



Introduction: Ideologies of Youth

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Abstract

In a number of countries in Africa, such as Uganda and Kenya, national publics have been discussing whether citizens of age 50 or even 60 should be regarded as 'youth'. Under the current dispensation of donor funding, relief programmes and international aid, these discussions have made the 'youth' the major beneficiary of what these policies offer and imply. There is a general feeling, however, that these policies should target all age groups in their youth-oriented programmes. If the donor-ideology prescribes youthfulness for societal and developmental relevance, it will then dictate practice. This is just one example of what this special issue will address in an attempt to explore what we see as an emerging development in Africa and beyond: the rise of *youth as an ideology*. Whereas Africa has witnessed the rise of a fast-growing study of youth as a *phenomenon* and as a *concept*, the aspect of youth as ideology has, so far, not been elaborated on.

Résumé

Les citoyens dans plusieurs pays africains tels que l'Uganda et le Kenya discutent si oui ou non ceux qui sont âgés de 50 ou 60 ans doivent être considérés comme faisant partie de la 'jeunesse'. Les 'jeunes' sont les principaux bénéficiaires du programme actuel des bailleurs de fonds et de l'aide internationale. Cependant, d'aucuns défendent de plus en plus le fait que ces politiques doivent cibler toutes les tranches d'âge. Si l'idéologie des donateurs est de prescrire la 'jeunesse' pour justifier la pertinence du développement des sociétés, alors nous assistons à un dictat de leur part. Ceci n'est qu'un échantillon des questions que

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cette édition spéciale tente d'explorer. Ce phénomène est identifié comme étant l'émergence *l'idéologie de la jeunesse*, et est de plus en plus remarqué en Afrique et ailleurs. Même si l'Afrique a connu une croissance très nette de sa jeunesse comme un *phénomène* et un *concept*, l'aspect de *l'idéologie de la jeunesse* n'a pas encore été élaboré.

Introduction

Youth has been approached, first of all, *as phenomenon* due to the empirical realities of population growth and the skewed generational composition of many societies whereby the youth, however defined, are by far in the majority (Trudell 2002). The precarious situation of youth in many societies, resulting from poverty, ill-health, lack of education and future prospects, makes youth the subject of a growing research interest. Hence, a great deal of attention is devoted to the question of youth not only *at risk*, but also *as risk*. In that regard, youth is seen as a liability and as a force society should harness (see, for instance, Sommers 2003, 2006a, 2006b). The youth-as-risk perspective presents itself in the person of the child-soldier, the gang member, the religious radical, the hooligan or the criminal (see, for instance, Honwana 2006; Vigh 2006; Lindegaard 2009).

Within this paradigm of the relation between youth and risk, instigated by the sheer size of the problem, an aid-industry has come to fruition. In its many NGO activities and initiatives, this aid-industry apparently has shifted policy-orientations from the 'rural', the 'women' or the 'household', to the 'youth' as the new developmental target and hope for the future (see Garcia and Fares 2008). In some contexts, these NGO activities and their influence on local politics have influenced the manner in which the youth came to be recognised as a category for interventions (Durham 2007, Bourdillon 2008). As a social shifter, 'youth' is in existence endlessly; there will always be new youth to target as older youth supposedly move into adulthood at one point in time (Durham 2000). There can never really be a shortage of young populations as target of policy initiatives.

The academia in and of Africa have been involved in exploring and defining the phenomenon of youth. The growth in published works mirrors the invention of the phenomenon as such. Many of these publications demonstrate the history of the phenomenon of youth, its invention in colonial and sometimes even pre-colonial Africa (Abbink and van Kessel 2005; Last 2005; Honwana and de Boeck 2005). These studies have also particularly contributed to the ways in which youth came to be recognised as a distinguishable group in society, marked by its own problems and tribulations. This is evidenced by the plethora of studies that devote detailed attention to the 'vulnerability' of

the category under study and produce an undeniable record of the youth's precarious condition (Trudell 2002).

The linkage between youth and vulnerability (i.e. youth at risk) has been studied in many divergent directions, each of them of great significance in understanding how complex this situation of vulnerability actually is (i.e. youth and violence, war, soldiers, rebels, crime, radicalisation).

