MESA 50
TABLE 50

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Comunidad e historia oral. Parte 2
Community and Oral History. Part 2

CHAIR
Indira Chowdhury (India)

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Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde (Nigeria):
"The Role of Oral Narrations in the Social Organisation of the Okun People in Central Nigeria"

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Aynur de Rouen (US):
"Kurdish Oral History Project"

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Meltem Karadag (Turkey):
"Oral History and Everyday Cosmopolitanism"

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Maria Zeneide M. De Carneiro de Almeida (Brazil):
"Pueblos y Cenários del grandde Sertaö: Patrimonio cultural, memória y fuentes orales."

—

Irina Rebrova (Germany):
"The Role of Oral History in the Memorization the Holocaust in Contemporary Russia"

—

Grace Millar (New Zealand):
"'My Father Always Used to Nag and Go On': Discussion of Memory within Oral Histories and the Creation of Collective Memories."

—

Ricardo Torres Silva (Spain):
"Poder y autoridad en el mundo gitano."

The Role of Oral Narrations in the Social Organisation of the Okun People in Central Nigeria.

Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde
(Nigeria):

Resumen: El historia de el Okun pueblo venir en varios forma de oral narracion tal como oral tradicion, oral historia y ethnohistory, asi para nuestro proposito nosotros utilizar el termino oral narracion como todo abrazo definicion de su oral historia. El Okun pueblo ser un frontera grupo de el Yoruba pueblo varios conflicto tradicions en su origen y social relacion. El social relacions aqui are en el primero nivel entre y dentro de ellas mismas y luego con su circundante ethnico grupo. Este estudiar mirar y evaluar el varios tradicions en tandem con su social organizacion. Asi, el papel yo de el opinion ese el social organizacion de el Okun pueblo base en parte del intrínseca narracions ese incorporar su migratorio historia en clan bases ace oponerse ese oral tradicions ese punto a concreto local como su primodal casa tierra. El papel yo de el opinion ese el autentico historia de el pueblo poder obtener cuando cerrar atencion yo sitio en el narracions ese dar validez a el social grupo de el pueblo.

Abstract: The history of the Okun people come in various forms of oral narration such as oral traditions, oral history and ethnohistory, thus for our purpose we shall be using the term oral narrations as an all embracing definition of their oral history. The Okun people being a frontier group of the Yoruba have various conflicting traditions on their origin and social relation. The social relations here are at the first level between and within themselves and then with their surrounding ethnic groups. This paper looks at and evaluated these various traditions in tandem with their social organisation. Thus, the paper is of the view that the social organisation of the Okun people is based on some intrinsic narrations that incorporates their migratory history on clan basis as opposed to those oral traditions that point to particular locale as their primodal homeland. The paper is of the view that the authentic history of the people perhaps might be obtained when close attention is placed on the narrations that validate the social set up of the people.

INTRODUCTION

The Okun people are located in Kogi State of Nigeria between Latitude $7^030'$ - $8^033'$North and Longitude $5^015'$- $6^0 30'$East[1]. Their geographical location makes them the northeasternmost Yoruba group which comprises of six linguistically intelligible Yoruba dialects of Oworo, Kiri, Bunu, Yagba, Owe, and Ijumu, collectively referred to as Okun Yoruba (see fig. 1). They are classified under Yoruba in the Niger - Volta sub – group of the Niger – Congo linguistic group[2]. The Yoruba group itself is divided into five clusters; Central, Southwest, Southeast, Northwest and Northeast Yoruba. In this subdivision they belong to the Northeast the group[3]. The geographical area they occupy has been touted as the centre from where other Benue – Congo speakers 'radiate out like the spokes of a wheel. (Thus) indicating that this must also have been the Bantu homeland'[4]. Being located within the Niger – Benue confluence area they shared geographical boundaries with the Kakanda and Igbira (Ebira) to the east, the Nupe to the North, Igbomina and Ekiti to the west and Akoko to the south.

The Okun area is located in an ecotone between the savannah and forest regions of Nigeria, thus the vegetation of the area is termed derived savannah which is characterized by extensive plains dotted with numerous hills. The historical significance of these hills according to my informants lies in the fact that they provided defensive outposts for refugees from more powerful invaders in the past[5]. The study area, which has a transitional climatic condition between the northern and southern parts of Nigeria, stands as a zone of mixed culture in which the food crops of the south are cultivated side by side with those of the north[6]. The area is located within the tropical seasonal climatic belt of Nigeria with distinctive dry and wet seasons annually. The wet season, which is characterized by a relatively high humidity, the average of which is about 70% and an average temperature of 27^0C runs from late March to mid October.

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[1] Bakinde, Clement Olumuyiwa, "A New Perspective on the History of Okun People," *Journal of Environment and Culture*. Volume 8 Number 2 (2011) 27 – 41

[2] S. Adebanji Akintoye, *A History of the Yoruba People* (Dakar, Senegal: Amalion Publishing) 2010, 6 – 7.

[3] Roger Blench 2010.The linguistic Geography of Nigeria and its Implications for Prehistory. *West African Archaeology: New developments, new perspectives. BAR International Series 2164* (2010) 161 – 170. Roger Blench, *The atlas of Nigerian languages*. 3rd Edition (2011).

[4] Iliffe, J., 1995. *Africans: The history of a continent*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1995, 16 – 17.

[5] Philip Akande Oyelaran, "A preliminary report on pallaeoenvironmental investigations in Iffe – Ijumu, southwestern, Nigeria". *Papers from the Institute of archaeology*, 4 (1991) 1 – 8.

[6] Reuben K.Udo, *Geographical regions of Nigeria*. (Ibadan. Longman) 1978
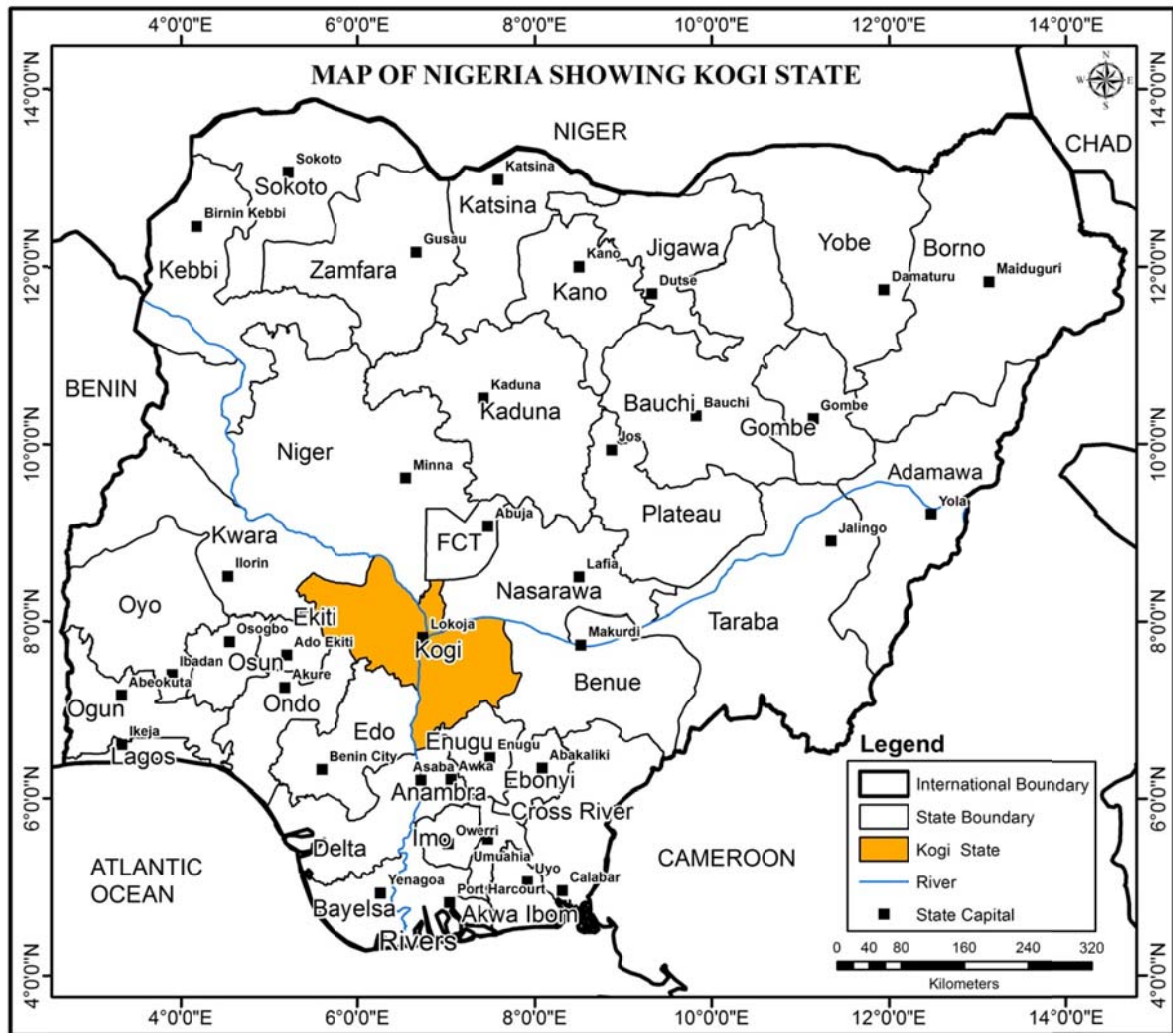
Fig. 1: *Map of Nigeria showing the study area*.

