal immigrant¹. Another example of African immigrants being irrational and dangerous is when uprisings have been addressed in different European cities. In these occasions they have been represented literally as ‘raging

¹ For more examples online see: „Mitusada Aafrika migranti üritas korduvalt ronida üle turvatara Hispaaniasse” in Postimees, October 2014; „Itaalia rannavalve päästis üle 200 immigrandi” in Postimees, April 2013; „400 aafriklast jooksid Hispaania piirile tormi” in Postimees, October 2013

immigrants´ or ´raging Africans´ by both *Postimees* and *Eesti Päevaleht* (in Estonian “märatsevad”)².

In my observation, given withdrawals from different newspapers are in alliance with the economy-based theories mentioned above. The reasons for movements in these cases are mostly war and violence. The numbers of people trying to make their way to Fortress Europe are high and as the case of Piusa and instance from Spanish border show- they are desperate and therefore, possibly dangerous. Some might say, that yes, well all these stories are essentially about refugees and illegals, and not talking about migration as it is. However, I could not come across a discourse of legal migration from Africa. In my opinion, absence of a discourse here, takes a form of a discourse itself. When I read about mobility directed outside from continental Africa, I read about illegal immigration and refugees. What is more, words like African, immigrant, migrant, refugee, illegal seem to work as synonyms in this particular context with little or no further explanation.

Migration- emigration and immigration

To learn how legal immigration is addressed, as the one that is closer to my informants´ experience, I decided to investigate how migration is written about in the local press. Anne-Marie Fortier uses the notion *technologies of personhood*, arguing that immigrant imageries are constructed basing on naturalized differences that are embedded in „phenotype, appearance and comportment”. According to her, the migration imagery is „structured by ambivalent relationship between the desires and anxieties: desires of enrichment, integration and cosmopolitanism; anxieties of invasion, loss (e.g. of control, of resources), chaos (e.g. social tensions, lack of planning), which in turn produce desires of securing borders, national identity and cultural integrity” (Fortier 2012:31). Migrant then becomes someone embodying everything that immigration represents, and above mentioned anxieties are projected onto migrant bodies and cultural markers (e.g. in original text the skull cap or the hijab) (Ibid. 2012: 40). In my opinion the particular anxieties and desires are omnipresent in Estonian media discourses for years. Both desires and anxieties

² For some examples online see: „Prantsusmaal tulistasid märatsejad politseid, mäss laieneb” in *Eesti Päevaleht*, November 2005; „Itaalia linnakeses puhkesid aafriklaste rahutused” in *Postimees*, September 2008; „Põlevad autod ja purunenud aknad: Stockholmis mässavad immigrandid” in *Õhtuleht*, May 2013;

were especially present in media publications during the year 2013, when new policies for giving living and working permits to foreigners was publicly discussed.

In *Postimees.ee* a whole dialogue opened up, where on the one side, different people were arguing for transforming Estonia into an appealing workplace for foreign intellectuals and therefore, attract professional, specialized 'talents'. The counter arguments said that rather than that, Estonia should make steps to care for 'our own people' and that the competition for 'good immigrants' in Europe is already high.

In the spring of 2014 another immigration related dialogue took place- namely the question of integration and multiculturalism. It seems to be the general public opinion that integration policies have not worked out as expected. The questions raised in the spring asked whether integration policies should be configured and then reinforced or should Estonia be aiming for diversity. Integration issues have been commonly addressed considering Russian-speaking population, yet, tackling what is expected of any foreigner living in Estonia. Estonian sociologist Andrus Saar stated to *ERR News* that one of the main problems with immigration is that of assimilating the newcomers to our society. He expressed the concern that the resources that could be invested to preserve and advance Estonian cultural heritage might reallocated to provide facilities for the new cultural practices that will enter the society (Krjukov, *ERR*, 13.06.2012). Politician Mart Helme, belonging to Estonian Conservative Peoples Party, has said that Estonian immigration policy should remain conservative since immigration is bound to divide societies (Postimees, 31.05.2013). Helme has also stated his ideas about immigration on television, saying "When (someone) is black, show (him or her) the door" ("Kui on must, näita ust"). In the same show he said that otherwise 'they' will have a center in Northern Estonia, where they would go stealing and raping- "because that is all that they do". In consequence the locals will be accused of racism due to not getting along with the immigrants. "This is statistics, this is an empirical experience that we see in Europe" said Helme, adding that if we know- from empirical experience- that immigration threatens our wealth and security, we should be honest about it. He also said that there is difference to be made between African and Asian immigrants (Teder, *Postimees*, 29.05.2013). Imre Mürk, who now belongs to Estonian Conservative Peoples Party as well, concluded the nature of this discussion is about the human quality of the immigrants. Reacting to Helme's comment, he argued that the angry statements towards uneducated immigrants speak of more than

narrow-minded racism, but rather of a national-cultural fear and wish to protect home (Mürk, Õhtuleht, 29.06.2015).

A doctorate in Tallinn University, Ruth Annus, has also concluded that immigration poses threats to a host society in terms of national security, to cultural identity and wellbeing, as well as, to coherence in society (Annus, 2007). While the assertions made by Helme appear radical, they go hand in hand with the academic research results published in the website of Estonian Parliament. The latter also states that Estonians are afraid that immigration will be accompanied with social problems such as alcoholism, substance abuse, AIDS and crime. According to the same research Estonians believe that increasing numbers of migrant workers will result with higher level of unemployment. Ainsaar and Maripuu also add that Estonians feel rather cautious about migrants who come from more distant countries (Ainsaar & Maripuu 2008). I believe this is said in reference to all third world migrants.

Appadurai offers a concept of *anxiety of incompleteness* arguing that the presence of categorical “minorities” create a certain sense of incompleteness, reminding „the small gap which lies between their condition as majorities and the horizon of the unsullied national whole, a pure and untainted national ethos”. This tension often results in some form of violence from majorities towards minorities (Appadurai 2006:8). In my opinion both emigration and immigration depictions are relevant here, because even though Appadurai speaks about the anxiety of incompleteness through minority presence, in my opinion it could go both ways. The notion of emigration speaks of “our people” who are voluntarily separated from the national whole

Something that I found interesting in newspapers was that immigration is linked to the notion of emigration. There was a scandal in August, whereby Tõnis Lukas, a former Minister of Education and current director of Estonian National Museum, stated in his speech for the Day of Restoration of Independence, that people emigrating from Estonia these days are refugees of convenience and idleness. The relevance of this statement is the apologetic explanation he gave later on. According to Lukas, the people who keep their ties, are actively engaged and will possibly return, do not belong to that group. In my opinion his explanation indicates his belief of that view being in accordance with that of the public. The statement of Tõnis Lukas brought on surface the worries about continuous decrease of Estonian population, fear that empty places will have to be filled with immigrants and finally the question of „real” or „proper Estonians”. However, it is curious

how these standards for migrating Estonians are applied to incoming migrants. Emigration from Estonia has been addressed continuously. “Not enough grooms in Estonia” versus “Not enough brides in Estonia” accompanied by “Not enough laborers in Estonia”. It is commonly known by now that thousands of Estonians work in Finland and Scandinavian countries and in media discourses has been explained by economical reasons. At the same time, there has been also growing number of articles looking at Estonian returning „home“ as more educated and with improved foreign language skills, therefore, with increased social and symbolic capital.

For me, the way immigration and emigration are seen mostly in the terms of the future or present of Estonian nation speaks to the ongoing project of nation-building. Liisa Malkki, for example, has looked at the relationship of nation-state and mobility of people through analyzing the notion of refugee camps. In my opinion she offers an appealing approach that sees institutions that reinforce the function of borders (immigration agencies etc) as “social technologies to discipline space and movement of people”. Since these devices are products of the state she calls the segregation of people with borders and disciplining movement “the national order of things”. She makes the case that sedentarism is seen as natural part of labor division that global capitalism and sovereign state power depend on (Malkki 2002:353-354). John Torpey also argues that since the nation-state is and its power are embedded in territory and membership, then both physical and abstract borders between its nationals and non-nationals are sustained (Torpey 1999). As the opinion stories exemplify especially well, the attitudes towards disciplining the borders in my opinion can be explained by what Taussig has called the fetish of the nation (Taussig 1997). Nation and nationality, as they are inter-dependent, become imagined as something sacred, something greater than us but also something existing within our very selves. The questions of who are leaving, who are entering the territory and in which terms and conditions this is done, are central to maintaining and building a coherent nation-state as its ideal imagination is constantly reconstructed.

Is there a particular „African immigrant“ discourse that could be synthesized using given notions of Africa, mobile Africans and migration? Perhaps not explicitly. However, the keywords that have emerged draw a certain outline, or perhaps shed a shadow of an archetype and some conclusions can be suggested. Africa, as a continent or as a „place“ appears as dangerous, violent, poor, unstable, underdeveloped and in constant need of help. The Africans on the move introduced to the reader are illegal immigrants and refugees.

The image of violent Africa reproduces the ideas of forced migration- people are escaping. In doing so, these Africans are desperate and therefore, possibly dangerous and unpredictable. Since they are not educated, they are also irrational. Due to all of these characteristics, they will become a liability to European states. Africa and Africans in this narrative are diminished to a „problem“ and Europeans, as more capable and advanced, have to see whether to help and to make sure that African problems would not reach Europe. Consequently, if Europeans are lucky, they might even get some business opportunities in turn, since these people do not even have water. In my opinion, these views are likely to lay grounds of what is expected of African origin migrants coming to Estonia.

My interpretation of particular discourses is that both emigration and immigration are approached in economic framework that includes social and symbolic capital. The opinions on migration are equivocal, uneasy but also anticipating diversity and positive change. The fears concerning integration are encouraged by population decrease and emigration, whereby „our people“ could be substituted with „foreigners“. These fears and anxieties, though fused with innovative ideas and are constantly contested, are present and relevant in public discourses. The way mobility is addressed, in my opinion, is part of a nation-building project, whereby politics of belonging are negotiated through questions like: who deserves to be in Estonia? This question leads to arguments on what Estonia should look like- from inside as well as outside. The notion of sending Estonian troops to Africa and receiving greater numbers of people from different countries indicates a quest to belong to the “Western” countries. However, that same desire and wish is fused with anxieties of disorganization, chaos, loss of people and loss of authenticity.

2.3. Who makes the news and “intuitive decision of a journalist”

Based on above mentioned theories, I saw media as something that can give power to certain discourses and therefore, certain people. I wanted to know, who are the people creating media, and even more, how written media is created. Who decides what is news? How is that decision reached? Which factors are at play in making news and newspaper stories? How come that these representations come to exist? To do that, I decided to contact editors of different newspapers and news agencies. The goal of my dissertation is not to conduct an in depth study on how African immigrant discourse is constructed, but

rather to understand the background of it. Therefore, I conducted semi-structured 1-2 hour long interviews with four journalists. The information presented here is not to make a claim, but to explore the ways how inner workings of media are articulated in limited time-frame and in interview format. The structure of my interviews was based on questions like: who gets to decide what will be published? Who makes the selection of news that are made accessible for Estonian readers? How are they qualified to do that? How they think African migration is talked about? What is the relevance of talking about immigration in media? Where are the news coming from? Which are the sources of international news?