Increasingly, studies of youth in Africa discovered how youth themselves have been voicing their vulnerability to poverty, violence (Jourdan, this volume; Sanni, this volume), AIDS (see Christiansen, this volume) and inequality through such means of expression as rap, gangster music and art, or through their self-organisation in various social or religious movements (see Weiss 2005, 2009; Perullo 2005; Pype 2007; van Dijk 1999; de Bruijn 2007; and Suriano, this volume). Remarkably, in this entire literature, youth is seen as being in an oxymoronic state of 'constant crisis' (Vigh 2008). This is oxymoronic because if a crisis is constant, how can it be experienced as crisis? If the youth themselves reflect on their situation, how then will they be inclined to define that as being in a state of crisis if it is so very much their 'normal' state of affairs? Also, the notion of youth being in crisis obliterates, at least so it seems, the possibility of studying 'ordinary youth'; who is youth that attend school (see, for an exceptional example, Simpson 2003, and see Mokam (this volume)), live ordinary and regulated lives, and do have a caring family and a future to look forward to? Hence, the issue of youth as a phenomenon is in itself (and not because of its subject) problematic by and through some of the common or underlying assumptions.

Youth in Africa has also been studied *as a concept*. The problem here is on the one hand the paradigmatic point of departure as well as the paradigmatic demarcation. In a range of studies, the question is posed: when do we begin and when do we stop speaking of youth, particularly in terms of age? (see Honwana and de Boeck 2005; Christiansen et. al. 2006; Abbink and van Kessel 2005). These studies give different answers to the definition of youth if the social science of Africa intends to do justice to the cultural, historical and political circumstances and developments that have given shape to the idea of youth in local societies. Abbink (2005), for instance, argues that for pragmatic reasons in terms of age, the youth-category can be defined as people belonging to a 14 – 35 years of age-category. At the same time, he admits that this may deny social, cultural and political realities whereby, for instance, in the context of AIDS or violent conflicts, orphaned youth even below the age of 14, may already be having responsibilities in taking care of entire families that otherwise belong to adulthood, or one in which people above 35 years of age remain in a state of dependency and therefore are

categorised as 'children'. The generational perspective, as invigorated and developed by Alber et. al. (2008), also perceives of the differentiation of society into age-categories as a socio-historical construct that of necessity remains 'fuzzy' and actually requires a kind of fuzziness in order to have significance in ever-changing contexts where the meaning of age is continuously in the making – a point also developed by Christiansen et. al. (2006) as an aspect of how youth is a navigating category; i.e., indicating a younger set of people in society that usually is placed in a position where they need to develop their skills to navigate changing societal conditions constantly.

Basically these studies address the question of how we can make sure that we do not superimpose Western categories of social analysis, which may become meaningless in the particular cultural or historical setting. Does African youth exist at all and in whose hands rests the conceptual invention here? Or are we exoticising African youth if we assume that matters must be different in Africa, compared to the West or Asia (for India see Sinha-Kerkhoff, this volume; for Indonesia see Semedi, this volume) when it comes to such delimitations and demarcations?

Classical studies of African societies and cultures appear to have been devoting detailed attention to the formation of youth, their initiation and enculturation, as well as their exploitation in the hands of the elderly or in their introduction to capitalist regimes that turned them into cheap labour for the mines or plantations. The formation of power appears to have put in place its own 'working definitions' of who were and are to be recognised as youths and who therefore can be placed under certain regimes of control, of labour, of exchange and so forth. In African societies, this has been much studied in view of the interplay between gerontocracies (the power and control of the elderly) and the new regimes of production and labour that came about through colonialism and the engagement with capitalist markets (Aguilar 1998; Baxter and Almagor 1978; Bradbury 1969). Social science studies often followed these 'emic' categorisations, sometimes naively, believing that the emic is the royal road to the truth. Yet in addition to this, the missionary endeavour, the colonial apparatus and the independent nation-states all put in place systems of education that to a large extent were capable of capturing youth and which therefore operated on the basis of ideas of what youth is, i.e. what this social category consists of (comparatively see for this process in Asia the contribution in this volume on Scouting by Semedi).