The mean annual rainfall is 1510mm, the peak of the wet season is usually August when the area experience a double maxima[7]. The dry season runs from late October to mid March, a period in which there is hardly any rainfall. During the dry season, the Northeastern air masses takes control of the weather, which brings about the strong dusty Harmattan winds from late November to early February[8]. In addition, the region experiences maximum isolation because of cloudless skies most especially during the months of February and March. The highest mean monthly temperature is about 34^0C[9]. Rainfall is the most important element of climate as far as agriculture, the main economic system of the people is concerned. As such, the economic activity of the people is controlled by the distribution of rainfall as well as the length of the rainy season annually.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH.

The Okun people have a unique way of utilizing the natural environment as their settlement pattern. Normally they organize themselves into wards or quarters based on clan affinity, thus each ward is made up of clans that have the same progenitor. This type of settlement pattern is quite distinct to the Okun people and is unparallel in all other Yoruba speaking areas. This paper attempts to explain some

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[7] Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, *A survey of Ogidi and Okekafe abandoned hill settlements*. M.A. Dissertation. University of Nigeria, Nsukka (2003). Philip Akande Oyelaran, *Archaeological and Palaeoenvironmental Investigations in Iffe – Ijumu Area of Kwara State, Nigeria*. Ph. D Thesis. Department of Archaeology and Anthropology. University of Ibadan. Ibadan (1991).

[8] Philip Akande Oyelaran, "A preliminary report on palaeoenvironmental investigations in Iffe-Ijumu, Southwestern Nigeria". *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*. 4, (1993) 1- 8.

[9] Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, *A reconnaissance survey of Okeeghon abandoned settlement site*. B.A. Project. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1990).

of the factors responsible for the adoption of this pattern of settlement by Okun people. This becomes imperative as their oral narrations seem to explain the rationale behind its adoption. Therefore, this paper aims to evaluate the various oral narrations on the peopling of Okun area. This is with a view to reconceptualising Okun settlement with interest to their historical background and social organization. In order to achieve the set objectives, oral interviews were conducted in key settlements prominently mentioned in oral narrations. The interviews target all ages, gender and economic tradesmen.

THE TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN OF OKUN PEOPLE

The early history of the Okun people as preserved in oral narrations is multifaceted, but could be grouped into two categories with each consisting of many variants. The official history; referred to as migration history traces the origin of Okun people to either Ile – Ife or Oyo Ile[10]. Although, all the dialectical groups in Okunland ascribe to one form of migration history or the other, there are major differences in the details of these histories. For instance, the Owe and Oworo groups and most of the Ijumu group with the exception of Ikoyi who claims Ikoyi – Ile as their root, accept Ile – Ife is their original homeland. Additionally, the Yagba group with the exception of Ife – Olukotun which trace their origin to Ile – Ife claim Oyo Ile as their original homeland. Moreover, the Bunu and Kirri groups have a mixture of tradition of origin as some of them claim to have migrated to their present location from Yagba or nearby settlements[11].

The second tradition maintains that the people are aboriginal to the area and that they did not come from anywhere as they have been within the Okun area since the beginning of times. Ijagbemi[12] recorded a version of the tradition thus:

In the beginning of things goes the tradition 'there was an old man who lived (at Iya) who had five sons and five daughters. These he sent out to people the world, one couple were the foreparents of the Yagbas, they went North. From the couple who went East the Bunus are sprung; and the Akokos from those who went South. The Aiedes descended from those who went West'.

The second version which is very popular in Ijumu avers that the people have been autochthonous to the study area. According to this version each lineage in each of the villages came into and within the vicinity of their current settings in waves of migration in search of pasture and game. This version avers that there was no single progenitor for the Okun people. Here, every clan and lineage in Okunland came to their present area of habitation at different time spectra from the others. Consequently, the first set of people to settle in any of the Okun settlements are the Ona people according to this narration. The Ona hold sway in all the cultural practices of the Okun people on account of being the first group to settle in the land. As a consequence of the above tradition, the Okun people did not evolve a state system as in other parts of Yorubaland where there is a ruling house. Rather, they evolved a rotational system whereby the kingship rotates from one quarter to another at the demise of an incumbent king.

Another consequence of the above traditions is that the Okun people could be regarded as a frontier group. A frontier is a geographical region which consists of politically open areas nestling between organised societies. Because they are located in empty or sparsely populated areas, frontiers are areas that can offer little political resistance to intrusion. One of the characteristics of frontier zones in Africa is the possession of dual traditions of origin. According to Kopytoff[13]

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[10] Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, "A New Perspective on the History of Okun People," *Journal of Environment and Culture*. Volume 8 Number 2 (2011), 27 – 41.

[11] Iyekolo, E. B, *The peoples of Okunland*. Lagos: Concept Publications Limited (2006). Kola Olubiyo, *Kola Olubiyo on Kabba. A City State. Its Founding and Tradition*. Published by Kabba Club 12. Obaleke Triple Crown Foundation. Kabba Alade Meta (2002).

[12] Ijagbemi, A., "Change and Incorporation in the Niger – Benue Confluence Area: The Case of the O'kun Yoruba". *Confluence Nigerians: Man, history and Culture in the Niger/Benue Confluence Region* (ed) Dike, P. C. (A publication of the National gallery of Art, Nigeria 2005), 205 – 230.

[13] Igor Kopytoff Introduction 3 - 86

"The collective 'official' history that such society tells about itself may be unitary and straight forward. But it is belied by the individual histories of its separate kin groups that show their ancestors coming from different areas and at different periods".

For the Okun people their traditions of origin are always in two layers: the official history which traces their origin to migration either from Ile – Ife or Oyo – Ile and the autochthonous history which claims that the various clans in each Okun settlement came to their present location on an individual basis.

Another characteristic of a frontier zone is that such zones or regions lie at the fringes of the established African societies[14]. The model proposed by Kopytoff is fraught with some shortcomings as has been pointed out by Ogundiran and Usman[15] when applied to the Yoruba speaking people in general. However the conditions are quite suitable for the Okun people as they satisfy most of the criteria used for frontier regions. For instance, they were surrounded by the Igala kingdom to their east, Nupe kingdom to their North and the Old Oyo Empire to their Northwest at the beginning of the 16th century. Activities taking place in these three kingdoms shaped events that took place within Okunland up till the time of the coming of the Europeans to the Niger – Benue confluence in the 20th century.