Hoping to find answers, I met with four journalists on different positions in written media. The first editor I met was Jüri. Jüri has been working for a popular online news agency in Estonia for more than six years. Jüri never studied journalism as such, but he studied literature. His role in his job is to search for interesting news, translate them and then edit and publish them online. His work title is international news editor and he is working by himself. He said that he makes all of the decisions by himself, and if there should be any problems at all, editor in chief would bring them up. According to Jüri, that does not happen too often.

The second person I interviewed was Martin. Martin is an international news editor in a daily newspaper and also for the online news agency connected to it. He has been working for given newspaper for 7 years. He spent 5 years as the editor of politics section. At the moment he has 3 people working for him- two for the newspaper and one for the online agency.

Allar is an editor-in-chief for a popular weekly paper called *Eesti Ekspress*. He has been working there for less than 1,5 years. He used to work for three years in journalism as communication manager, but decided to do something else for a change. After ten years, that he has returned, he feels that his job is more about management and production and that he could basically do similar things in publishing books or producing TV-shows. He himself is not writing news, but is responsible for the process.

The last journalist I interviewed was Tanel who works for an opinion column for one of the biggest newspapers in Estonia. He has been working as an editor for economy section for four different publications- all of them which are of national range. His career in economy section lasted almost 10 years in connection to his background of studying economy in a

university. At the time of the interview, he had been working as an editor for opinion column for about half a year.

Where do news come from?

The main sources of information for Jüri are news agencies from neighboring countries, such as Finland and Sweden, but also BBC news and German news agencies. I expressed my surprise of Jüri being able to understand all these languages. He tells me that his knowledge of Finnish, Swedish, English and Russian are good enough for translating news. When it comes to German and French he needs help from Google translator. When I ask him about his writing style when translating, he tells me that he often follows the emotion he gets when he first reads the article in a foreign language. On the basis of how he reads it, he is looking for a way to interpret it for an Estonian reader too. As Jüri is working by himself he has the liberty and responsibility of choosing which news will be published in the web. He said that his decisions are largely based on the amount of „clicks”. In online environments he will have access to statistics of which news are read, or rather clicked on, more times and therefore, as he interprets, are of more interest to the reader. He gives me an example that according to these statistics Ukraine-related news have proven to be popular, therefore, they are published in greater amounts. Apart from following current trends, Jüri bases his choice on his experience of what has been proven to be of interest for the reader. For Jüri it is rather clear that there is not much objectivity in journalism and following a hunch is as integral part of his workday as translating and interpreting news.

For Martin, the whole process is completely different. As he is part of a team, for him putting together a newspaper is a collective and creative process that is carried out through discussion. However, he also points out that the decision, what could be of importance to Estonian reader, is no more than a judgment call and deeply embedded in what he calls „intuitive decision of a journalist”. Martin says that sometimes he just thinks that a particular subject is something that people should know about and inherently, his personal interests and subjectivity are always at play. However, he later states that the journalist is irrelevant and that it is all about the essence of the story. The published news are often either translated or put together from a pile of information. According to Martin, the resources used in given publications vary. I insist that he would fall into details and he

mentions individuals that are into politics and mostly foreign media such as BBC, CNN, Reuters and Russian, Finnish as well as Swedish newspapers.

The publications that have an impact on *Eesti Ekspress* are rather different. Allar points out New York Times, die Zeit, das Spiegel, The Atlantic. The Atlantic, he adds, is the most influential for the paper. In Allar's words, *Eesti Ekspress* is not about news journalism, but rather about reportage-like stories, investigative stories and about looking at relevant events through individuals. Subjectivity and the author's position has a great significance for the paper. According to him, some of the journalists have an opinion that author should be taken out from the text in order to leave that role for the reader. However for Allar, trying to remain neutral is not a goal in itself and the role of the author should be rather obvious than hidden.

Tanel tells me that 5 people, from whom 1 is caricaturist and other 4 are journalists, work for the opinion column. Due to small collective most of the questions are figured out during the workday without meetings as such. According to Tanel there is quite a lot of mail coming in from people offering their stories to be published. There is no official procedure of selecting stories and writers, neither a very specific criteria. It should be someone who has good language skills, is able to approach topics from an interesting angle, is able to keep the deadlines and is familiar with the topic he/she is writing about. Tanel says that they want to keep the opinion column as diverse as they can, and also include some foreign journalists. He even found one Ukrainian journalist from *facebook*, who now sometimes writes for the column, whose writings proved to be popular (according to sharing, liking and commenting). However, in the end, the choice of stories is very subjective and based on experience. Some feedback is gotten from the online statistics.

Tanel brings up the case of Argo Riistan, a young man who got 15 interviews with rather influential people published and it turned out that at least 4 of these interviews were fictional. Tanel also refers to Gustav Reinop who pretended to give an on-site radio interview from Afganistan during the war, while actually not being in Afganistan at all. Both of these cases took place in the early 2000s. The moral for Tanel is that every time they publish a story, they first have to make sure that the author „exists”. Tanel said that there are cases when the story is said to be written by a politician or authority figure, but they can tell by reading it, that it is written for them for PR.

African immigration discourse?

When I first state to Jüri that I am trying to investigate how African immigrants are depicted in Estonian media, he asks me: Are they depicted at all? Perhaps the one common thing that each and every editor I interviewed told me was: “I am not sure if I can help you, I do not really deal with this particular topic.” As Jüri said: „Why exactly would we write about it, it is more of a Western problem” and continuing to say that the immigration issues are not as pertinent for Estonian reader since there has not been any big problems with immigrants. Jüri also states that most of the news in relation to African immigrants are about refugees. When I asked about using particular concepts such as „black”, „African”, „Nigerian” or „immigrant” and „refugee” he said that he is trying avoid misunderstanding in his writings, however, the differences are more about political correctness for him, than anything else. People should still use their common sense and he cannot be responsible when words get ripped out of context.

Martin, on the other hand was a little more explicit. For him, immigration is indeed an important topic that is often visible and talked about in the news. He notes that emigration is of particular interest for the reader. According to Martin, there are many news about immigrant “pressure” from North and East-Africa. “People in Estonia do not realize how big of a problem it is” he notes. In his observation immigration is a hot topic everywhere in the world. British media claims that there are too many immigrants, Swedish media tries „to figure out how to help these poor refugees” and „Estonia, with its Soviet heritage, is somewhere in between”. Martin states that Soviet past makes the whole immigration topic more sensitive in whole Eastern-Europe. Since there are not as many blacks, it is considered as a new phenomena. For Martin, it does not make too much of a difference for the reader whether the words used are „asylum seeker”, „refugee” or ”immigrant”. In the big picture all of them express mobility. In the case of so called „boat-refugees”, Martin says that it does not matter whether they are refugees or illegals -immigrants are they anyway. However, in his opinion the nationality is relevant, since it would help to understand why someone is mobile. He gives me an example: “Syrian is probably escaping from non-human circumstances while Nigerian is just looking for a better life”. If we were to find out what makes people move, then perhaps we would be able to change something in their country of origin so that they would not need to become mobile. This would also solve the problem of pressuring Europe.

Immigration is not something that is often written about where Allar works. He remembers that there was a story about 300 Nigerian students in TTÜ (Tallinn University of Technology). In his opinion the story deserved its place in the paper because of the element of surprise. Why so many people from such a faraway country? He admits that before publishing the story, there was a discussion on what to say about Nigeria in this context. Allar says that it is natural to bring out nationality in stories, to give the reader an idea whether it is one of „ours” or not. Allar sees media as one of the main sources of information nowadays. Since the sources vary, media should provide a revision or overview of several viewpoints- that is something that for example organizations involved will not do. At one point in the interview I ask about a particular story by Anne Treumuth, where she is warning the readers, saying that if we are not careful, all the Africans and Arabs will end up coming here (article suggest they are now in the Mediterranean). In case Estonian social welfare is not capable of supporting them, they will have to start stealing here. Allar thinks for a while and says that he is not sure who that lady is, but he can remember canceling one of her stories because of racist implications. At times stories like that do get published and sometimes the reflection comes afterwards. Sometimes he is not reading the whole paper and that particular story was possibly in the travel section and not of big importance.

In opinion column, Tanel figures, immigration has never been a very hot topic. Tanel brings the example of Helme because of his strong words about immigration and that he decided to interview him. His reasoning is that there is no point to publish 3 stories about how „Helme sucks” and not to give Helme a chance to speak. However, connected to immigration, the questions of citizenship and double citizenship have been addressed more often since it is close to the readers. Tanel says that emigration is usually addressed in the key of as something to fight against and a search for solutions to make people stay. Immigration and emigration are associated with decrease in population, and economic welfare. The latter suggests that the low salaries are a pushing factor for people to leave since it is simply not enough to manage the living costs. He anticipates that if Africa would be addressed in opinion stories then likely in connection to the spreading of ebola. Even though Estonia does not have direct contact with African countries or ebola, due to few cases of ebola presented in Europe the interest is growing.

At one point during the interview with Allar, I asked him about what does he consider as his responsibility as a journalist. He thinks about it quite a bit and finally answers: „My main task is to make sure that the paper has a considerable readership. For me personally, it is indeed important that the world would rather become a more bearable place in connection to the newspaper. However, making the world a better place is not a purpose in itself, this is not the reason to do this kind of job“. In my observation, similar ideas were expressed in a subtle way by all the interviewees. What Jüri, Martin, Allar and Tanel are initially doing is their job. Big part of that job is not only to inform the readers, but to attract readers and maintain consumers. In my observation for all of them, the responsibility of interpreting and constructing discourses is as much on the reader as it is on the mediator. According to Jüri, Martin, Allar and Tanel, they make stories of what is already out there, they process it and mediate it for the reader. The news and stories made available for the reader are largely depending on foreign publications, and therefore, rather than being a mirror of reality, they are reflecting on international discourses and subjective worldviews. Martin, Allar, Tanel and Jüri did not think of themselves as being involved in constructing discourses about African immigrants at all. Based on these interviews, the context of discourses could be looked for within inter-subjectivities of their producers. Google translator, work ethics, work conditions, relevant and irrelevant education can all be seen as creating that context. However, the freedom and creativity that they described, implies that the context and content of discourses is not systematically determined.