While such an institutional *encadrement* of youth took place (not only in schools, but also the army or political youth wings for instance), an ambiguity remained about the precise 'edges' of the category of youth. In many societies,

the notion of the importance of marriage for entering adulthood means a societal definition of youth that can extend way beyond the school-going age (Johnson-Hanks 2002). In other situations and circumstances, such as that relating to AIDS in particular, orphaned youth are sometimes forced to take on duties and responsibilities that turn them into social adults at a very tender age (Robson et. al. 2006; Dahl 2009; Skovdal 2010). Hence, also the meaning and definition of adulthood can shift easily from situation to situation, making ambiguities even larger. This has particularly acquired traumatic meaning in the context of war and violence which sometimes has made youth commit atrocities that upset and disrupted societies so profoundly that a sense of how and why categories of differentiation in age can be made vanished completely. In this volume, this process has been addressed by the contribution of Jourdan on *mayi-mayi* youth in Congo and by Sanni's contribution on youth movements in Nigeria.

Youth as an Ideology of Becoming

The conceptual fuzziness of the idea of youth has had detrimental effects on the study of youth as a phenomenon. It has become increasingly fuzzier to understand precisely which groups are studied if there is no conceptual clarity of their demarcation, nor conceptual clarity of how their choices, situations and motivations can be understood. The best social science usually offers is the argument that an understanding must be 'situational' and that it must include 'agency' although it remains very unclear where and in whose hands this agency should be located if all is 'situational' to begin with (Christiansen et. al 2006; Cole and Durham 2007, de Bruijn 2007). The diversity of the phenomenon seems to stand in the way of greater conceptual clarity of how structures of African societies can be understood and explored in the way in which a location of youth becomes visible and explainable (Alber et. al. 2008) . As social science in Africa has moved away from conceptualising youth only in terms of time – a passage through the generations – and has included the notion of space – not when one is youth but also *where* one is youth – the 'situational' exploration of youth has at least allowed for the possibility of looking at space and place as new modes of understanding. In addition to the concept of youth as emphasising the 'situational' it has also turned into the 'locational' dimensions. Youth should be understood in their relation to specific spaces and places, which Christiansen et. al. (2006) have termed 'navigation'. Youth is thus a 'navigational' concept as it indicates how and by following which trajectories, a 'certain' group of people in society produce, occupy, or escape from certain spaces and places. Redefining youth as an identity-project of 'becoming

somebody', this becoming is captured in navigating certain spaces and places – the bar, the disco, the funeral, the school, the church, the state, the house and so forth. Youth seem to create their own landscapes of action and interaction, their own sites for being young and for acting out their identities; and situations that seem to fit the idea of the emergence of distinct 'youthscapes' (Chatterton and Hollands 2003), forged as these are by the modern media, migration and new modes of communication.

Maira and Soep (2004) also explore youthscapes in the context of globalisation, as a way of creating a category of youth on the basis of social achievement and not as a psychological stage that children naturally pass through as they grow older. By analysing youthscapes, they are able to demonstrate how youth always occupy an ambiguous space in the interaction between local conditions, national ideologies and global markets. Youthscapes thus indicate the places (local, national or even global) where youth create spaces for becoming, i.e. a 'landscape' of possibilities that specifically mark the social spaces where being young and where living through the new experiences that are giving shape to one's identity, are to be found.

Yet what is lacking in most of these studies is a capturing or rendering visible of a process that is very much comparable to that of the emergence of ethnic identities. In the study of ethnicity as a phenomenon of social, political and economic organisation, and as a concept that serves the analytical distinction of perceiving a distinct process of identity-formation, it became increasingly important to also perceive ethnicity as being a form of *ideology*. We are interested in exploring ideology in the way it covers the pursuit of certain identity-constructs in the defence and enlargement of socio-political, socio-cultural and economic interests in society. That is, in how far is the pursuit of a youth-identity forceful with regard to processes of inclusion and exclusion in the defence of such interests? In how far is it becoming normative for (the control of) behaviour, expression and desires?