THE SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF OKUN PEOPLE

Generally speaking, settlement patterns connote the way and manner people make use of available landmass[16]. It could also be viewed as the manner in which habitation sites and related structures are arranged over the landscape[17]. Settlement studies throws light on why people occupy the area of land they inhabit, construct their houses the way they did, and engage themselves in the various types of economic activities they carry out on a daily basis. Settlement pattern here connotes therefore the way and manner in which Okun people organize themselves over the landscape, through time.

A comprehensive documentation of Okun settlement system has been done elsewhere [18]. Their settlement layout is nucleated; where people belonging to same clan are clustered. Each family lives together as an entity within their clan land. Each clan comprises of families which is made up of the husband as the head and the wife or wives as the able assistant or assistants then the children as well as the extended members of the household. Each lineage is recognized based on patrilineal mode. The people from the same clan cannot marry one another; they must look elsewhere for their marriage partner as each clan is made up of all siblings from the progenitor of the clan.

Each household lives in a rectangular brick house constructed by the head of the family. However, in times past, mud was the main material used from the foundation of the house to the main frame of the building. Small openings are left here and there to serve as windows to let in rays of sunlight as well as wind during the hot period. The layout of houses generally is circular, in nature. There is no clearly discernable measurement or house plan. Nevertheless, the purpose the house stead is meant to serve determines the measurement to adopt. Buildings meant for storage purposes are not as big as those for human habitation. In addition, the number of wife's and children in the home dictates the number of rooms in a homestead.

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[14] Ibid

[15] Ogundiran, A., "Frontier Migrations and Cultural Transformations in the Yoruba Hinterland, ca. 1575 – 1700: The Case of Upper Osun". In T. Falola & A. Usman (eds) *Movements, Borders, and Identities in Africa* (2009) 37 – 52. Rochester: Rochester University Press. Usman Aribidesi, "Precolonial Regional Migration and Settlement Abandonment in Yorubaland". In T. Falola & A. Usman (eds) *Movements, Borders, and Identities in Africa* (pp 99 – 125). Rochester: Rochester University Press.

[16] Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, "An archaeological survey of Ufe settlements: A preliminary report," *West African Journal of Archaeology,* 35 (1&2) 2005, 51 – 63.

[17] Alex Ikechukwu Okpoko, "The Use of Ethnography in Archaeological Investigations (Ethnoarchaeology)". *West African Journal of Archaeology,* 19, (1989) 65 – 82.

[18] Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, "An archaeological survey of Ufe settlements: A preliminary report," *West African Journal of Archaeology,* 35 (1&2), 2005, 51 – 63. Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, "Settlement and subsistence patterns in Ufe and its environs: An ethnoarchaeological study". In: A. I. Okpoko and M. K. Aliyu eds. 2006. *Ethnoarchaeology: An African Perspective. ZAP Volume 10.* Zaria. Ahmadu Bello University Press. (2006), 180 – 198.

The type of structure to be built as homestead is dictated by the number of individuals to be housed as well as the financial ability of the head of the family. Each house head will normally provide a room for each of the wives and the children of the entire wives would normally sleep together as a group either in the parlour or living quarters. The floor of the house is usually decorated by wetting it with cow dung, which must have been immersed in water and well mixed. It is customary to see towards the edge of the wall-raised platforms of about 50cm in height 1m in breadth and 4m in length made of mud. These types of raised platforms are permanent beds on which the elders in the homes usually sleep.

The village layout among the people is that each lineage occupies their own land area. For instance, those belonging to Ona will live together in their own locale while those in Ohi will occupy their own quarters. However all these various groups are made up of families and groups who dwell together based on kinship affinity. Each family has its own compound. The size of the compound of each family is determined by the number of people in the family. Each homestead is usually made up of two buildings. The first is the main living quarters where day-to-day activities of the family take place. In the main apartment are rooms demarcated according to the immediate needs of the family and the number of people within the family. Adjourning the main building is usually a small building of not more than 10m by 10m. This building is the kitchen for the whole family from where the food requirement of the family is cooked.
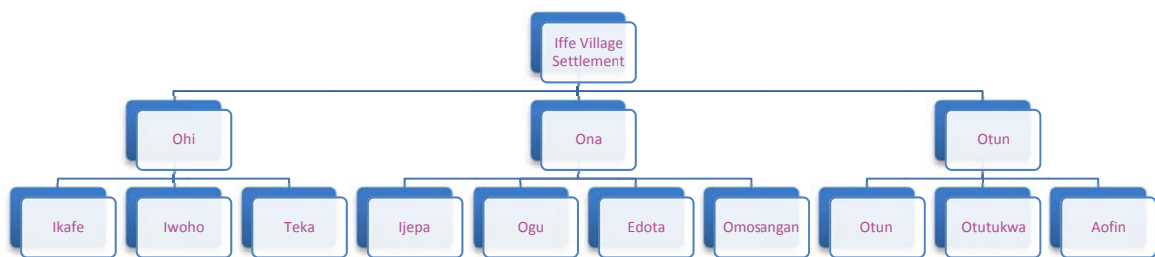

Chart showing Okun settllement pattern using Using Iffe seettlement layout as a case study

DISCUSSION

The settlement pattern, land use pattern and cultural practices of the Okun people are based on the autochthonous narrations. Perhaps the autochthonous narrations might be the authentic version of their history, while the migratory narrations might be a later day fabrication based perhaps on the later achieved status of Ile – Ife[19]. In addition to the above, a cursory glance at all the villages in the Ijumu group for instance shows that they are all organised on the concept of Ona, Ohi and Otun phenomena.

It is interesting to note that contrary to the general Yoruba settlement pattern, the Okun people organise themselves in segments based on the period of arrival of each clan or lineage to the vicinity of the current settlement. Each of the Okun settlements are divided into three segments called Ona, Ohi and Otun respectively. According to tradition, the Ona people are the first group through their progenitor to occupy their current locale, while the Ohi and Otun groups came later to join them through their progenitor also. Therefore in all traditional ceremonies such as marriage, masquerade festivals and chieftaincy title celebrations the Ona people hold sway. This is because as the first settlers to inhabit their current locale, they are the main custodians of their customs and traditions.

The cultural practices of the Okun people are also based on the second tradition of origin. In Iffe, for instance, whenever masquerade festival is to be performed it is the Ona people that open the ceremony at *Akodi* (the place where masquerades congregate for dancing competition on a clan by clan basis) before any masquerade from other clans could dance. Even before the festival begins *Alo* (a masquerade belonging to the Ijepa clan, the first clan to settle in Iffe) must announce the date of the festival for seven consecutive days. Also *Alo* is the only masquerade allowed, according to tradition, to close the festival. In the event of a need to carry out rituals or sacrifices on the Ogidi hill in the town, it is only the Ijepa clan that is allowed to perform such rituals and sacrifices on behalf of the Iffe people. It should be noted that the Ijepa people are also in the Ona segment of Iffe.

The emerging trend from this second tradition therefore seems to be that people have been living within the Okun landscape for a long time. Oral traditional accounts could not give a precise chronological date for the antiquity of Okunland habitation. The peopling of the Okun area could therefore be better explained by harmonising the two traditions. – that is, the migration history and that of autochthonous development. As it has been pointed out elsewhere[20], the two traditions represent two different epochs in the evolution of settlements and political systems in Okunland. While the migration history explains the admixture nature of the current inhabitants of the area from different parts of the country from about the 15th century, the aboriginal tradition, on the other hand, explains the earliest set of people to have inhabited various sections of Okunland.