When starting the interviews, I expected the inner workings of media to be considerably more structured and to encounter more ideological principles as articulated by Stuart Hall. I expected to meet manipulative and power-oriented people, considering the relation of knowledge and power as articulated by Foucault, who could fit with the image of media as structural unit. However, based on these interviews, I will argue that media is a result of inter-subjectivities negotiated by individuals, rather than clearly structured and definable unit.

3. AFRICAN PRESENCE IN ESTONIA: “COOL, WE HAVE ONE!”

“From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art.”

— Michel Foucault, 1997: 261

The aim of this chapter is to show how Salim, Godfrey and James, as immigrants from three different African countries, negotiate their personhoods in Tallinn. Based on my observations I will suggest concepts of mimesis and alterity, as moments where sameness and difference, Europeanness and Africanness are experienced, useful for understanding the process of self-making in migration context. To illustrate that, I will provide a montage of ethnographic descriptions that are intersected with interpretations from my part. The chapter is divided into 6 sections with themes inspired by biological definition of mimicry. In biology, mimicry of the species can occur in appearance, behavior, sound, scent and location. Holding these aspects as references, I decided to give them my own interpretation according to the course of events of my fieldwork.

In the first section I will give an overview of how mimesis and alterity have been articulated by scholars like Michael Taussig (Taussig 1992) and James G. Ferguson (Ferguson 2002) and why I find them compelling in this thesis. The subsequent section follows the line of translating biological aspects into my fieldwork experience. The next section interprets appearance into appearing and image. It addresses how African presence in Tallinn is perceived by my informants and how they are contesting and negotiating representations of Africa in Estonia. The following section aims to illustrate how through essentializing certain behavior, one's own preferences of comportment can be legitimized. The fourth section addresses how music and its performance are part of transnational self-making. In the fifth section I will look at how food is used to brand alterity as well as the importance of food in maintaining transnational personhood. The final section addresses the importance of locations in life-projects and the notion of nostalgic longing for home.

In this chapter I hope to offer an alternative narrative to that, which emerged in the previous chapter, from media discourses. In my opinion, suggested media narratives are present in the experiences of Godfrey, Salim and James. They are dealt with by contesting,

conforming and exploiting them. In the following sections I am trying to allow my informants to demonstrate their ability to contribute and add to the discourse while simultaneously assimilating and integrating to it.

3.1. Conceptualizing mimesis and alterity

In biology, mimicry suggests similarity, whereby one species becomes similar to another. That similarity is important because of its benefits to either one or both of them. Taussig has used the concept of mimesis to explore how people use it to integrate to a different socio-cultural context, while acknowledging the parallel processes of distancing through the notion of alterity. My reading of Taussig is that through analyzing magic of the mimesis as appropriating colonial phenomena into rituals (such as Hauka or wooden figurines of Cuna), he sees mimesis as means to resist, come to terms with and obtain control over the colonial presence. The self then is negotiated through mimetic practices of magic and mockery. James G. Ferguson (2002) provides an account on mimesis in post-colonial context that I found most inspiring when reflecting on my interpretations of the stories of Salim, Godfrey and James. Ferguson points out that mimesis, as utilized in colonial and post-colonial anthropological studies, have been highly criticized because of its implications of African inferiority by reducing its modernity to bare, at times tribal, imitations of Europe. Ferguson voices concerns of African students saying that:

“By taking the extraordinary figure of the Hauka as a paradigm for understanding African gestures of similitude with Europeans,” we risk misreading (as magical appropriations and resistances by a localized "African" cultural system) practices that are better understood in the context of the politics of membership in the "world society"..." (Ibid.:557-558 referring to Wilson)

Ferguson makes the case, that mimicry, especially in African urban setting, speaks of claiming fair membership of global modernity that is perceived „not simply as a shared historical present but as a social status implying certain institutional and economic conditions of life.” (ibid :560).

Borrowing the idea of juxtaposing mimetic practices and processes with altering ones, and Ferguson’s interpretations, I perceive mimesis and alterity as possible responses to the tensions of agency and the structure, constant reconciliation of the global and the local, the

isomorphism of place, culture and individual within the migration experience in Tallinn. In this thesis I see mimesis and alterity as embodied continuous processes of constructing a sense of self that are highlighted in transnational experience.

3.2. African presence and representations: „Do I look hungry?!“

Godfrey and his friends told me that they are all “around” 30 years old and they explained that they consider my asking of age somewhat rude. Godfrey, John and Leonce have been living in Mustamäe dormitory for two years. Godfrey and John are studying international relations in Tallinn University of Technology, and Leonce is studying international law. According to my observation, they form a group of friends who often spend their free time together. Godfrey and Leonce are from different parts and ethnic groups in Nigeria whereas John is from Cameroon. They all already had their BA degrees in Nigeria and Cameroon but they were not eligible for the MA degree programs in Tallinn and now have to graduate another Bachelors program. From this group, Godfrey became one of my main informants with whom I spent the most time together.

Salim is now 33 years old and working as a DJ in Tallinn. He graduated his Bachelors program in Helsinki this winter and now considers applying for a Masters degree in Tallinn. He was hesitant at first, since studying in Finland for him, as a permanent resident, would be for free. Salim moved to Finland from Tanzania when he was 18 years old. In the beginning he lived with his mom who was doing her PhD in Finland. As her mom left after around 6 months, he has been on his own. His connection to Estonia was first embedded in his work as a DJ, but after years of moving back and forth between Finland and Estonia he figured that Tallinn is friendlier and more open minded place to live and pursue his career.

James is in his early fifties and has been working as a lecturer in Tallinn University. He is now running a school in Tallinn. He moved to Estonia because of his relationship and is now raising a daughter with his wife in Tallinn. As he left Cape Town, his hometown in South Africa, he left behind his business that he had with his brother and cut most of the ties economy wise. Other than that, James is into food business and sees his future in that area. He does workshops of cooking, wine tastings and pop-up restaurant style events when he can. James has been importing wines from South Africa for a while and dreams of opening his own restaurant.

Something that Salim, James, Godfrey and his friends tell me, is that they could go to many other countries in Europe, but they chose Estonia. Their initial reasons for migration were varied. Godfrey came to study, James fell in love with an Estonian girl and Salim came because of work connections. According to Godfrey and his friends, comparing to Latvia and Lithuania, Estonia is better off- „economy wise”. They did research before deciding on their studies in Europe and Estonian Universities were highly accredited and affordable. Since the living costs also appeared reasonable for them, they decided to take a chance. James says he has been moving around in Europe enough and his wife has also been working abroad, however, they have decided to raise their daughter here. A friend of Salim got him a gig in Estonia about 7 years ago and he has been moving between Finland and Estonia ever since. Only in the summer of 2014, knowing that his studies in Finland are almost over, he decided to move to Tallinn. As it turns out, their choice also had to do with how many Africans they believe to be living in Estonia.

Salim told me that he does not know a single African person living in Estonia. He says that when he happens to see another black person on the street, they usually nod to each other, as if saying „I feel you...”. Salim is laughing when saying that, but swears that it is true.

For me, I see that Estonians are more open... maybe because we are very few here.. so Estonians are more like... oh cool... we have one (he is laughing, when saying that). Because you have, like, Russians. Maybe because we are not many here and they like to see... like... international people. There was one girl apologizing to me in the club: „Ooh, I am sorry, sorry if Estonians are like... really aggressive and rude... but you know, it's not our fault, we had these Russians, and Germans and others”. I was like, yeah yeah, don't worry I am not trying to occupy your whatever... (laughing).

According to Salim, Finnish are more closed and have certain prejudice about Africans. He thinks that it has to do with Somalis who are bringing down the reputation for all Africans. Other than that, he thinks that the reason why Estonians seem to be more tolerant is that they simply do not know anything about Africa.

Few weeks into getting to know Godfrey, I noticed that he is often out of town in nearby smaller cities and towns. Quite a few times he also mentioned meetings and conferences as a reason why he would be busy. After a month I finally asked him about how does he have so many friends outside of the city. Godfrey told me, a bit hesitantly at first, that it is “church stuff”. On one Thursday evening I accompanied Godfrey and his friend Omar to a

some sort of „church meeting”. I phrase it like that only because while I was waiting for them in Radisson SAS hotel lobby that is where I think I was going. When they arrive they lead me to another building and honestly, I could not make my way there by myself again. Finally we enter to office spaces. We are greeted by someone who does not really speak English. He goes to look for a guy who speaks poor English, since actual translator, being the person who invited Godfrey, is going to be late. It turns out that this meeting is for foreign Christian business people, either having or starting a business in Estonia. Besides us three, everyone could speak Russian. There were ethnic Russians, quite a number of people from Ukraine, someone from Belarus, us three and one guy from India. Apparently, one of the main speakers, who was also our main translator for the evening, met Godfrey in a conference week ago and invited him for this meeting. The translator told the whole group of people about a conference, that took place prior to his meeting with Godfrey, about business opportunities in Africa. He had a pamphlet with him that included all the speakers and he went over some of the ideas he had heard from the conference. According to him, the development of African countries and the fact that they have been “undiscovered”, in terms of small business relations, provides European entrepreneurs with new prospective business partners from Africa. At this point I felt like the presence of Godfrey and Omar was an obvious exhibition of how the advice from the conference can be put to practice here in Tallinn. In addition, our translator was pretty blunt about how every opportunity should be seized and tried out. Therefore, I do not think his agenda to include Africans for prospective business contacts was meant to be a secret.

My informants have told me about other occasions where their “African presence” has been valuable. Godfrey and his friend have been to some schools to represent Africa (not Nigeria) and had kids asking them questions about where they come from. According to Godfrey, the kids think that Africa is a massive jungle with tribal people running around. James has been asked to give class on racism in a local primary school due to his South African origins and its association with apartheid. Salim was recently offered a part in a commercial where he would play a well-known black movie actor.

In my opinion, the migration stories of Godfrey, Salim and James go beyond neoclassic economical theories of migration and social network theories whereby migration fosters more migration (Hagen-Zanker 2008, Haug 2008). I would argue for manifestations of Rappports individuality that sees people as consciously leading their lives and pursuing life projects (Rapport 2003). By making a conscious choice between different locations, they

engaged themselves with Estonia and decided to invest their skills and knowledge here at a particular moment. From pointing out that one of the reasons of choosing Estonia is the small number of Africans here, I sensed that my informants did not only see themselves as possibly valuable for the local context, but they also expressed a sense of being perceived as an asset for the circles they move in. I think Salim's interpretation of local attitudes being along the lines of "look, we have one", illustrates the understanding of African presence in Tallinn. The instance from church event is another example whereby I sensed African presence as desired, exciting and useful. In my observation, Godfrey was invited to that meeting mainly because of the conference about business opportunities in Africa. Godfrey, himself, is not involved in private business sector in Tallinn, but he was in Nigeria. I wonder if the self-image in Estonia is partly constructed by interactions like that. It speaks to me of reciprocity and imagining the self through interactions with others, what a person is able to offer to local community and what community offers as well (Fowler 2004). Being exotic, being different, being transnational- in these particular moments of my fieldwork- have been bargained as advantages for positioning the self.