By comparison, many factors contribute to the ways in which ethnicity becomes an ideology, particularly for those subscribing to a particular ethnic positioning in any social field. The most important contributing factor to the process by which a particular identity comes to be rendered meaningful in ethnic terms, thereby signalling authenticity and belonging, are socio-political interests and resources. The emergence of the nation-state in many parts of Africa produced new divisions of a socio-political nature that were easily translated into exclusionary rhetoric (translated into autochthony: see Nyamnjoh and Geschiere 2000, Werbner 2002, etc.; but see for an Asian comparative case, Semedi, this volume). Ideas of a primordial nature of belonging somewhere came to be translated into ethnic identities that

functioned to produce exclusionary claims towards the ones that do not belong and therefore cannot be granted the same kind of socio-political resources. In the pursuit of ethnic identity, even old classical anthropological studies could be used as the intellectual resources that provided the evidence for some of the ethnic claims on resources of any kind. In many parts of Africa, the debates on 'autochthony' demonstrate forcefully how the rendering of ethnic identities becomes meaningful and important, but above all, it indicates conflicting arenas where resources are scarce but where the symbolic stuff to generate ethnic identities of any kind are abundantly available (Geschiere 2009).

This production of ethnicity as an ideology by and for the people themselves, who in the process make use of whatever is available, both as phenomenon and as concept for the social construction of such an identity, is what can also be observed in the case of youth. Youth has become an ideological project because an arena of interests and scarce resources has been generated around it (de Bruijn 2007; Moyer 2003; Nieuwenhuys 2001).

This arena is only partially of their own making as it has been produced in the context of post-colonial state-formation, the emergence of civic society organisations, educational systems, foreign NGO-activities and policies, and rapidly changing kinship patterns as a result of rapid population growth. Increasingly, governments and parliaments began to discuss 'youth' as a separate category for policy making but also as a kind of formal representation (see Sinha-Kerkhoff for India, this volume) so that the voice of youth could be heard in the context of national politics and nation-state building.

Youth as an Ideological Force

In some situations, the recognition of youth as an ideological force came to serve national or party politics through the establishment of para-military youth wings and organisations, of which the Ghana Young Pioneers and the Malawi Young Pioneers became well known if not broadly feared post-colonial examples. Through programmes like these, the youth often have become enlisted in the coming into being of the nation-state and the rise of the nation-state as a political project of identity-formation.

While there was on the one hand, increasingly, a formalised ideological positioning of youth in the framework of nation-states and civic organisations, there was on the other hand, also an international influence on the formation of an ideological positioning of youth (Abbink and van Kessel 2005). International youth organisations also began targeting postcolonial African societies and the formation of youth bodies in the form of student organisations, religious youth groups, and associations for care, support, training and so forth were established in many countries.

In addition to the transnational feature of the ideological positioning of youth, more 'ideological material' was rendered meaningful to youth themselves through the media and through migration. The media have also opened possibilities of representation of the youth to the public. This is a representation that goes with the formulation of an ideology, or at least that goes with the sharing of ideology with others. This particular form of exposure to an external, in some cases even global, flow of images and ideas by which the youth acquired the means to formulate ideologies by and for themselves, was in a sense 'free', 'uncontrolled', 'unorganised', 'random' and 'democratic' (Cole and Durham 2007). In principle, any youth could tap into that flow as it usually was able to reach every corner of society easily and randomly through the spread of modern means of communication (radio, television, magazines, mobile telephones, internet etc.). Images such as those relating to rap and other forms of modern youth styles acquired a high velocity of spreading, adoption and adaptation in many African settings (see Suriano, this volume). In other words, while youth as a category of age indicates a life-phase of 'becoming', the whole ideological framing of the term youth indicates a process of coming into being of a specific domain of power that also began to 'prescribe' what these forms of expression should be about. The trope of 'marginalisation', as is often found in such expressions as rap, street-theatre, dance, style and fashion is very much the product of the 'ideolisation' of youth in Africa.

As such, the post-colonial moment became a time in which youth had unprecedented opportunities to present themselves, make their voice heard, organise themselves into movements of a religious or political nature within the context of nation-state projects and make their presence felt through the media. More than ever before, youth could tap into many different types of symbolic, political and ideational resources that allowed for the creation of ideological bedfellows; youth being confronted with an increasing ideological compartmentalisation of the category of youth in the hands of governments, NGO policies, transnational mediation, and religious and political interest, while at the same time becoming agents in their own right in the establishment of a range of social forms of organisations or groupings that make available onto themselves the identities that are relevant. 'Youth' has become a project for youth themselves, and these youth happily make use of all the ideological resources that give the project its distinctive features.