Thus, the aboriginal groups would have been present in Okun speaking area from, at least, the Late Stone Age period as attested to by the date from Itaakpa. Itaakpa is an archaeological site in Iffe area of Okunland which produced a date of 300 BC for human presence. Additionally, the excavation produced evidence of a continuous human occupation of that location from that period until now[21]. Therefore, there is a very high degree of probability that the offspring and descendants of these Late Stone Age populations still inhabit that area till now.
The migrants, either from Ile – Ife or Oyo – Ile as the case may be, would have been people who came either as individuals or in groups on account of a number of factors including disputes within their primodal home on issues relating to land pressure or the search for game from favourable areas to dwell[22]. These migrants on coming brought along with them replicas of the political institutions practiced in their aboriginal homes. In the process of time, they introduced such political systems to

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[19] Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, *A reconnaissance survey of Okeeghon abandoned settlement site*. B.A. Project. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1990).
[20] Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, "A New Perspective on the History of Okun People," *Journal of Environment and Culture*. Volume 8 Number 2 (2011), 27 – 41.
[21] Philip Akande Oyelaran, *Archaeological and Palaeoenvironmental Investigations in Iffe – Ijumu Area of Kwara State, Nigeria*. Ph. D Thesis. Department of Archaeology and Anthropology. University of Ibadan. Ibadan (1991).
[22] S. Adebanji Akintoye, *A History of the Yoruba People*. (Dakar, Senegal: Amalion Publishing) 2010, 6 – 7.

Okun people. In embracing these political innovations, the Okun people decided in lieu of having a royal household to rotate the ruling house among the various federating units within each settlement.

However, despite this arrangement, the aboriginal elements within each of the settlements still retain traditional functions such as offering of sacrifices to the gods on behalf of the community and in presiding over traditional festivals such as *Egungun* (masquerade) and *Oro*. Similarly, all the cultural activities connected with the coronation of king and other traditional functions remains their prerogatives of the aboriginal group and they are not rotational.

Therefore, the migration history deals with the period of the formation of political systems among the various Okun groups. The formation of political system was introduced by the migrants on coming to Okunland. The aboriginals embraced the concept but with major modifications according to their immediate needs. The acceptance of these political modifications might not be unconnected with the fact that most of Okun people's neighbours (Nupe, Igala, Oyo – Ile) have such political practice. The rotational kingship system, an innovative political system which incorporates the indigenous practices of Okun people with the new political order introduced by the migrants became the adopted political system by the Okun people. The process of incorporating political system from the migrants by Okun people seems to have started as early as the 15th century as the archaeological evidence from Ebere suggests[23].

Ebere is an archaeological site on top of Ebere hill in Ogidi area of Okunland. From the excavation conducted on the hill a date of 290 $\pm$ 30 BP (Cal. 1500 – 1660 AD. Beta – 309322) was obtained[24]. At Ebere, there was an element of political centralisation represented by the availability of remnants of numerous house foundations in form of rectangular granitic stone arrangements. The availability of these cultural materials suggests that the site was an activity area when it was in commission. According to oral narrations, the inhabitants of Ebere are the direct progenitors of the extant Ogidi people. According to this version, as the migrants were coming into Okunland from Ile – Ife through Iya they settled on Ebere hill. It was from Ebere hill the people moved to the current settlement called Ogidi. Therefore, the migrants first settled at Ebere in the date of 16th century AD as they came in from Ile – Ife.

The 16th century AD date for Ebere is quite significant because it shows that when the migrants came to Okunland they met other sets of people on ground. For instance, there were aboriginal people present at places like Itaakpa by the time the migrants came to Okunland. Itaakpa, it should be recalled has evidence of continuous human presence from 300BC till date. Also, the Itaakpa site is not far from Ebere which is about 10km away. Thus, the peopling of Okun speaking area could best be understood when viewed in terms of waves of migrants coming to the area to meet the aboriginal group which would have been on ground from the Late Stone Age period.

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[23] Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, The History and Culture of the Okun People of Central Nigeria. Presented at the African Seminar Series of the Centre of African Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, November 17, 2011.

[24] Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, The History and Culture of the Okun People of Central Nigeria. Presented at the African Seminar Series of the Centre of African Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, November 17, 2011.

CONCLUSION

The traditions of origin of Okun people come in two forms. The official history, which is referred to as, migration history and the autochthonous tradition. As has been pointed out elsewhere, the cultural practices of the Okun people are premised on the autochthonous tradition and not on the migratory history[25]. Hence their settlement pattern is based on a tripodal model of Ona, Otun and Ohi, an arrangement in which the eldest lineage is Ona. These two traditions look contradictory when viewed in isolation, but they are not, as each of the traditions address different time frame in the history of the Okun people. Therefore, the history of the Okun people could best be understood by harmonising the traditions. The migratory tradition could be credible when viewed in connection with people coming into Okunland from places like the Old Oyo empire as a consequence of the disintegration of that empire. However, the migration history cannot be used as a yardstick for explaining the earliest periods of human habitation of Okunland. Also the migration history does not address the issues pertaining to the social organisation and cultural practices of the people.

The autochthonous tradition on the other hand gives a very precise early history of the people. With this tradition the social organisation and cultural practices of the Okun people is better explained. It also gives a good account of the nature of the settlement pattern of the people as well as a better understanding of the intergroup relations among Okun people. Therefore the autochthonous tradition is the authentic history of the people while the migratory tradition is a latter day fabrication which could be used to explain the introduction of the state system unto Okun people[26]. The introduction of the state system was from the migrants while the aboriginals modified and adapted the system to their local needs. Hence the notable differences between the Okun political system and those of Central Yorubaland[27].

The adoption of this mode of political organization would have started as early as the 16th century AD. There is archaeological evidence that these migrant groups were already on ground in Okunland as at the beginning of the 16th century. Therefore the crystallization of the political model adopted by the Okun people would have started by the beginning of the 16th century, based on the date from Ebere and other sites within Okunland. Dates clustering around the 16th century have been obtained by Obayemi[28] for Akpa and Ikaro.

In conclusion, the Okun people have been living within their ecological zone since the Stone Age period. From this location they developed gradually over centuries into what we have on ground there today. It was from here that the first Yoruba group migrated southwards and westwards to other parts of Yorubaland, a development dating back to about 7,000 years ago[29]. The Okun people being a frontier group developed a unique mode of political organization distinct from that of other Yoruba groups. Their oral narrations point to different locations from which the group emerged. However, these various traditions are to be viewed as addressing different time frames in their history. While the autochthonous tradition explains how the people came to their location from the earliest times to the present and gives a concise explanation about their cultural practices and settlement patterns, the migratory history only gives explanation about the beginnings of political centralization among the people. Thus, the autochthonous tradition is the original history of the people while the migration history is a modern day fabrication fostered on the people in order to justify the current political arrangement in Okunland.

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[25] Clement Olumuyiwa Bakinde, " A New Perspective on the History of Okun People," *Journal of Environment and Culture*. Volume 8 Number 2, (2011), 27 – 41.

[26] Ibid

[27] Ibid

[28] Ade Obayemi, "The Yoruba and the Edo Speaking Peoples and their Neighbours Before 1600AD" *History of West Africa* Vol. 1 2nd (eds) J. F. A. Ajayi and M. Crowder. London. Longman. (1985), 196 – 263.

[29] Roger Blench, "The linguistic Geography of Nigeria and its Implications for Prehistory," *West African Archaeology: New developments, new perspectives. BAR International Series 2164.* (2010), 161 – 170. Kay Williamson, "Indigenous Languages of the Niger – Benue Confluence Region: Their Classification and its Implication for Prehistory," *Confluence Nigerians: Man, History and Culture in the Niger/Benue Confluence Region (ed) Paul Chike Dike (National Gallery of Arts 2005)*, 148 – 154.

Kurdish Oral History Project.

Aynur de Rouen
(US):

Resumen: La Lucha por la Democracia Kurda: El Proyecto de Historia Oral Kurda en la Universidad de Binghamton

Entre los grupos étnicos que viven en el suroeste de Asia, los kurdos son el cuarto grupo más numeroso, después de los árabes, turcos y persas. A pesar de este hecho, los kurdos son el unico grupo que carece de su propio estado. A través de la historia, los kurdos se han enfrentado a la violencia física, la asimilación cultural, y a la limpieza étnica en las naciones-estados en que han vivido, lo cual ha dejado una marca indeleble en sus memorias e identidades. Las causas de su resistencia varían de acuerdo a la nación-estado en que vivan; las guerras, los conflictos, y la opresión han tenido un efecto profundo en el desarrollo de la identidad kurda. Todo esto creó la autodeterminación entre los kurdos a luchar por cierta autonomía. A través de entrevistas con refugiados kurdos que viven en Binghamton, descubrimos detalles sobre las relaciones entre los kurdos y el régimen de Saddam, sus luchas sociales por autonomía cultural y política, y tácticas de sobrevivencia. Basado en los testimonios de estos refugiados, esta exposición examina la memoria colectiva y testimonios personales del trauma y opresión para descubrir el otro lado de la historia.