Representations: "This is not what Africa is about"

Godfrey, Omar and me are sitting in a surprisingly big bar in Mustamäe. Half of the bar is filled with pool tables. There are not many people- us and a rather loud group of youngsters. It is not that late, but completely dark outside. Somehow we end up talking politics. Godfrey asks me if I know about Boko Haram. I know very little, but I do not feel confident in saying even that out loud, so my answer is „no". Godfrey tells me that they are a rebel group causing trouble mainly in Northeast of Nigeria. I want to know why and ask if it was conflict between Christians and Muslims. Godfrey laughs: "Yeeeeeaaah, they can say that it is religious, but it's not. They are just troublemakers, they have their own agenda ...yaaah, just some corrupt troublemakers". He tells me that Boko Haram says that they are against Western education and now they are making it about religions as well, only to justify their case. According to Godfrey the Muslims and Christians in Nigeria are not really bothered about the religious differences and coexist in "peace and harmony", as he says laughing. For example, he is Christian and Omar is a muslim and he does not remember it to never come up in their daily lives. He says something very similar to Ilmar Raag, an Estonian film director, media executive and columnist, when he was giving a

presentation about his military involvement in Central African Republic. According to Raag, these conflicts are essentially not a clash between Islam and Christianity, instead, there is a very small percentage of people who take some principles to absolute extreme and claim to fight for them. Godfrey remembers that he had read something about Boko Haram recently and he was surprised by that. He starts talking to Omar in a dialect and I do not understand much. They enter into a few-minute discussion. Boko Haram had recently taken over the town of Baga. While they both are surprised, Omar asks Godfrey several times whether he is sure that it is true. I ask Godfrey if he is worried about what is going on in Nigeria. He answers smiling, almost laughing, that he is not, because these things are happening very far from his hometown and he has never had anything to do with that part of Nigeria. He says that things like that are always going on in the world, also in Europe (giving Ukraine as an example). As we continue talking about the conflict in Ukraine, Godfrey hesitantly shares his opinion, expressing his understanding that this opinion would not generally be welcomed by Estonians. He tells me that in a sense he has a lot of respect for Putin, because it is not like Western countries had not been meddling with the uprisings in Ukraine. “These Western countries can just do what they want and no one dares to talk about what they have been doing in plenty of places, also Maidan in Kiev.” It is the first time when I hear Godfrey criticizing „the Western”. This conversation was held around a week before Boko Harams’ “deadliest massacre” in town of Baga, where estimated 2000 people were killed (theguardian.com).

I found this conversation noteworthy because I think Godfrey is displaying very different affections, worldviews and senses of belonging from those of some other instances. When in the introduction I have described an incident where Godfrey stated that Africans share “one blood”, and that they are all “brothers”, then in this vignette he expresses distance. He is not concerned about Boko Haram, because it has nothing to do with his life story. That is not to suggest that he is being self-centered, but rather, it seems to be as close or as distant to him as the violence in Ukraine. Another aspect I find curious is that talking about Boko Haram, as well as Vladimir Putin, he offered me an alternative perspective on political questions in the world. While hesitant, he was willing to share, willing to alter himself from what he considered as normative in Estonia. I am reminded of Mudimbe, who has written extensively of African representations and its affect on African thought. He makes the case that African thought has been and still is, controlled by Western epistemological order and hopes for a new, independent African thought system, since people now have the

freedom to think for themselves (Mudimbe 1988). Mudimbe too expressed the tension of being the Other and the Same, that in the case of Godfrey could be interpreted as offering an alternative perspective in discourses dictated by the West.

James has expressed his concern about European concept of Africa several times during my fieldwork. On our very first meeting he was going to tell me a story, but first he asked whether I know where African Union is located. I said the right answer, which was Addis Ababa. From his smiley approval I felt like I kind of passed the test. He then went on to tell me how an Estonian government official in a gala event had approached him and asked something concerning politics of Africa. James asked him the same question about African Union. The guy figured it would be in Egypt. „People always assume it is Egypt, as if Egypt was the only country in Africa where there are politics”. The topic comes up again in few weeks.

People always ask me things like, „how are things in Africa?”, and I tell them... You know, Africa is massive. It takes me all day only to drive to visit my sister in other part of the country. It takes me all day. 8 straight hours or more. And I drive non-stop. This is not even that far in South Africa. ”

James continues to speak about the size of Africa, saying it could fit Europe, United States, Canada and even parts of Asia in it. He asks:

How can Europeans give so little credit to a massive, rich continent like Africa? You already know that we have all the resources you could image- gold, diamonds, oil... But did you know that South-Africa also has the second largest beer brewery in the World? They produce Pilsner, Carling, Castle... Did you know that?

I did not.

Another time we were sitting in Godfrey’s dorm room with Godfrey, John, Leonce and Paavo and having a rather heated discussion about women, their rights, responsibilities and opportunities in Africa. At one point John stops the conversation and says laughing:

”It is just so funny that even nowadays... when someone says that he is an African or from Africa, the first things that comes to your mind is someone walking barefoot on the street, naked...”

„With a stick!” adds someone.

„That is why people ask me if I have seen a lion on street- yes, a lion is my neighbor!” says Leonce shaking his head and laughing. Godfrey also finds the questions about wild animals

absurd: “We don’t have lions in the town! There are even no lions in the village! They are in the zoo! I saw elephant in Berlin- in the ZOO!” From that point on the conversation gets heated, full of different representations that the guys have found ridiculous, as well as offensive. „They don’t ask the Arabs these stupid questions they ask us” says Godfrey and gets a quick response from John: „One stupid girl asked me if we have cars in Africa”. According to John, people often compare and describe Africa as it was in the fifties and sixties. This notion is approved by rest of the group and commented, saying that things have changed a lot since then. According to them, you will hardly find a household in Nigeria where there will not be at least two knowledgeable computer users. Most of the people, according to the guys, have embraced Western culture in majority of aspects. Leonce comments:

You know Kaubamaja? There is a shop called Humana in Kaubamaja. Have you ever been to that place? The first thing that greets you is a hungry black child! I detest going into that place- this is NOT what Africa is about! Do I look hungry?

The guys start making comparisons between Africa and Europe saying that the poverty in Africa is exaggerated by media. They rhetorically ask me whether there are no homeless in Estonia, or beggars in United States. When they say „exaggerated” they actually say it simultaneously. They think that part of showing only a certain image of Africa has to do with showing Europe as more developed. „I am not saying in Africa there are no places with bad roads... but it is not like there are no bad roads in Estonia... I have been to Võru!” says John, raising his voice. Godfrey says:

People are portraying us- they think we live in a tree. I don’t take stupid questions like that. Maybe tomorrow they are trying to portray us in the bad way, but at least you have heard from us

From what I have gathered, the images of violent and poor Africa are very real part of making the “self” within migration experience. James’ insistence on South-African and African achievements and assets to be appreciated is also addressed by Cheikh Anta Diop. He makes the case that by acknowledging African contributions and legacies we can recover a more truthful image of the world. In doing so, according to Diop, Africans would not consider modernity as something Western that will “domesticate, atrophy, dissolve, or “steal” their “souls”, but would see Africa as participant in creating it (Diop 1997:726). In my opinion, reversed version of that same idea, is what James is indicating. Instead of

seeing Africans as essential others, demanding rights to modernity, they could be seen as active counterparts in creating it. While being able to provide a different, alternative perception, the existing representations of irrationality, being wild and underdeveloped inhibit the image of a person as prospective contributor. Mudimbe argues that “primitivity” is an ideological concept that naturalizes European superiority and creates the subaltern (Masolo 1994:182). Comaroff and Comaroff have written about imperialist images of Africa saying that: “the images of Africa are born of European arguments about their own essential nature”(Comaroff and Comaroff 1997: 693). To contest these images is to contest otherness. When Leonce asks “Do I look hungry?” and Godfrey says “I don’t take stupid questions like that”, I understand it as representations of primitive, poor Africa are personally offensive, since they feel like this image is applied to all Africans, including themselves. Questions of this kind, are perhaps interpreted as descriptive of their lifestyles and therefore, their knowledge and abilities.

When Godfrey talks about Boko Haram he makes a connection with violence in Europe and ends up talking about Vladimir Putin. For me, there is a simultaneous moment of mimesis and alterity, whereby Africa is no different from Europe, when it comes to violence. At the same time there is a moment of alterity, where he offers a perspective that he considers as unpopular and uncommon. In addition, he creates a map of international, perhaps global politics, where Ukraine and Nigeria fit into a same discourse of contemporary conflicts. For him, Africa is not essentially violent, but conflicts are inherent to international politics. This leads me to look at how certain image of Africa is argued against, since it denied both Africa and Africans the participation in global community. That image dictates to a degree how Africans are possibly perceived and expected to behave in Europe. To contest this image, in my opinion, involves concurrent acts of mimicking the other and altering the self.

All in all, it is not my aim to suggest that negotiating personhood for Salim, Godfrey and James is embedded in post-colonial condition. However, I do think that discourses of African presence in Europe, as well as African representations by Europeans, are constructing “symbolic frontiers” that are entrenched in imperial imagination (Hall 1991). I have referred to above mentioned scholars to understand the essence of these “symbolic frontiers” and how they are experienced.

3.3. Performing difference- “I can do it because of the way I do it”

Like when you get into to the bus... everyone's quiet... at some point you are like “did I do something or...?” You know... everybody's like... when they get on the bus... you see people are sitting like... one seat and other one's empty... and next again one seat and the other one empty. No one wants to sit next to other... like... And when you sit yourself... and nobody comes to sit next to you... they rather stand... That was weird/But you know still, the silence... always... Because you come from a social background, everyone's “aaae” (imitating being noisy). /And then you see people standing in line... for the... automachine... the machine to take the money out (I interrupt saying ATM?) Yeaah... you know... sometimes it's broken... And the first one sees its broken... he goes... and then the next one in line... sees it's broken and goes... they all go and look... and nobody says it's broken. It happens. Few times I have seen it. There's no like... communication...

Given anecdote was told by Salim, when I asked him what was the biggest surprise for him when he first moved to Finland. His description fits with the narrative that people from cold countries are essentially less communicative, whereas people from global South, from warm countries, are more lively and social. In following section, I will consider reproduction of stereotypes as possibly tactical move to make use of assumed differences to negotiate personalized norms of acting.