This means that we are talking of ideology in two different perspectives at the same time; while ideologies (such as religious or political systems of thought and practice) define, circumscribe and make use of the youth, and therefore include young people in their ideological projects, this volume intends

to indicate that youth are not passive in their ideological framing. While ‘youth’ has become a project for governments, religious and political leaders and NGOs in the ordering of society and production and control of interests and resources, youth has become an active ideology for themselves in the pursuit of their own interests; in other words, they have acquired an ideological force of their own. This is the reason why, as Durham (2007) has described succinctly for Botswana, youth can manoeuvre themselves in a position where they control the processes of inclusion and exclusion on the basis of age-categorisation; and ageism that has acquired new and unprecedented dimensions in recent years. The Botswana case that Durham analyses clearly shows how youth, through taking control over youth-programmes, the youth-ministry, the financing of youth-affairs and the gaining of control over important channels for the expression of their desires and identities, do create the means to exclude others, to monopolise resources and establish a kind of political favouritism with regard to their position in society.

In the course of this ideological interlocking between ideologies *for* youth and ideologies *of* youth, ‘youth’ has lost its naivety; too many interests, resources and contestations are at stake; too many different ideas and political projects are projecting different social orders in which youth take up different positions; and too many attempts are made to streamline the youth’s own visions and voices into such contesting notions of the social.

One particular source for youth to become an ideology that is capable of enforcing its own interests or that may support the interests of other groups and institutions in society is and has been religion (see also Sanni, this volume, for the relationship between youth and Islam in this regard in Nigeria). In a number of studies on religion in Africa, the issue has been raised of how and why in specific circumstances and social processes, religious formations became deeply intertwined with youth. These studies have been dealing with the introduction and spread of Islam and particular forms of Christianity and, in fewer cases, has also related to African historical forms of religion. In the work of Parkin (1972), *Palms, Wine and Witnesses*, for instance, the spread of Islam in Kenya is studied from the perspective of how Islam had to become ‘youthful’ in order to be successful, and how, the other way around, youth in defending new-found positions in society were turning to particular forms of Islam to do so. A similar symbiosis for mutual success can be found in new forms of charismatic Pentecostalism that have been sweeping through many parts of Africa in recent years. Its success in places such as Malawi (see van Dijk 1999) was largely based on the ways in which it connected to the position of youth and, in particular, to those who wanted change in the gerontocratic structures of society. Pentecostalism became a

place for the youthful to be involved and the faith contributes to a youth identity whereby the faith itself also acquired a youthful outlook. In much of the Pentecostal activity in Malawi, the elderly therefore became the target of conversion and purification strategies and rituals, being the ones for whom a 'born-again' ideology was the hardest to muster.

There are also much earlier examples of similar processes on the African continent than the ones referred to so far, which all took place in the 1970s and 1980s. Earlier examples of similar processes of an intertwined relationship between religion and youth can be found in the *Mchapi*-movement that swept through the southern African region in the 1920s and 1930s. As recorded by Audrey Richards (1935) at the time, these were youth witchcraft eradication movements which, in order to be effective, were to consist of youth only. Another historical example of the way in which youth were effective in terms of producing profound religious changes were to be found in the activities of millennial and ecstatic revival preachers, travelling through the southern African region (Fields 1985).

These early examples of youth/religious activities demonstrate one particular feature this interrelationship appears to produce: an easy cross-cutting of all sorts of borders and boundaries, be they social-cultural, economic or geographical. Not only is the active spread of these youthful groups, witch-cleansers, zealous revival preachers and healers over a wider region remarkable, the way in which this combination of religion and youth becomes transcultural and appears to be able to render itself meaningful and effective in very different cultural settings at the same time is truly noteworthy. In addition, in each of these varied settings, their activities cross-cut boundaries of power, age, cultural respect and prestige and for some youth it even means upward socio-economic mobility as they gain access to new resources and opportunities.