Abstract: Among the ethnic groups living in southwest Asia, Kurds are the fourth largest, following Arabs, Turks, and Persians. Despite this fact, the Kurds are the only one of these groups that does not have a state of its own. Throughout their history, Kurds have faced physical pressure, violence, cultural assimilation, and ethnic cleansing in the nation-states they lived in, which left an indelible mark on their memories and identities. The causes of their resistance varied depending on which nation-state they lived in; wars, conflict, and oppression had a major effect on the development of the Kurdish identity. All this also created self-determination among the Kurds to fight for some kind of autonomy. Through our interviews with Iraqi Kurdish refugees who are currently living in the Binghamton area, we discover details about power relations between the Kurds and the members of the Saddam regime, their social upheavals, fight for cultural and political autonomy, and survival tactics. Based on the testimonies of these refugees, this paper examines the collective memory and personal accounts of trauma and oppression to discover their side of the story.

I want to begin my presentation with an excerpt from an interview with Zhiman, a female Kurdish refugee from Dohuk, Iraqi Kurdistan, during an oral history interview which took place on May 25, 2013:

> *I remember there were nights where we would just hear fires in the distance all night. The sky would be lit with gun fire and noises. There was war and fighting going on and we would watch from a distance, we would hear explosions and we would hear this constantly …. A lot of times during school, we were in attack mode. We would get under our desks, or we would be put into basements, and sometimes, we would have to be sent home because of the risk of explosions or attacks….. During the nights, we would be ready in our coats and packed- ready to just run away. That's how we fell asleep at night. We didn't know when we were safe and when we would have to run away. I do remember a lot of nights were scary. Things were very scary.*

This excerpt represents the shared memories of Iraqi Kurdistan that many of the Kurdish refugees vocalized during our interview sessions.

Today, I would like to talk about the Kurdish struggle for autonomy under the Saddam regime in the light of the testimonies that we have collected as part of the Kurdish Oral History Project at Binghamton University. This project consists of personal life stories, narratives, testimonies, and memories of the local Kurdish refugees in the Greater Binghamton area in New York State. I have divided my presentation into two parts. First, I will give a brief history of the Kurds, particularly in the Iraqi region. Then, I will share the details about the Kurdish struggle to gain cultural and political rights in Iraqi Kurdistan and how all this affected the development of Kurdish identity.

Ok now I will start with the overall Kurdish historical background. The Kurds have been living in southwest Asia for centuries. Today, about 40 million Kurds live in Turkey, Iraqi Kurdistan, Iran, Syria and parts of the former Soviet Union. In the last decade of the 1900s, a substantial number of Kurds migrated to western countries such as France, Germany, Sweden, and the United States. Although they do not have their nation-state, Kurds have remained a large and influential minority group in the Middle East by protecting their cultural identities and national struggle. Since the rise of nationalism and the repression of minorities during the last phase of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds have struggled to establish a state of their own in place of a divided homeland. Kurds faced physical pressure and violence, cultural assimilation, and ethnic cleansing in the nation-states they lived in; their identities were not even recognized. At the end of World War I, the Treaty of Sevres in 1920 included the creation of Kurdistan, which was never implemented. Furthermore, Turkey, Iran and Iraq engaged in an agreement to not recognize independent Kurdistan. All this development led to a series of Kurdish rebellions and harsh retaliations by Turkish and Iranian governments in addition to their assimilation policies.

In Iraq, the British mandate controlled the Kurdish-inhabited cities starting at the end of World War I until the mid-1940s. The Kurds were opposed to being included as part of Iraq, and the Kurdish resistance against the Iraqi-British rule grew steadily and strongly over the years. The Kurds engaged in a long series of rebellions to gain some form of autonomy. The rejection of the Kurdish wish for political autonomy by Arab nationalists in the Iraqi government resulted in periods of upheavals and wars. This led the Kurds to engage in guerrilla warfare against the Iraqi government. A military coup led by General Qassim ended the pro-British monarchy in 1958, and the Kurdish national movement re-emerged powerfully. Kurds helped Qassim in his efforts to pacify the government's opposition groups, and in return, were promised civil and cultural rights. Although the Kurds aided Qassim against the opposition, they did not receive the rights they were promised, which resulted in an armed resistance movement in 1961.

The situation gradually worsened between the Kurds and the successive Iraqi government, reaching a point by 1970 when the United Nations had to interfere, which resulted in a ceasefire between the Kurds

and the Ba'ath regime. Reforms implemented by the Autonomy Law of 1974 came to an end with Saddam Hussein's attack on Kurdish villages in 1975. Events took a turn for the worse, when Kurds supported Iran during the Iran-Iraq War between 1980 and 1988. This time, Saddam retaliated by bombing Kurdish villages and using chemical weapons. In 1988, Saddam launched his infamous Anfal campaign in Iraqi Kurdistan during which about 100,000 people were killed or disappeared. In the town of Halabja, the Iraqi regime's warplanes gassed 5000 Kurds in March, 1988. Later on, during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991, the Kurdish uprising was put down by Iraqi troops, which caused at least one million Kurds to flee Iraq and stay in refugee camps in Iran and Turkey. Finally, a no-fly zone was created by the coalition forces. For the first time in its history, the Iraqi Kurds gained the control of the territory that they have been claiming for centuries. However, starting in 1992, two Kurdish Iraqi fractions started a bloody war for power, which finally resulted in a power-sharing agreement in 1998. It was during this time that thousands of Kurds migrated to the states. The majority of these migrants settled in Nashville, Tennessee and San Francisco, California, but some families chose to stay in the Binghamton area, where I initiated our oral history project.

As you may know, the entire Kurdish struggle has received little attention until now, which was a major incentive for implementing our oral history project in February 2013. We have undertaken this project with the goal of interviewing approximately sixty-five Kurdish families, mainly refugees from the Iraqi region. Our interviewees included both males and females between the ages of 18 and 65, all of whom reside in the Greater Binghamton area.

The experience of Iraqi Kurds was different than what the Kurds in Turkey and Iran experienced. Although Iraqi Kurds seemed to have more cultural rights, they suffered through continuous fighting, armed conflicts, chemical warfare, genocide, deportations, national oppression, and so forth. All this experience caused many Kurds to look for alternatives. Out-migration, becoming refugees in both neighboring and western countries, along with hiding in mountains were among the most common solutions. Their desire to escape conflict, search for protection, and obtain human rights played an important role in Kurds leaving their homeland. The narrative I am about to read you illustrates this point exactly. As 35 year-old Jotiyar details in his conversation:

> When I was born, there was war going on in our village. When I was about 6 years old, we had to leave our village, because the regime wanted to burn the houses and kill the Kurds. We went to the mountains, and spent 10 days there. No water, no food, no anything. Many people were dying, many people were sick. We eventually made our way back here, I mean the city of Dohuk. Life wasn't easy. We were poor and we did not have peace. We were afraid all the time!

The majority of the testimonies detailed events leading to their flight from their destroyed homes and villages along with the harsh lifestyles in mountains and refugee camps. In order to save their lives, these people ran away from their villages with nothing. One of the interviewees gave details about his long journey from his village to a Turkish refugee camp with his family on foot while wearing only one shoe for twelve days. According to another chilling testimony, "the path we followed was surrounded with dead bodies. We could not bury our loved ones, we could not even say goodbye." It is evident that the war and conflict have left deep marks in everyone's lives in Iraqi Kurdistan. When I asked people to talk about their life stories, almost everyone started narrating their painful memories of war and how violence changed their lives. Some personal accounts articulated the sadness associated with losing a loved one – whether it be a mother, child, sibling, spouse, or friend. Even though these unfortunate events took place years ago, the pain was still very much alive in their memories, evident through their strong emotions during the interview process. These sensitive personal accounts confirmed that violence, fear, pain, and various forms of resistance dominated Kurdish everyday life.