Spivak has come up with a term *strategic essentialism* to explain temporary solidarity of a minority group to pursue particular goals (Spivak 1999). The way I read it is to strategically act as „essentialist” to emphasize particular identity when encountering subalterity. I found this approach compelling when remembering moments of my fieldwork where certain behavior or manners were talked about as Estonian. I sensed that Godfrey had the most colorful stories to tell, since his migration experience in Estonia is more recent. However, they have all contested and confirmed manners they find curious or irrational in their very own personal way. According to their experience in different locations, they negotiate how much they are willing to alter what they consider as norms and when they feel like they would prefer to start a revolution.

One time I meet James in a homey beer place in Tallinn Old Town. He tells me what happened before I got there. He told me that he had a friend amongst the group sitting in another table. His friend had greeted him immediately as he entered the door, while the waitresses did not say anything. James turned to waitress jokingly: „You have very polite

guests here, they must be taking after you!”. What made the situation funny for James was that the waitress could not assume that the guy greeting him was his friend.

The girls were confused. They understood that it was a remark on how they welcome their guests. I was laughing and friendly when I told them that (He does a little demonstration of how he had said it.) But I am educating them. I was not rude, but if someone doesn't point out that they had done something wrong, they will not realize it by themselves... and now they will remember that.

Later on in the evening he tells me how he thinks it is important to communicate with words and say things out loud. The ability to do that, for James, is what Estonians often lack. He tells me how he can get away with saying things that coming from another Estonian would come across as highly inappropriate. For instance, making comments about someone's booty at work. James is the only foreigner in the office and he knows that Estonian women are not used to this kind of behavior. James tells me a story about a young guy from work. The guy wanted to ask a woman from the office out on a date and sent her a text message. He never received an answer, but the girl issued a complaint as she found his behavior offensive. James laughs and says that this could never happen to him, otherwise it would have happened more than once already. He explains his somewhat shameless verbal behavior:

I do it because I can. People make words too important. It's just words you know. I can call a priest names and then grab him under my arm and it's fine. It's because I do it, and because the way I do it.

I recall another night with James before Christmas. That night he was not that confident about teaching people lessons, but told me about another side of non-communication he had experienced in Estonia. He was invited to a sauna-party somewhere on the countryside. He did not know many people there, but socializing, as far as I know, is not an issue for him. He describes how he saw guys talking in the circle and drinking beer. He went, grabbed a beer, and joined in. According to James, the circle quietly closed in, continuing their conversation in Estonian and leaving him aside. He joined the ladies and chatted away, not acting bothered by the incidence, but he admits that it was still hurtful.

James is using his „foreignness” for his own purposes. The way I see it, he has taken a certain kind of behavior that has troubled him within his migration experience, and uses his „otherness” to confront people, but also to negotiate his own personhood. I consider the

way he has said that he can say these things that others cannot, as him not being considered an Estonian enables him to not act according to the „norm”, and not to be judged on same terms.

Godfrey has also decided that there are some manners that he is not going to conform to. Godfrey and his friend explained to me once, that in Africa, when they go out with friends people do not make a thing about how much someone consumed then divide the bill accordingly. You would just pay if you can, and next time it will be someone else. If there happens to be a woman in the company then there is no way that she should ever take care of the bill. Godfrey, John and Leonce all told me rather similar stories how they got into an argument with an Estonian girl simply for paying the bill. They were blamed for being disrespectful and not respecting Estonian manners. Godfrey tells me a story how he once invited a girl to eat in African Kitchen in Tallinn Old Town. When they were finished, he went off and settled the bill at the bar. As he got back to the table, he let the girl know that the bill was taken care of. The girl, however, took it very personally and asked Godfrey whether he thinks that the girls cannot pay for their own food and that here in Estonia things work differently. Godfrey said that he lost a friend that day. When he talks about it he laughs, but he also looks upset. Finally, when I asked him if he now knows better how to handle situations like these, he answers: „You know, if you are coming to eat with me, I will pay the bill anyway. I don't care if you don't want to be my friend because of that!”

The way I understand moments like this, is that selves are negotiated through essentializing the behavior of the others. I am not under the impression that James or Salim believe all the people in Estonia or Finland to be unable to express themselves vocally. What is more, the example of Godfrey does not necessarily suggest that all Estonians will not pay a penny extra to what they have consumed and that all the Estonian girls get offended when invited to a meal. The way I understand essentialism here, is to explain or justify their own wishes to behave in a certain way. Clifford wrote about negotiation of identities, not only as connected to place, but rather embedded in the experience of dislocation, “mediating complex affiliations and multiple attachments” (Clifford 1998). In my opinion, the experience of dislocation enables people to play on these affiliations and attachments through tactical and strategical essentialization of both Self and the Other. Therefore, I understand stories from James, Salim and Godfrey as ways of using already existing narratives about people from different parts of the world to legitimize their personal preferences of how to behave.

3.4. Transnational sounds: “Put-your-hands-up-in-the-air music”

For Salim, making music has been his ambition since he was a teenager. His work as a DJ is the most significant reason why he moved to Estonia in the first place and that is also how he became connected to Estonia long before actually moving. In my understanding the places that have been hiring him, starting from around 7 years ago, have been central in how he understands Estonia and his experience here. Salim once explained to me, that the British school system, that Tanzania has adopted, was way too strict and uninspired for him. He got bored and started to interrupting the classes. The high school where Salim went to during his first years in Finland was using the same British school system. Salim never graduated. As a kid, Salim was already into rap and hip-hop music.

I used to record music videos... same with the tape... I used to have the tape... They used to have these radio shows... and... because they didn't have so much hip-hop I was always waiting... and I would record the top ten and, you know.. and the guy end up talking in the middle of the song and I am like... aaaah... (laughing). I used to have my walkman so I... I used to record all the weekend... and then I... the next Monday I walk to school and I would listen... Like Wu Tang, Gangsta... there's a group called Gangsta... Dr. Dre. At that time Eminem wasn't that big.. it came like 98

"Local music was not that good for the young... it was like very old and..." When I ask him what kind of music is it, he stops to think saying "huuuu", as if I hit a hard one. Salim tells me that most of the kids his age were listening to the same kind of music as he was. According to Salim there is no music typical to Tanzania. There is traditional music, but not a genre more specific than that. The songs that are in Swahili are still influenced by Congolese music. "Back then there was a lot of borrowing" he says.

In Finland, Salim got into playing records through a Tanzanian friend he met in school. As he tells me, his career is based on networking. One of the people Salim was introduced to by his classmate is a Finnish guy, Toivo, that he considers his best friend until now. Salim tells me that they even formed a rap group at one point.

I remember I was rapping in Swahili in early stages... he was like what is he on about? I was like... maybe we can try... I can do it in Swahili and he can... in Finnish... It was some weird mixture like... Yap... these were fun years

The descriptions of Salim's childhood are particularly important to me, because without a doubt, my ideas about possible ways to live in Tanzania were strongly influenced by my experience in Malawi. Malawi and Tanzania are neighboring countries and Malawians import goods from there and always talk about Tanzania as a kind of big brother. My underlying agenda when asking about Salim's childhood was to make sense of the whole experience of moving to Finland founded on my subjective and personal experience, based on assumption that everything was very different. His description, therefore, was surprising for me and mostly because it was very similar to my own. Watching TV, recording radio shows, buying magazines and putting posters up on the wall.

His childhood experience does not resonate with the narrative of poor and underdeveloped Africa and irreconcilable cultural differences. I consider representations of place very relevant, because nationality, as well as national identity, are both space centered notions that suggest that one's personhood is influenced, if not determined, by where one comes from. Nationality and national identity are important since both of them constitute the concept of immigrant in the first place (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002).

#African

One of the first things I learned about Salim was that he is working as a DJ in a rather upscale club in Tallinn. After knowing Salim for more than two months I finally went to see him play on a Friday evening in the beginning of January. I invited my sister to come with, as I am not used to going to clubs like this one. When we got there around midnight, the place was not packed but there was plenty of people considering the hour. I remembered when Salim talked about the music he is playing. He called it „put your hands in the air” kind of music. At this very moment I knew what he meant. He is playing all kinds of club mixes of mainly pop songs, hip-hop and R'n'B music. Looking around among the people it seems as if everyone is dancing and almost every new song was welcomed with a cheer. Within an hour the place got crowded and it was getting harder to get around and to breathe. When Salim is playing he looks very different from the person I had been spending time with. He takes the microphone and yells to the crowd asking whether everyone is having a good time and letting the people know that it is time to party. The audience responds with cheers and shouts while „putting their hands in the air”. Salim does not speak with the audience too much, but when he does he is confident and calm, if

not to say cool. It feels like he is letting the partying crowd know that everyone can just relax and enjoy the ride because DJ has everything under control. When he is not talking he looks concentrated and professional while dancing to his music. At one point I noticed that he was not on the stage and we went to see if we can find him. The club had gotten crowded and it took us a while. When we finally found each other I introduced my sister and we had a quick chat. It felt awkward. In that club, as a DJ he had this pop star presence and I felt like talking to one. Weeks later I told him about that night and he answered to me laughing „I have to make a show, you know”. Until that night we had only talked about his job and I had heard few of his mixes.

What was the most curious for me, was that on the flyer of the event it pronounced Salim’s artist name and behind that (FIN), indicating that he is from Finland. When I asked him about that, he said that the organizers figured it would work better for promotional reasons, since Tanzania might not ring a bell to the audience. Salim does not mind, since he thinks that it is possibly true. At the same time Salim’s promotional pictures are often with Tanzanian flag and his instagram pictures (also promotional) always tagged as #EastAfrican, #African, #Tanzanian etc.

In my opinion, as a DJ, Salim is branding both his Europeanness as his Africanness in opportune moment. His Tanzanian and African background is something that is definitely important to him and he includes it in the way he presents himself as a DJ. At the same time, it does not define him as a DJ. The way I understood Salim’s explanation of being presented as from Finland is that he does not consider himself as a Tanzanian DJ or Finnish DJ. All he really wants to do, since his childhood, is to play music. If being associated with Finland or Tanzania is good for business, then so be it.

During that period in my fieldwork I had not familiarized myself with the concept of personhood and was thinking more along the lines with plurality of identities. The night when I went to see Salim play records, the word „plurality” really struck me. I realized that in some bizarre way, within the past few months I had come to know Salim „the African”, Salim „the Finnish”, Salim „the Tanzanian”, Salim „a student like me”, Salim „my friend” and Salim „the artist”. The oddness of seeing him on the stage made me understand that these different Salims are actually always present and context-dependent. Therefore, Salim (FIN) and #EastAfrican ceased being contradictory as well as Salim „my friend” and Salim „the artist”. In the midst of multiple identities of people during my participant observation, I found the concept of personhood more appropriate and rounded to understand subjective

experiences, like that of Salim. All the above mentioned notions of being Tanzanian, student, artist etc say very little about the person Salim is in his daily life. More than that, some aspects of his self are negotiated as irrelevant in certain context, while defining in other.