This opens-up a perspective which does not only simply state that religion may want to recruit youth for its own prosyletisation. While there is no denial of the fact that in Africa some religious formations indeed have done their best to capture the youth in all sorts of associations or educational programmes and, as such, have been hoping that by doing so, the future of the religious body or particular kind of faith would be ensured, this is not the same as youth-as-ideology, which these early examples appear to have been demonstrating. In these religious forms, the need and ambition to be young created the specific impetus to be involved in border-crossing purposefully. In these groups, to belong to youth created a specific form of power that otherwise could not be attained and that became a form of power which could be understood and negotiated religiously.

In this collection of articles, this process of youth appearing in an ideological (including a politically and religiously inspired) format is being studied in present-day Africa. Due to globalisation, Africa has witnessed the spread of many new forms of Christianity and Islam across various parts of the continent, such as Pentecostal or Islamist movements; while in the domain of African historical forms of religion, new nativist movements have appeared in which youth again play a dominant role (one example of that is the Afrikania Mission in Ghana, see de Witte 2008). In each of these forms, the use of modern means of transport and communication as well as a dominant presence in the public domain through modern media has become important politically. This volume features a variety of examples of these new conjunctures between religion/ideology and youth and the way they translate into modern political contexts of life in Africa. Whereas earlier youth movements cut across regions and more localised social-cultural formations, such as kinship patterns or local forms of authority, in the current context this cutting across borders has acquired new meaning and a new dynamic. One element is indeed the increasing importance of the public domain and the civic sector. In terms of the public domain, being young means to engage in public speech, religiously endorsed in the form of (evangelical) campaigns, rallies, radio and television shows, music, performance and so forth. For these forms of religious and political expression, the element of being 'youthful', of having to transmit a youthful imagery and a youthful identity, appears as of paramount significance for its success. In these ways, often fundamentalist Christian and Islamic movements present a youthful imagery as recipe for success and public appeal.

The important question is obviously why? Why is it that these ideological formations, in the new Africa that we are describing here, must be youthful? Why is youth as ideology so important in achieving public success for many ideologies and policies? What is the inherent quality and nature of the relationship of youth and ideologies that is producing that success or at least that aspiration of public success?

An important dimension to be explored is the extent to which youth connect to ideologies in the way that they are not bound by vested interests. If it becomes ideologically 'better' to be young it might also indicate that in particular circumstances, it is 'better' not to have vested interests in anything. This would mean that we are looking into an ideology that is particularly 'footloose', that depends more on intellectual and social capital than it builds on 'real' capital, that it constructs networks instead of ties and that, because of its fluidity, escapes much of the control of an elderly generation. Examples abound of 'travelling cultures' of the young in religious and public terms,

such as the street-preachers from Malawi, the Rap-groups in Dakar and Nairobi, the Talibe of francophone Islamic Africa, and so forth.

Another element to be explored in this 'alliance' between ideology and youth relates to the fact that this ideology produces new structures which can be appealing in situations where state-decay and crumbling of kinship systems produce a real need for replacements, constructed by the youth themselves. This creates its own counter movements and ideas, attempting to disqualify the structures that were once dominant in their lives by bringing them under new checks and balances, which at other moments reinforce the ideology once more. The youth-as-ideology interpretation allows us to see more of the agency that commonly is attributed to youth (see de Bruijn et. al. 2007) but which turns this agency into a counter-hegemonic force to the powers that be (state, church, party, etc.). Through the various contributions in this volume, we aim to demonstrate how, not only ideology can cover or inspire agency in terms of protest, resistance, alternative choice and so forth for youth, but also how in important ways, ideology itself is part of the inventions that this agency is producing. Youth are the constructors of this ideology that pursues 'youthfulness' and its interests and desires in unprecedented ways in current African situations; a reality which the following contributions demonstrate in their fascinating variety.