Some of the other personal narratives detailed people's behavior under the Ba'ath regime. "When somebody did something against the government, the whole family would get condemned. The whole

family would disappear without any explanation. That was one reason why some people had to pretend like they supported the Ba'ath Party to protect their families."   Others gave explicit details of their survival tactics:

> We did not have democracy. The Constitution of 1958 recognized both Arabs and Kurds as equals only on paper. We never elected an official in Dohuk. Only those who signed up for the Ba'ath Party would have the privilege to serve as local representatives. Things got worse steadily. Some people cooperated with the party just for the well-being of their loved ones.

Some other testimonies portrayed vivid details of the Ba'ath party's Arabization policies:

> The Ba'ath party had recruited so many people in the area. In school, we were forced to think that Saddam was our second father and that Ba'ath was the best party and we would repeat slogans following the national anthem. The slogans would emphasize unity, freedom, and Arab nationalism. The meaning of the slogans was the unity of one Arab nation and the Kurds were part of this nation, as they were not allowed to create their own.

This testimony shows how the Ba'ath party tried to keep the Kurds powerless and completely under their control. One form of resistance against the state's Arabization and assimilation policies was maintaining a close-knit tie to their culture and traditions. For instance, even though children were made to rehearse the Iraqi national anthem and slogans, Kurds never identified themselves as anything but Kurdish.

Lived experience of assimilation - namely the state's Arabization policies - suffering and pain shaped their resistance efforts against an oppressive nation and motivated them politically to lead sustainable forms of resistance. Kurds jointly refused to follow the hegemonic inclusionary criterion of the Ba'ath regime. Their rejection to cooperate with the state solidified the Kurdish power against the Saddam regime. Periodically, they revolted against the government throughout the 20th century. The creation of peshmerga, or the Kurdish military, by Mustafa Barzani in the mid-1940s was one form of their efforts to gain political power. The majority of adult male interviewees served as peshmerga as detailed in many informants' testimonies:

> My father was a peshmerga. Until I started school, we were hiding in the mountains. When I grew up, I joined peshmerga myself because we were fighting for our freedom and our land. The peshmerga were very powerful and strong, and the Ba'ath party knew it. If they knew somebody from your family was a peshmerga, they would catch you or kick your kids out of school.

Along with terror, sadness, hardship, perseverance and courage, fear seems to be a collective theme in the narrative. The fear and horror that they experienced left an indelible mark on their memories. The continual conflict and violence dominate the narrative. Saddam Hussein stands out as one of the main source of fear according to the majority of the informants as he was held personally accountable for what happened to them. Blood-feud and wars were named as the other sources of fear, which were just as potent as Saddam himself. Many gave vivid details of dead bodies, blood, wrecked houses, and burned villages especially after a major armed conflict.

The absence of men was pointed out as another important source of their fear, yet this can be also interpreted as the reason women became so strong, which is clearly expressed by a 62 year old Kurdish female refugee:

> I have eight children. My husband was a peshmerga. When he was not fighting for us, he was working far away to make a living. I was always alone with my children. Women always stayed

behind. Many men left to join the fight and never came back. Our sons died, our husbands died, our brothers died.

Despite the fear that many Kurds articulated in their accounts, they still persevered and resisted, one form being through education. As it is the case here, each upheaval was not necessarily an armed resistance. Although the majority of the interviewees lived in the Dohuk area, many attended college in Erbil. The narrative pointed out the difference in secondary education prior to 1991, as it was heavily geared toward Arabic history and culture. However, Kurdish language, history, and culture were supposed to be part of the curriculum based on the constitution. Efforts were made in Erbil at different times to constitute the Kurdish-based curriculum in Erbil schools, and the narrative contains such victories of the Kurds against the state.

Migration can be named as another type of non-violent resistance that Kurds have been practicing for decades. Violent conflicts and fear were described as the main sources of suffering in Iraqi Kurdistan. Lack of food was the most mentioned form of suffering among the childhood memories. Several informants provided explicit details on how they had to sleep many nights with no food and how a simple loaf of bread brought joy. "An armed conflict was going on outside our house. My mother took us to the roof of the house and we stayed there for days with no food. If we had a bowl of soup or a slice of bread, we acted like it was a feast." Over time, the penetration of fear and suffering led many Kurds to make the decision to migrate either to a neighboring country or to the West. Others left to provide better conditions for their children. One informant who was a child during that time explained, "After we left Kurdistan, we arrived in Guam. I could not believe the abundance of food. For the first time in my life I have experienced the hot running water. We no longer had to keep quiet at nights and go to bed hungry."

Up until this point, I have sampled several interviews to give you a sense of the power struggle Kurds experienced under the Saddam regime. The collective memory, and individual accounts of the past, oppression, assimilation, exclusion, and othering, along with the intertwining relationship between the struggle and resistance, contributed to the strength of the Kurdish identity. The narrative provided explicit details of their forced departures from their homes to survive from violent uprisings and wars, struggle against the imposed order, and harsh conditions in the mountains, refugee camps and diaspora. These refugees linked their troubled past to the present in order to establish their Kurdishness.

The collective Kurdish identity in diaspora was further emphasized with their attachment to their homeland. Longing for home added further to their identity, which had a profound impact on the ways in which the older generations are currently raising their children in America. These Iraqi Kurds used memory of original place to form a community in which they continue their commemoration practices, everyday life and socio-spatial practices. So far, the narrative shows that Kurdish refugees attempt to keep their ties alive to their spaces of origin. My team and myself are discovering the importance of Kurdish traditions in the lives of these Kurdish refugees, which are the markers of their identity. In order to connect and establish trust between us and these refugees, we regularly attend local Kurdish events, programs, and celebrations. We also visit their homes, especially when we are interviewing with the older women and men. What we have witnessed first-hand is that they are still very traditional - from the home furnishing to kin relations. Even in their small diasporic community, they tend to apply the same patterns of gender restrictions, mainly to maintain their Kurdish identity and to eliminate western influence. It appears that efforts of these refugees to share their experiences and their collective past in Kurdistan with the young generation was to teach them about the Kurdish traditions – values, gender norms, interaction patterns - for the continuity of their Kurdishness. Living in a close community helps them not only to preserve these customs, but also to keep their collective memory growing.

To conclude, the identity of Kurds was recognized in Iraq, and they were granted limited cultural rights since the mid-twenteeth century. However, the boundaries between Kurds and Arabs were clearly drawn. The struggle that Iraqi Kurds experienced was not identifying themselves as Kurds, but to gain political power. Thus, the protection of their Kurdishness became the pivotal aspect in many ways, especially as part of their political and cultural struggle against the national oppression. Even now, the struggle to gain recognition has not ended even after the emergence of the de facto Kurdish state in Iraq, but in fact has become stronger not just for Iraqi Kurds, but for Kurds all throughout the Middle East.

Oral History and Everyday Cosmopolitanism.

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Abstract: In this article, I present an oral history of city dwellers who live or work in a former Jewish quarter in the south eastern city of Gaziantep in Turkey. During the Ottoman period Gaziantep was home to a small Jewish community; however, throughout the Republican period their numbers decreased due to political insecurity. I use the city dwellers' recollections of their Jewish neighbors as a tool to understand the forms of everyday cosmopolitanism that takes place in contemporary Turkey. Analyzing their recollections, I aim to explore the strategies of ordinary people to overcome the boundaries between them and other people who are different from them. Additionally, drawing on theoretical work concerning the concept of cosmopolitanism that has proliferated in recent years, I explore the ambivalence of cosmopolitan sensitivities and gestures, and argue that cosmopolitan openness can be limited. Furthermore, in the paper the respondents' recollections indicate a change in their perception of time; a phenomenon Huyssen (2000) called 'global memory.' However, recollections also show how 'global memory' does not guarantee cosmopolitanisms.