In his book, “I am Dynamite”, Nigel Rapport places life-projects of individual into a empowering position, whereby individual is seen as having control over his/her life journey instead of society, social institutions and others (Rapport 2003). That means that while conditioning factors exist, essentially they do not control the life of the individual, but merely provide circumstances. Through his own reactions and decisions in particular circumstances, Salim, some nights in a month, is a Finnish DJ in Tallinn. To me, the instances of Salim as a DJ, either Finnish or Tanzanian, speak of how Africanness, while emphasized, is flexible and negotiated creatively for personal ambitions- for life projects.

3.5. Taste of Africa and “eating paper”

Usually I have been meeting with Godfrey in Mustamäe. Either in his dorm or some of the pubs that are close by. Once I decided to invite Godfrey and his friends over, as I thought would be fair to do. When I called him up I got an unexpected answer, saying that he is probably going to be in Finland for the night. He and some of his friends were going to get some African food from Helsinki. They had told me about their trips before, but I had already forgotten. Godfrey says that in Helsinki I can encounter all the African food stuffs that I could possibly imagine.

During my fieldwork I sensed the importance of food when Godfrey and Salim talked about things that they miss from back home. For James, on the other hand, food has a particular place in his life project. In the following section I will elaborate on different levels of importance that food, with its smells and flavors, can have in personal migration experience.

I am motivated by Paul Stoller’s encouragement to include sensuous descriptions in ethnographic writings and find sensuous metaphors meaningful in social context (Stoller and Olkes 1989). To do so I will attempt to place the utterances of my informants into a transnational migration context. For example, when it comes to food talk, flavors and taste come up without asking. At the same time, when participating in a food event, gustatory

sensation expands beyond taste, becoming a metaphor for the whole experience. For James, offering food is not only to offer flavors through embodied experience, but also to offer a social and cultural experience.

I found out about James' passion for food on the very first night we met. Once I went to see him while he was conducting a wine-tasting and dinner for International Women's Club as a favor to one of his friends. When I arrived, there were about 10 people around the table, listening to James talk about one of the wines, laughing and asking questions. Introducing the wines, James used stories about South Africa to paint vivid pictures of where they came from. He tells a story of the first black woman who became winemaker and the hardships she confronted due to the legacy of Apartheid in South Africa. However, the story does not shed a shadow of sadness, instead, it feels romantic. A woman with a passion, in a magical country (James does not spare words when he describes landscape and nature in South Africa), who struggles in an oppressive political context and in the end succeeds against all odds. It is a happy ending especially because now her wines are enjoyed across the world. Later James tells me that he can tell these stories in a way that no one else can because of his roots. The story of Ntsiki Biyela becomes more meaningful when coming from a black South African in Estonia and the experience he offers when doing his wine tasting creates a unique atmosphere. The wine becomes more than flavors it combines, but it becomes a lived experience of James and Ntsiki that can be consumed. James does not mention it, but I doubt that the choice to present wine from „the first black female winemaker” had nothing to do with the fact that the audience was International Woman's Club.

The story he told about Ntsiki Biyela illustrates how James uses his South-Africanness as advantage and also how aware he is of that. Due to the preceding notion of „we have one”, James is offering a unique experience in Tallinn and his Africanness is one of the main components in it. When introducing and importing the wines from South-Africa, James' own self becomes a branding tool that contributes to his business. Given instance illustrates for me how Africanness gets highlighted in James' presentation of self. The part that violence played in South-African image, while in other conversations contested by James (and by others when talking about violence in Africa), is presented hand in hand with wonderful landscapes of the country and indicates the exotic. Being different and exotic are negotiated by James as valuable to set him apart from different possible dining experiences in Tallinn. As I will elaborate later in this section, Sutton makes the case, that

consuming foods from home evokes memories of past experiences and places. I find what James is doing very similar. Before he would offer wine and food, he would tell stories, that due to his origins and style, might easily leave the impression that he is talking about his own experiences, even when he is not. He creates images, flavors and memories with his description, that are evoked when tasting the wine and food.

James is also a head chef for the evening. He has two people to help him, one of them is more of a hostess of the restaurant, and in addition, there is a young boy as an actual kitchen assistant. James asks all of us to try the rice and looks us expectantly to hear comments. It is rice with raisins and some spices. According to James, it is his own improvisation with South-African influences. While he is making sure that the guests are happy and entertained, the plating up in the kitchen is on hold, because as the hostess said: „It’s James’ meal so we better wait for him to come back and plate up exactly how he wants it”. Few minutes later I understand exactly what she meant. James rearranges the plate couple of times before he is happy with it. He asks for a small cup. All three of us, the hostess, assistant and me are looking for a small cup. Finally someone brings a cup from a bar, James stuffs it with rice, puts it on a plate upside down and removes it, leaving the rice in a cup shaped pile. When he is done, he asks everyone if they are happy with it too. He is serious and careful. „The food has to be simple and tasty, and it has to look like that as well”.

James is importing wines as a business, and performing as a sommelier is something that comes with the job. He has been doing workshops on cooking and is making plans of opening up his own place. Carrying out a position of a head chef is not only a favor to his friend, but could possibly be affirmation of his talent as a chef, being good at what he loves to do, conformation that his vision of his own restaurant is worthwhile. He is not getting paid for it, but it is reciprocal for him.

I believe this event to be illustrative of many aspects of this thesis. James’ personhood could be considered as dividual and individual. As he is doing a favor, participating in social exchange that does not involve money, it is not a job or service. At the same time, James has his own agenda, to promote his wines and also his cooking skills, to fulfill his own life project. To do that, he creatively balances his sense of being a fellow expatriate, international intellectual in Tallinn, with emphasizing his otherness, not only being a foreigner in Tallinn, but also in Europe. The experience he offers is not only based on

flavors and how they are sensed, but on the exotic and unique atmosphere that he intentionally creates.

Bread like a brick

Another evening when Godfrey, his friends and I were sitting in Godfrey's dorm and chatting away. In the middle of the conversation another man joined us. Godfrey introduced me to Paavo who had arrived to Estonia only two months ago. Paavo was quietly listening most of the time. Once again, my experience in Malawi has put silly questions in my mind and I ask the guys whether they too are eating mice in Nigeria and Cameroon. The answer is absolute and a bit judgmental "No, no, no". I am told that there is some kind of creature, bigger than rat, that is very tasty and if they can find some, they will invite me to dinner. Paavo, who had stopped whatever he was doing in his computer and had been listening to the guys, spoke up:

When I first came here, for first four weeks I could not get used to Estonian food. I was eating potatoes for weeks. I thought potato will grow out of my head.

After few comments on abundance of potatoes in Estonia, the guys start bombing me with different food stuffs they had been trying, which in big part consisted of different types of game meat. Blood sausages are mentioned as well. Counting of food produce stops, when Leonce asks me whether he could find a turkey in Estonia. He asks me to write turkey in Estonian on a piece of paper for him. Godfrey comes with a paper too.

„I went to Keskturg. I could not find any turkey” says Leonce. Godfrey agreed making noises of tasting food like „mmm”. Paavo suggests that perhaps they should be just eating chicken. This idea is not welcomed Godfrey:

Chicken? You cannot compare turkey to chicken. NEVER. You get tired of chicken, you never get tired of turkey (he is interrupted by Leonce and John agreeing). It's sweeter... it's softer...

Leonce adds: „I will buy it, even if it's 10 euros.”

Being careful, due to previous experiences, not to suggest that the food in Nigeria is drastically different I asked whether their meals are similar to those back home. The whole room bursts into laughing. I have my answer. Godfrey tries to maintain himself and states

that many things are missing. I am personally very attached to black bread, so I ask them about the bread.

Godfrey: „Even the bread is different from our bread.”

Me: „So what kind of bread you have?”

Everyone bursts into laughing and start talking at the same time: „Not like this here” „We are eating soft bread not hard like here, without taste.” „Your bread looks like... what they call to make a wall. It’s like a brick... you can hit people with it”. The whole room is laughing.

Godfrey:

When you walk pass the bakery (in Nigeria) and smell it (rest of the guys are making approving noises), you might just break down the wall to get it. The bread here is hard... like meat...

John: “These are just some of the difficulties we face here”

I am loosing track who is saying what, but I gather that even the potatoes are different. Beans are different too.

I stop them in the middle of chatting and ask if perhaps there is some kind of food that they really like here. Mixture of voices answer me:

Not that we really like, but it is manageable. The rice is manageable. They don’t clean it properly. You have to cook it two times... but it’s actually manageable.

I am not giving in and I finally ask what was on my mind since from the beginning. Surely, they like black bread.

Leonce: „I am sorry Estonians, no offence, but there is no flavor. It is so tasteless”

Godfrey: „Sometimes eating here is like eating a piece of paper nam-nam-nam. Food is some of the biggest challenges for Africans coming here”

I believe within next 30 seconds our conversation shifted from food towards woman’s role in the household and to Leonce’s assertion: “I don’t think my dad has ever been to the kitchen in the past 15 years”. This was followed by lively comments on how cleaning up plates and starting to mess around in the kitchen would probably confuse their mothers and perhaps be even offensive.

What is interesting in this particular conversation is that there is a very clear distinction made between how food tastes in Nigeria and in Estonia. While Nigerian bread is hot, soft and its smell makes you want to break the door, Estonian bread is described as hard, tasteless and something to use for building a wall. At the same time turkey, as it is missed and regarded as hard to find, is characterized as sweet and tender, in opposition to chicken, that while being available, is plain boring. The food is described not only by its gustatory properties, but also by its texture and character. This sensation or perception is so real for them, that taking a boat to Helsinki, to get some food supplies, is not too much trouble. Godfrey and his friends perceive food as “some of the biggest problems for Africans”. This expresses an essential difference of flavors in two particular places- a moment of alterity, that is based on taste, smell and texture of food.

David Sutton has adopted the concept of *wholeness* from James W. Hernandez to describe the importance and role of food within migration experience. In his interpretation, food becomes an instrument to come to terms with sudden ruptures in social scene through symbolic processes of reconstructing the “whole”. (Sutton 2001:76). Sutton goes on to explain that food evokes “local knowledge” and memories that are the basis of one’s selfhood. It resonates with my observation that following the discussion on food, we shifted into practices of making food, social sphere of kitchen and roles carried out there. To accommodate Sutton’s insight into the concept of personhood and self-making, I suggest that self-making is not only embedded in present experiences, conditions and ambitions, but also those of the past. Food becomes means to induce memories of family, relatives, friends and people that are associated with certain places, moments and emotions. I wonder if the perception of how things taste, is affected by the sense of longing for home. Sutton, here, makes the case that food from “home” is an immediate remedy for that longing (ibid.:82). As Rapport writes, fulfilling one’s life-project does not necessarily grant people happiness (Rapport 2003:2). Food, therefore, can be considered as a relief for that degree of belonging, missing and feeling of incompleteness. What is more, a way to tie the individual self that is negotiated through social relations, family ties and reciprocity, with the individual, a self that is taking control of his/her life.