The Contributions to this Special Issue

This special issue is the result of a conference that was held in Dakar in 2006. This conference invited scholars to reflect on the relation between youth and ideology: *Youth and the Global South: Religion, Politics and the Making of Youth in Africa, Asia and the Middle East*. By that time, as is also clear from the bibliography in this volume, this was still a topic in its infancy.² Though the study of youth is very prominent in Africa, the comparison with the same field in Asia and the Middle East has been revealing. In this volume, we included two studies from Asia (India and Indonesia), and five studies from different countries in Africa (Cameroon, Uganda, Congo, Nigeria and Tanzania). The division between studies from Asia and Africa also reflects the general state of affairs in youth studies in the developing world, which are especially based on research in Africa.

The articles in this volume show how diverse the category of 'youth' is. They all refer to a specific category of youth; in development (Sinha-Kerkhoff, Christiansen), in the nation (Semedi), within the complex chaos of war and violence (Jourdan and Sanni), as public performers (Suriano) or as a schooling youth (Mokam). These categories are often defined from the outside, and then taken up by the youth who become actively involved in a re-definition in

their own terms. Youth as an ideology in the service of states or organisations becomes an ideology-of-youth for the youth itself; an ideological resource. The articles all refer to this latter ‘use’ of youth. They do not only refer to religion and politics as an ideology of youth, but they refer to a much broader domain of ideologisation by the youth themselves. These domains can be found in music and arts (Suriano), in the history of war, conflict and insecurity (Jourdan, Sanni), in sexuality in relation to HIV-AIDS (Christiansen) and in education (Mokam). Youth either embrace these ideologies or are engaged by them, as in the case of university youth in Cameroon, in policy formation in India (Sinha-Kerkhoff) and in Scouting in Indonesia.

The latter idea of ideologies, with which youth are forced to engage themselves, often takes place in relation to ideologies of youth and the state. Sinha-Kerkhoff provides us with examples from India. In her case, it is the state ideologising the youth; i.e. a state that needs youth to celebrate its own success. This article is set in India, but the process it indicates is very relevant for African situations as well. The article of Semedi, situated in Indonesia, relates to youth and the state in a different manner, namely how through the organisation of youth (scouting) associations the state not only creates an ideology of youth, but also creates youth as a militant organisation. Mokam’s article on Yaoundé university youth shows how the state influences youth in their youthful identity. We can question if such movements have an ideology beyond their economic goals? The article of Sanni, on Nigerian youth-organisations, discusses how they act as a protective force. Are they a reflection of how the state forms the youth, of how youth is an answer to the imperfections of the state, and whether this informs policies?

However, youth also creates its own ideology. As the case of Nigeria demonstrates, the youth often create order by basing themselves on an imagined history of their force in moments of violence. In such cases, the youth ‘construct’ their own ideological practice in relation to an imagined past. Another clear example of youth making their own ideology and making their voices heard is in the realm of popular culture. In Tanzania, music and texts voice the wishes of the youth and give them strength. It is an example of youth culture.

How youth organise and shape social relations in society reflect the presence of new developments in Africa and Asia. In Christiansen’s article on youth confronted with the HIV-AIDS epidemic in Uganda, the development of a new categorisation of youth is visible, not imposed by the state, not created by the youth, but created in the interplay between sexuality and sociality. The problematic of illness feeds into ideologies of youth and youth ideology concerning sexuality. Youth then take a social position in how they intend to

(re-)structure sexual and reproductive relations that are important to them, often contradicting the ways in which the older generations want these relations to be.

This is a good note to end on: youth taking a social position by navigating through places and spaces, all linked to new developments that incorporate youthfulness. This is a social position which is reinforced by the way they are either included in an ideology or produce an inclusionary ideology. The question this raises is: who has access to this ideologisation of youth? And who are these youth that are producing ideologies of themselves? In the end, we therefore face the paradox that while youth is often excluded from the formulation of ideologies that shape their lives, this self-ideologisation is at the same time producing new modes of exclusion. This is setting a new agenda for the social sciences of youth in Africa and beyond; an agenda to which this volume aspires to contribute on the basis of a number of well-informed and empirically studied cases.

Notes

1. This is not only an issue of discussion in the African context, as similar patterns can be found in India (see Sinha-Kerkhoff in this volume).
2. The Bibliographic Overview (Klouwenberg and Butter) in this volume reflects the results of literature search carried out in 2005 and is complemented by more recent publications dealing with 'youth'.

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