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The 'Yahudi mahallesi[1] (Jewish neighborhood) in the rapidly developed Gaziantep is located near to the city castle. The Jewish community in Anatolia dates back to long before the sixteenth century when the Sephardic Jews were expelled from Spain and allowed to settle in the cities of the Ottoman Empire. According to Canbakal (2009:54) the number of the non-Muslims in Gaziantep in the seventeenth century was low, and it started to increase in eighteenth century so that during the nineteenth century thirty percent of the population of the city were non-Muslims including; Armenians, Orthodox and Catholic Greeks, Syrian Orthodox, Jews and Romany (Kipti). However, the Jewish community was small. Then, during the Republican period anti-Semitic policies in Turkey caused many Jews to flee, and Gaziantep was not an exception.

THE SYNAGOGUE AS A MUSEUM

There is a synagogue which was constructed in 1886. A road passes both on the east and west side of the synagogue. Until recently the synagogue had no roof, there were only a few walls and arches that stood in the middle of the ruin. The synagogue has now been renovated and turned into a museum. This is not the only museum in the city. Until recently, there was only the city archeology museum in the city, but the city municipality with funding from the European Union has, over the past 10 years, restored buildings in the "old city" turning some of these buildings, including the old synagogue, into museums. Now, there are thirteen museums in the city specializing in different items such as; food, toys, and glass. Some of the themes and contents of the museums are eclectic; for instance, the museum of toys collects and exhibits mostly the toys of European children. Similarly, the ethnographic museum houses a collection of Turkish folk objects from the 19th century but it does not include any pieces from everyday lives of Armenian, Jewish or other ethnic groups who used to inhabit the city. Nevertheless, the rise in the number of the museums and also in local history journals in the city clearly indicates a shift in the sensibility of time, and an interest in past.

Huyssen (2000:24) defines the obsession with memory and the past that is also distinguishable in historicizing the restoration of old urban centers and the development of museum villages and landscapes as a feature of the perception of time over recent years. According to Huyssen (2000:21) the early decades of twentieth century modernity would be characterized by a focus on 'present futures.' He states, however, that until 1980's, the focus has altered from present futures to present pasts. Indeed, in Western societies memory became a key concern in contrast to the privileging of the future during the early twentieth century. Memory discourses reached a peak through the media attention to Holocaust. Additionally, Holocaust has been resonated with the recurrence of genocidal politics in Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosovo. Together with the universal discussion of historical trauma, Holocaust, the rise of autobiography, and the postmodern historical novel, the spread of memory practices in the visual arts, and the increase of historical documentaries on television led to a new way of focusing on memory (Huyssen, 2000:24-25). Huyssen (2000:24) calls this phenomenon 'globalization of memory.' Similarly, Neyzi (2001:102) by examining the youth culture and the discourse on youth culture in Turkey from the early Republican period to the 1990s indicated the changing conceptions of time. Neyzi argues that the youth culture of the 1990s indicates a shift from a future oriented modernist notion of time (the time of the nation) to an orientation to the past through memory together with an orientation to the present (the time of the self/body). The individualism of the young people suggests their resistance to existing categories and their hesitance to linking their subjective identities to a single national project (Neyzi 2001: 112-113).

Neyzi (2010: 3) states that despite the political repression of the coup of 12 September 1980 in Turkey, and under the impact of global trends, underlined by Huyssen, cultural and subjective identities have become a key concern in Turkish society. The emergence of private media resulted in Turkish society being much occupied with the past. National history and particular historical events were discussed and

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[1] The name of Jewish neighborhood has been changed to Dugmeci mahallesi

furiously debated in the public sphere. The murder of the Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in 2007 is one example of the interest in the past. Indeed, Dink's murder was accompanied by debates and an increase in interest in the history and memory of 1915. Similarly, Kurdish language, oral tradition, music, and performance become an area of research after the violent conflict between Turks and Kurds that caused forced migration and trauma among families on both sides (Neyzi 2010:3-4).

Interest in the recent past is also a common theme of recollections. The respondents I interviewed were concerned about the history of the street where they live or work. They were very enthusiastic when I told them that I wanted to collect their memories of their Jewish neighbors. Indeed, I received kudos for showing interest in 'our past.' Furthermore, the recollections of city dwellers resemble hybridity and heterogeneity as they diverge from national chronology and official ideology. One respondent, sixty-eight year old Mehmet Kar[2] spent his childhood in the neighborhood in an old Antep house. The house was owned by his family, and now been converted into three separate floors. Mehmet is an electrician and uses the first floor of the building as an office. When I asked him why Jewish city dwellers left the city, he blamed the government policies during those years:

> *They left the city in the 1970s when Ecevit was president. During those years, even though there was no need to limit consumption as Turkey had enough sugar, gasoline etc. austerity measures were taken; we could not find sugar, gasoline, and fuel. Also, Turkish authorities, back then, propagated xenophobic ideas which scared the Jews in the city. In the city [Antep], there was no negative reaction to the Jewish population, but in some other cities they might have faced xenophobia. So, without any fuss, gradually the Jewish people sold their properties and some of them returned to their country; tell me its name (He could not remember Israel, and he asks for my help), others moved to Istanbul or Izmir.*

 Hence, subjective identities and a turning toward the past are characteristics of the city, as old urban center restoration and a new wave of museum centered city life have emerged as a salient phenomenon of the daily lives of the city dwellers. Indeed, respondents, when talking about Jewish city dwellers, mentioned the restoration work at the synagogue and the opening ceremony that took place few days before I interviewed them. They all seemed very happy about the renovation of the synagogue even though none of them except the mukhtar[3] had been to the renovated synagogue. At that time there was an exhibition at the synagogue. Korans from different regions and at different times were exhibited in the synagogue. One of the respondents remembered the keeper of the synagogue during the 1970s, and he also mentioned how the building was in a state of collapse and ruin after he left. Furthermore, all respondents mentioned how the renovated synagogue would attract tourism in the city. This interest in past, and sensibility of time, hence, resembles what Huyssen calls the "globalization of memory." With these developments it seems essential to ask whether the city dwellers' sensibility of past and their subjective identities are compatible with cosmopolitanism.

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[2] All names are pseudonyms.
[3] The elected head of a village or a neighborhood within a town or city.

THE FORMS AND LIMITS OF EVERYDAY COSMOPOLITANISMS

Huyssen (2000) argued that with globalization, the form of memory cultures has changed in that local and national memory practices give way to global memory. Global media and the focus on themes like genocide, ethnic cleansing, migration and minority rights, victimization and accountability have an effect on national memory debates. Thus, according to Huyssen (2000:27), globalization and national and local past need to be considered together. However persistent these national memory practices may be, global memory is described by Huyssen (2000:35) as hybrid, prismatic, heterogeneous rather than holistic and universal. This is a global future where nationhood, citizenship, and identity will change shape.

Mehmet Kar's recollections of the Jewish neighbors shows the strategies of equalization, a practice of openness which can be identified as a form of Lamont and Aksartova's (2002) category of 'ordinary cosmopolitanism.' Lamont and Aksartova (2002:1) define ordinary cosmopolitanisms as the strategies used by ordinary people to bridge racial difference in everyday life. In the literature, cosmopolitanism is broadly conceptualized in terms of a form of moral commitment to a world community, thus, it is defined in contrast to nationalism (Lamont and Aksatova 2002: 2). Indeed, Beck (Skrbis and Woodward 2007:731) defines cosmopolitan culture as a form of social action and imagination that is globally open, fluid and hybrid rather than local, regional or national. From Beck's point of view, individuals living together in a particular society in different parts of the world can live in different life worlds. Cosmopolitanism is also discussed in relation to elite cosmopolitanism. It has been argued that due to their occupations the upper-middle class are more mobile; thus, they are able to appreciate varied lifestyles and can be called 'cosmopolitan travelers' (Lamont and Aksartova 2002:1-2).