3.6. Experiencing places: “At ease everywhere, at home nowhere”

I believe that “where would you see yourself in the future” is a relevant question for people who have migrated from one country to another. Not to actually know what they will do or where they are going to live, but rather to hear what kind of plans they have for themselves and how are places, locations partial in constructing them. For me, where person is, becomes a conditioning factor of who he/she could be. Glick-Schiller wrote about several instances, in case of Haitian immigrants in U.S, whereby people experience a nostalgic longing for home that is, according to my reading, relieved through maintaining transnational social and economic ties and transnational political activities (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 1999) . I found the notion of nostalgic longing to be useful in understanding my informants claims to tie their future with homelands. While Salim, Godfrey and James have not made actual plans to either move to another country or back to where they were born, their presence in Estonia is infused with ideas of leaving. The way I understand longing for home, it is rather an arbitrary idea than actual plan for future.

For instance, Godfrey told me that two weeks after he arrived to Estonia he was ready to go back to Nigeria. He said that he was bored out of his mind. He thought to himself that in Nigeria he could at least earn money and have a rather luxurious life, but here, he could find a job for 2,5 Euros an hour and that is simply not worth the trouble. In the end his friends talked him into staying. Godfrey says that he is happy here now: “Africans never regret their decisions. I wanted a challenge and I got one”. The last time Godfrey was in Nigeria was two years ago. He says that he is hoping to go for two weeks in the summer of 2015: “By gods mercy, let’s hope I can get there for two weeks... By gods grace!”. He says it as if he does not want to jinx it. Godfrey told me that the initial reason why he came to Estonia was to go into politics in Nigeria. According to him, this is the biggest problem in the country- corruption. Godfrey and his friend all agree that so many people have a foreign degree these days, that in order to make it in politics you really need to study abroad. “We came for your knowledge” says Godfrey. However, when I ask him what are his plans after graduating, he does not have any particular plans or agenda yet. He does not know if he wants to stay living in Estonia for a while, go to another country or to Nigeria. He says that he can not know what following one and a half years left in Estonia can bring. I ask Godfrey and his friends if they miss home and why. They start speaking at the same time and I can catch words like family and food repeatedly. Leonce starts joking around:

"Where's my mom... I miss my mom.. You look like her . You know, she is very light-skinned (everyone is laughing hard)"

When I ask John, because he keeps being left out from the conversation, whether he misses home, he starts laughing. "I guess yes.. I miss home.. but in another context I don't miss home because... (moment of silence).. Because you know.. I always wanted a situation to be a little bit far from my mom. Back there she would never believe that I am a man, I can stand up for myself. I just want to have some space between us. I really do miss her, but sometimes when I think about it, it's like.. it's like fifty fifty."

Family ties are something that I have especially noticed when being together with Godfrey. 99% of the times we have met, his father had called him on the phone. This is a moment where he would just state that he has to take his call because it is his dad and would quickly pick up the phone saying "Yes chief!" or "Hello Sir!". Salim told me that he too talks to his family in Tanzania almost every day, especially to his mom. As he said, his dad is not so much invested in technology. When doing my fieldwork, it actually took me by surprise how close are the transnational ties and that information between Estonia and Nigeria or Estonia and Tanzania is exchanged on daily basis.

In a sense similarly to Godfrey, Salim also told me that he sees his future rather in Tanzania than anywhere else. He does not know when exactly he would like to return, since he first wants to build up his career as a DJ. Then, once he will start playing music in Tanzania, he would be considered as an European DJ in a sense. He would also like to be financially secured once he will settle there. He is planning to build two houses there, so that when he will decide to live there, he would already have his own place. At the same time, when we discuss these ideas he has, there are no timeframes. Salim, too, is opened to other possibilities of how life might turn out. Since Salim moved to Finland almost 15 years ago, I was wondering how close are his ties with Tanzania. When he left he was only a teenager. He says that he visits as often he can- the last times were in 2008 and 2012- but it is rather expensive. He also does not have many connections other than his family since he has lost contact with his friends from school by now.

James told me that he really wants to go to South Africa for a little while. He figured a month would do to visit friends and family, but during a summer holiday, when the school he works for is closed, the winter winds in Cape Town are almost unbearable. He would have liked to go before summer already. I could sense a degree of emergency from his

voice back then and asked about it again. James told me in a very different manner than few months ago, that since South Africa is the size of Europe he would need at least a month and it is not in his agenda at the moment, even though he would still like to go. He adds: „I am at ease here in Estonia now.” I tell him that it surprises me because few months ago he was not that optimistic on that topic and he also considered moving back to South Africa permanently. James tells me that he is feeling more calm now and that he is making plans to open a restaurant in Tallinn. This is something that he had wanted to for years and he is hoping to start meeting with some people in following weeks. While he tells me that, he looks calm and at the same time excited and hopeful. Some years ago he had found a place in Uus Maailm (a neighborhood in Tallinn) that he wanted to buy and turn into a restaurant. He was already in contact with the current owner who had his own vision of what could be done with the building and James had arranged a meeting to introduce the owner his idea. „When I got there, I could tell by their reactions right away that this is not going to happen. I was not what they expected, you know. The secretary with the computer went right back to the car once she saw me.” The owner came up with an excuse to call off the meeting at that was the end of that. „When they saw me, I was not what they were expecting. I don’t take it to heart, but.. you know.” he repeats. I ask if there had been more occasions like that, but he is not keen on giving me more examples. He assures me that he does not take those situations too seriously and does not make too much of them.

Another thing I learned about Estonia is that a small country like that is very unforgiving. If you screw up, people remember that. Especially when you are a foreigner. There’s good and bad

He concludes: „There are many opportunities in this small country for me”. James explains that he was earning well in South Africa and that he dropped everything to come to Estonia and now he is doing well here too. This topic makes James think. He tells me that he has been around in Europe and he knows that he could be at ease anywhere he would choose to settle. And then he says something that stays with me for days: „At ease everywhere, at home nowhere”

Home, as I understand it, is something rather flexible for Godfrey, Salim and James when they talk about it. It has everything to do with what they are experiencing at the very moment when they talk about it. They often refer to their country of origin as home, but at the same time their commitment to going back is not written in stone. These particular

examples for me illustrate that longing for home goes hand in hand with the ups and downs of living abroad. I hesitate saying that, because I hardly think Estonia can be considered as abroad for James and I wonder whether Salim actually considers Tanzania as home- and if he does, then what is the definition of home. Maybe to say ups and downs of transnationalism would be more accurate. Have family, friends and memories in two places will always allow one to „miss” (not to say something is absent, put more that is out of reach) something. And of course, the last sentence that echoes through all of my informants’ stories. They can create good lives for themselves in many places of the world, but at times they would talk about „going back”. However after years of living abroad the „back” does not feel the same as well. “Home” or “going back” somehow seems to work as an alternative to present condition, as nostalgic ideal place to escape to and to compare the present with. At the same time, it is also not defining the plans or ambitions of any of my informants. While home country and nationality are present and are identified with, these emotional ties are not definitely acted upon. As said before, the locations here are engaged with through the opportunities they offer a person in a very particular moment of his/her life. Going back to Tanzania, Nigeria or South-Africa, therefore, can be seen as a choice, decision based on similar individual ambitions as that of moving to Estonia- love, career, studies, social ties, economy, safety, family or search for a challenge as ways to negotiate opportunities for personal success and happiness.

4. CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore the tension between media representations of mobile Africans and the lived experiences of individuals who could be categorized as such. The study was set out to investigate how discourses are constructed by powerful media agencies, but instead identified individual agencies at the core of media imaginary. When general theoretical literature on the subject of migration experience is embedded in structural categories of identity, this thesis proposed to approach the topic through subjective, creative and disorderly self that emerges in the concept of personhood. With the intention to understand reasons and motivations for particular representations as well as negotiations of selfhood, this thesis has addressed the complexities of interplay between agency and structure, reconciliation of the universal and singular, global and the local, as well as the tension between the Self and the Other. In doing so, this dissertation is offering an alternative perspective on the power of media and the experience of immigration in Tallinn.

In the following sections of this chapter I will summarize the main empirical findings of this thesis and what they suggest for the specific study of media representations and real-life experiences. I will expand on how dissertation at hand contributes to the knowledge of migration experience, media discourse and personhood in Anthropology. Consequently, I will revisit theoretical approaches that have inspired this thesis. In addition, I will give my suggestion how this thesis provides valuable data for migration discourse in Estonia and allies with policies that consider Tallinn as diverse and cosmopolitan city. In the last section of this chapter I will elaborate on some of the limitations of this dissertation and some of the questions that have emerged during my fieldwork. I will offer some recommendations for further research that could help to create even fuller body of knowledge on proposed tension.

Empirical findings

As stated earlier, this thesis is an exploratory study and does not claim to answer a particular research question, but rather to expand on a tension between media as structure and individual as agency in migration context. The emphasis has been on individual experience, and due to that, the empirical findings, though interrelated, are chapter specific.

The introductory chapter shows how the shift in anthropological study of mobility, introducing concepts like transnationalism and diaspora spaces, suggests an approach that apprehends and examines the complexity of migration processes. By addressing scholars who question the isomorphism of state, place, language and culture, I found that identity, as a categorical, top-down, structure based concept, is perhaps not well suited for understanding the complex subjective experiences. I was compelled by the concept of personhood that includes both dividual and individual self. Therefore, my choice of methods are strongly based on person-centered approach. As I have explained, biographical approach and montage writing aim to refrain from generalizations and reflect on the fragmentation and turbulence that self-making involves.

The second chapter, “Media as Structure”, sets out to investigate the discursive representations of African immigrants in Estonian media. As stated, it is based on the assumption that media has power and could therefore, be seen as structural agency that affects the conditions and possibilities of individual agencies to author their lives. The discourse analysis and interviews with journalists showed that that African discourse, in general, takes up a very small part of Estonian media. Considerable amount of news stories involving Africa are about war, disease and refugees. According to the discourse analysis on immigration and emigration, there is a great fear of receiving new immigrants to Estonia and this is discussed in connection to human value of an immigrant. In the interviews with journalists, none of them sensed any responsibility of depicting neither Africa nor African immigrants in any particular way. Instead, their answers suggest that media is constituted by subjective individuals, trying to make a living and fulfill their own life-projects. The interviews conducted and results exhibited in this thesis are not to suggest that media cannot be considered as structural agency with institutional implications, but are calling for a further ethnographic study and analysis of who and what constitutes the power of media and its discourses. While collected data is not enough to make any generalizations, the attempt to approach immigration discourse from structural aspect led me back to individual subjective agencies, who in my observation, are driven more by personal agendas than any particular structuring aspect of media.

Based on collected ethnographic data, in the third chapter “ African presence in Estonia”, I suggested that negotiations of personhood can be understood through mimicking and altering practices of Salim, James and Godfrey. The montage like sections reveal how personhoods are negotiated in different settings of everyday life, in making careers, food

practices, understandings of place and performing the self. While addressing certain image of Africa, representations, that are similar with those encountered in media discourse analysis, are contested. On another occasions, for example the wine tasting event with James or the anecdote of buying a meal for a girl by Godfrey, differences and being exotic are played up for own purposes. As the case of Salim and him being a Finnish DJ shows, identity markers are constantly negotiated and creatively put to use in life-projects of individuals.

Consequently, conditioning factors (including media discourses) are respected, disregarded, cheated, acknowledged, stretched and praised. My main informants- James, Godfrey and Salim- are not fighting against the system, neither are they victims- if anything, they are creative authors of their own stories, deleting phrases they dislike, adding chapters and constantly configuring the storyline.

Theoretical implications

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the anthropological study of migration experience. In doing so, I believe it could also contribute to anthropology of media and representations as well as anthropology of the individual.

One of the most curious findings of this thesis is that beyond the god-like apparition of media, there are real people. People who are making careers, supporting their families, building houses, paying bank loans and struggling for recognition. Perhaps one of the editors does extra hours and research while the other goes home and watches TV. Maybe the third one is obsessed with motorcycles and spends most of his free time in the garage with other bikers. However, on Monday morning they show up at work and do their job- which is to write, edit and select news and stories for readers all over Estonia. As Rapport wrote:

“In combination, in institutionalization, individuals can be more forceful than apart (to the extent that they can orchestrate their individual momentums in harmony), but the institution and the society has no life or life-force on its own.” (Rapport 2003:8)

While this thesis is in many aspects inspired by scholars like Michel Foucault and Stuart Hall and their articulations of media, power, knowledge and discourse, its empirical findings do not exactly support the image of media as hegemonic and ideological entity. The ideas of media setting agendas and creating an imaginary of “social totality” are very

convincing in explaining how discourses encountered in Estonian media could affect Estonian migration policies. However, given theories give little credit to individuals who are creating the media.

Marilyn Strathern's articulation of individual person has had a major influence on this thesis. She has suggested a negotiation of personhood through reciprocity - relationships with people, things, concepts and so on. However, in this thesis I am suggesting that the concept of personhood could be understood in a more holistic way, when adding the notion of creative subjectivity of individual, ability to author ones' own life, as articulated by Rapport. In my opinion, "African presence in Tallinn" implicitly makes the case that the roles of structure and reciprocal relationships are present and influential, while they are constantly up for a debate and not having a static place in the processes of self-making. The representations of Africa in media discourses, and lack of them, have been perceived as lack of knowledge about Africa by Salim and James. From the stories of Godfrey and his friends, encountering a stereotypical violent and underdeveloped image of Africa emerges as a part of their migration experience. While these representations and lack of representation are seen critically, they are taken advantage of.

Implications for the future

This dissertation provides empirical data that indicates that public discourses on Africa, especially regarding mobility, are one sided and do not provide an alternative narrative, such as experienced by Godfrey, James and Salim. As shown, in printed media discourse, migration evokes both anxiety and desire towards newcomers. Considering the findings of this thesis I would propose to review the grounds on which these anxieties, as well as desires, rest and include the counterpart of mobile people in the discussion.

Secondly, in my opinion this thesis contributes to the idea of Tallinn as diverse, multicultural and cosmopolitan city. The findings of this thesis suggest that African presence contributes to that image by offering alternative perspectives on existing discourses as well as consolidating them. Incorporating the voices of migrants in the discourse of mobility, and valuing as well as understanding the diversity of Tallinn, is important for the conviviality of people in Tallinn. What is more, I believe in the wider context, these implications would suggest a more realistic and fair image of contemporary global processes.

Consequently, I believe this dissertation has identified some presumptions about Estonia as a nation-state that are often taken for granted and provokes some questions on an ongoing nation-building project of Estonia as well as Estonian democracy. The thesis touches upon the image of Estonia as a democratic country aspiring to belong to the Western world and how it is intersected with nationalist, ethnocentric views towards migration. In my opinion, Estonian nationalism and its implications concerning immigration could benefit from further exploration to guarantee egalitarian living conditions to citizens as well as non-citizens of Estonia.

In addition, I believe extended ethnographic study on news production could add a great deal when investigating how discourses are constructed. Unfortunately, the study on public perception was beyond the scope of this thesis. African immigration studies in Estonia could also benefit of gender studies. While all my informants were male, their manhood as such, was not addressed. It would also be curious to see how women's migration experience and negotiations of self can be articulated. While this thesis has addressed the experience of Africanness in Estonia, the experience of race would add another interesting layer for understanding the lived realities of my informants. On a wider level of mobility studies in Estonian context, it would be very interesting to unpack different ethnic minorities belonging to Russian speaking population of Estonia. This could be done in relation to media representations and nationalist discourses as well as minority studies.

This said, I believe this thesis grapples with number of questions that in further exploration will be beneficial for understanding the Estonian imagined community with its members and non-members.

All in all, this thesis argues that the interplay between structure and agency, between mediated representations and daily negotiations of personhood, cannot be fully explained by domination of hegemonic structural powers and disenfranchised subjects. This dissertation illustrates the ability of individuals to creatively contest, ignore, as well as take advantage of and conform to the structural powers, to negotiate personhoods that would best fit their individual life journeys.

4.1. Kokkuvõte

See bakalaureusetöö keskendub sellele, kuidas ja milliseid diskursusi mobiilsetest aafriklastest meedias luuakse, ning leiab, et need diskursused ei ole kooskõlas kogutud

etnograafilise materjaliga. Põhinedes etnograafilisele uurimustööle, toon näiteid kuidas minu informandid loovad ise-endeid samaaegselt läbi mimeesi ja erinevustele rõhumise. Tähelepanu keskmesse satuvad globaalse ja kohaliku omavaheline lepitamine, koht, kultuuri ja indiviidi isomorfismi käsitlemine, sarnasuste ja erinevuste kogemine migratsiooni kontekstis ning samaaegselt nii aafriklase kui eurooplasena elamine.

Meedia diskursuste uurimiseks tegin diskursuse analüüsi ning intervjuerisin lühidalt erinevate uudiste väljaannete toimetajaid. Etnograafilise välitöö viisin läbi kolme indiviidiga: Godfreyga Nigeeriast, Jamesiga Lõuna-Aafrika Vabariigist ning Salimiga Tansaaniast. Informatsiooni kogumiseks viisin läbi struktureeritud ning semistruktureeritud intervjuusid, tegin osalusvaatlust ning veetsin informantidega mitteformaalselt aega. Info kogumisel kasutasin eluloolist lähenemist (Jackson 2008). Materjali esitamisel eksperimenteerisin montaaži stiilis kirjutamisega lootes rõhutada kui ebakorrapärane ning loominguline on eneseloome (Taylor 1994; Marcus 1990).

Antud teesi teoreetiline raamistik põhineb Nina Glick-Schilleri transnatsionaalsuse teoorial ning Paul Gilroy transatlantilist ruumi käsitleval teoorial, mis seavad koht, kultuuri ja inimese isomorfismi küsimuse alla. Selles bakalaureusetöös väidan, et identiteedi konseptsioon ei ole kõige veenvam, et üksikisiku subjektiivset kogemust mõista ning inspireerituna Marilyn Stratherni dividuaalsuse konseptsioonist ning Nigel Rapport'i individuaalsuse mõistest, pakun välja alternatiivi eneseloomise ja iseolemise mõistmiseks. Meedia rolli mõtestan lahti toetudes Michel Foucault, Stuart Halli ja Faye Ginsburgi käsitlustele meediast, teadmisest, diskursusest ja võimust. Eesmärgiga mõista iseendaks olemise ja saamise protsessi migratsiooni kontekstis olen laenanud binaarse opositsiooni „mimees ja eristus” (mimesis and alterity) Michael Taussigilt. Käsitlen mimeesi eelkõige läbi James G. Fergusoni tõlgenduse.

Antud töö teine peatükk analüüsib kuidas kujutatakse Aafrikast päris immigrante Eesti ajalehtedes. Leidsin, et Aafrika immigrandi diskursus iseeneses ei eksisteeri ning see konstrueeritakse läbi Aafrika kui mandri kujutamise, rändavate aafriklaste esitamise eelkõige põgenike näol ning läbi üldisema migratsiooni käsitluse. Eesmärgiga mõista, miks ja kuidas selline representatsioon tekib pöördusin nelja, neljas erinevas ajalehes töötava, toimetaja poole. Sain teada, et intervjueritavad ei arva, et nad mingeid kindlaid representatsioone loovad või, et neil Aafrikaga seotud migratsiooniga palju kokkupuuteid oleks oma töös. Lisaks sellele, selgus, et uudiste tootmine põhineb palju enam

subjektiivsetel otsustel ning pole struktureeritud, nagu seda oleks võinud arvata Foucaulti, Halli ja Ginsburgi teooriate kohaselt.

Kolmandas peatükis illustreerin kuidas James, Godfrey ning Salim loovad ja esitlevad endid läbi meedia representatsioonidele vastandamise ning teistel hetkedel, läbi nendest kasu lõikamise. Seda tehes, rõhutavad nad oma sarnasusi ja erinevusi eestlaste ja eurooplastega läbi alternatiivsete perspektiivide pakkumise Aafrika kohta ning läbi käitumistavadele hinnangute andmise. Igapäevastes praktikates toimub eneseloome läbi Salimi jaoks läbi muusika, Godfrey ja Jamesi jaoks läbi toidu ning suuremal või väiksemalt määral kõigi jaoks läbi koha ja kodu mõistete seostamise.

Kuigi tehtud diskursuseanalüüs on esile toonud järjepidevuse Aafrika, mobiilsete aafriklaste ja migratsiooni käsitlemises, siis tehtud intervjuud näitavad, et meedia representatsioone loovad subjektiivsed inividid, kes oma tegevuses lähtuvad eelkõige isiklikest eesmärkidest ja maailmavaadetest. Tehtud etnograafiline välitöö Aafrikast pärit immigrantidega pakub aga alternatiivse pilgu nii erinevate Aafrika riikide sotsiaalsele, poliitilisele ja majanduslikule olukorrale, kui ka migreerumise kogemusele Aafrikast. Käesolev bakalaureusetöö toob näiteid sellest, kuidas pinged representatsioonide ja kogemuse, globaalse ja lokaalse vahel ning indiviidi ja struktuursete üksuste vahel võtavad erinevaid vorme inimeste eneseloome protsessides migratsiooni kontekstis.

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