Mehmet Kar characterizes his Jew neighbors as hard working and philanthropic. In this mode of equalization competence is used as a key opening access to society and social membership[4]. Kar's recollection of his Jewish neighbors overlaps with Syrian refugees who have recently arrived to make a living in Gaziantep. It is estimated that more than a tenth of the city's 1.8 million population is now Syrian (The Wall Street Journal). The official number of the Syrians in the city has not been announced, but *mukhtar* of the neighborhood indicates that fifty five out of one hundred and seventy six households are Syrian. His estimation corresponds to former data. Kar recollects how his father learnt stone crafting from the Armenian's living in the city. Comparing the world he inhabited as a young boy having Jewish neighbors and the Syrian refugees as his present neighbors, he talks with nostalgia of everyday life of "Antepli's" back then. Through the juxtaposition of his narrative of the Jews with the Syrians, he compares the two groups in terms of their competence in their work:

> *We have enormous trouble with Syrians. In those years, we treated the Armenians and Jews with great respect, but now we cannot respond to Syrians' needs. Unfortunately, they have settled in a way that twenty five people live in one room. How do they sleep, stay or clean up? Now, we are all very worried: as the own sons of Gaziantep we do not know what the Syrians are going to do tomorrow. This so sad....I do not think that they do us any harm....In the old days, Armenian or Jews, the pain Syrians cause suppress the formers'. The Jews and Armenians did not need us. We needed them. We took advantage of them. Now, we are helping Syrians.*

The respondents also used religion to establish similarities with Jews and Armenian city dwellers by pointing out that they shared something fundamental[5]

> *We thought the same.....As human beings they were humanitarian (insan olarak insandi), we acknowledged God, they acknowledged God, in our religion we go to the mosque to worship*

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[4]Lamont and Aksartova (2002:6) in their study of the strategies that ordinary people use to overcome boundaries with people who are different from them found that black workers in the United States see competence as bases of cultural membership.
[5] Lamont and Aksartova (2002:8) scrutinize how black people use religion to demonstrate that we all share something fundamental.

and they go to the synagogue. There is nothing against this because they also say that "There is only one God" as in all four of the holy books; the Torah; the Bible, Old Testament, The Book of Psalms and Koran. Hence their guardian is prophet Jesus, or Moses and they are prophets of God, but they call our prophet as "your Mohamed." That is not wrong we belong to Mohamed religion. We were not different in terms of social activities, daily lives, or humanitarian affairs. We went to primary school together for five years and we finished primary school when we were 11 years old. He (The respondent is talking about his schoolmate) used to give me roasted chickpeas that he kept in his pocket and I used to give him raisins.

Likewise, Mustafa Akar who owns a shop in the neighborhood remembers the last Jewish resident in the neighborhood. His strategy of equalization also consists of pointing to the shared belief in God, a common status for city dwellers:

I remember Murat. He owned a soap shop in the neighborhood and he also held the key to the synagogue. He used to take care of the synagogue like the people who takes care of a dervish lodge. It is like being guardian of the Yunus Emre or Haci Bayram dervish lodges. They had their own way of religious practices like ours....why were we close to them? As we are Muslims, our religion encompasses all the religions. As being an example of good moral we were close to them. It behooves a good Muslim to behave like this (Bize de bu yakisir).

Remzi Eren's narrative of past, however, goes hand in hand with strategies of bridging boundaries, and establishing hierarchies with people who are different from him. Remzi Eren is a *mukhtar* of the Karagoz neighborhood which is next to the Jewish neighborhood. He is also a carpenter and owns a carpenter shop in the Jewish neighborhood. When I asked him who lived in the neighborhood, after establishing similarities, but not equalities with the Syrian refugees by pointing out the government and municipality policies and openness of city culture, he established a hierarchy between locals and non-locals:

The number of the old residents as the locals of the neighborhood is very few. More Jewish people used to live here thirty years ago. As most of them left the rest of the community left as well. We didn't have any problems with them. The old Jewish residents live in Istanbul now, but some of them still come back to visit here. They have memories of their lives here; for instance they have a synagogue here. But, it is a slim chance for instance for them to rent a house here. But, there are old people; old and local people living here. They are the sons of the homeland. Some of them are ninety years old and others are 85 years old....but, as I told you before we need to know the history of Gaziantep, we need to teach it; for example Sahinbey and Karayilan and our martyrs.....In those years, people use to call others as 'the son of the this or that' that everybody knew each other. But now still some of the old people know others....

Indeed, being local is a salient point in all the respondents' recollections as they stress how the number of local people who live in the street is decreasing. They draw symbolic boundaries along with solidaristic discourse which is reinforced by Turkey's strong tradition of state interventionism with nationalist orientations. Through the recollections, strategies of equalization are used to overcome boundaries, but localness is also important in their recollections. Being local for them means being Turkish and Sunni. Likewise, citizenship is not a salient theme in their recollections. Hence, the strategies of equalization are counterbalanced by a discourse of 'localness' and 'being local'.

To sum up, these recollections indicate a variety of equalization strategies that are used to build bridges between 'us' and 'them.' These strategies and everyday ideas about openness are the feature of the everyday cosmopolitanisms. These everyday cosmopolitanisms embedded openness. However, there is a fragile commitment to cosmopolitan values as tensions between local and culturally different are also articulated with cosmopolitan values and ideas.

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Pueblos y Cenários del grandde Sertaö: Patrimonio cultural, memória y fuentes orales.

Maria Zeneide M. De Carneiro de Almeida
(Brazil):

Resumen: El texto que aquí presentamos tiene como objeto de estudio la reconstrucción de la memoria sobre las experiencias de las personas, ombres y mujeres que vivían en el sertão, por medio de las rememoraciones que hoy, guardan de ellas. Los recuerdos de la región noroeste del Estado Minas Gerais – Brasil, más precisamente conocida como Grande Sertão – una denominación que fue dada por el romancista João Guimarães Rosa, que percorrió aquellos sítios que le inspiraron su romance homónimo.

En la investigación se ha utilizado la aborgaden teorica de la Historia Cultural e fue realizada por medio de entrevistas, documentación escritos, filmagens, fotos y diario de campo. El estudio fue desarrollado principalmente por medio de la documentación oral, comprendida como una metodología de investigación de inegable importancia para el historiador de hoy y para los que se han preocupado en reconstruir la historia regional. Los corpi oral y escrito constituyese en un marco en fueron sistematizados en los grandes temas abiertos por las narrativas y interpretadas como representaciones. Las entrevistas que forman el corpus oral de la investigación oral contribuyeran a la reconstrucción del pasado, entendiese como una reinterpretación de las   experiencias y demandas del momento presente de aquellos que narran.

 Las contribuciones de los estudiosos de   la   Historia oral y Cultural   ancoraron   los procedimientos de los estudios procedimientos metodológicos para la realización de la investigación, Para la comparación y análisis de los datos fueron utilizados los presupuestos metodológicos de la Historia Oral, Historia Cultural y enfoque teórico que contemplo tres ejes: Patrimônio, Memoria e Identidad, cuyos presupuestos pueden lanzar luces para el entendimiento de la importancia de los diferentes procesos culturales, bien como de experiencias sociales en sus tiempos y lugares.

SUBTEMAS:
 Fuentes Orales y Patrimonio Cultural;
Archivos, Fuentes Orales y Memoria

Poder y autoridad en el mundo gitano.

Ricardo Torres Silva
(Spain):

Resumen: El acceso a sistema de representación y configuración de una comunidad cerrada como la gitana centrará nuestro estudio. Los diferentes códigos simbólicos que configuran dicha cultura y su problemática para ser entendidos.

Su forma de organización social, los medios a través de los cuales dicha comunidad se constituye como tal y se manifiesta hacia el exterior. El concepto clave de "Autoridad" su significado en dicho contexto y su relación con el poder dentro y fuera de la propia comunidad.