Money and violence: Financial Mutuals among the Xhosa in Cape Town, South Africa

Bähre, E.

Citation for published version (APA):
Acknowledgements

I was in the privileged position that many people and institutions assisted me in the process of making this book. The confidence that my supervisor Abram de Swaan and my co-supervisor Robert Ross showed in my research project was a tremendous support. I appreciate the freedom that I had, as well as the inspiring and open conversations about the research. Abram de Swaan particularly encouraged me to approach the issues that arose from new angles and thus allowed me to explore new avenues of thought. The importance of Robert Ross’ gentle questions and suggestions, as well as his historical knowledge of the region, mostly revealed itself after our meetings during my walk back to the train station. I wish to express my gratitude to Bonno Thoden van Velzen, my first anthropology teacher, for his continued involvement and support. He commented on the chapters and encouraged me to explore the finer shades and bright spots that enhanced the depth of the research.

The Amsterdam School for Social Science Research was a pleasurable and sheltered working environment. I am grateful to the constant efforts of Teun Bijvoet, Anneke Dammers, Annelies Dijkstra, José Komen, Miriam May, and Hans Sonneveld for maintaining this environment and not giving in to bureaucratic cynicism. The many conversations around the coffee machine, and during lunches and seminars were of tremendous value. It was great to discuss with fellow researchers about research experiences, ideas, and inevitable frustrations. I wish to thank particularly José de Abreu, Talja Blokland, Ferdinand de Jong, Jeroen de Kloet, Reinhilde König, Baz Lecocq, Song Ping, Marina de Regt, Alexandra Schüssler, Rachel Spronk, and Sikko Visscher. The careful reading of some chapters by Birgit Meyer was of great help and forced me to sharpen my arguments. The ‘collective imagination’ reading club initiated by Mattij van de Port and Bonno Thoden van Velzen was an inspiring and joyous forum. Many chapters and ideas have been discussed in the ‘mutual club’ for which I wish to show my gratitude to Aspha Bijnaar, Abdoulaye Kane, Marcel van der Linden, Hotze Lont, Abram de Swaan, and Peer Smets.

The presentations and debates at the PhD ‘Africa seminars’ initiated by Peter Geschier and Robert Ross made me sensitive to the specificity of my findings as well as the resemblances to other regions. Our informal ‘South Africa-researchers’ group with Julia Hornberger, Wiebe Nauta, and Barbara Oomen was a pleasant place to exchange information and ideas.

During my fieldwork in Cape Town, I was fortunate to be affiliated with the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of the Western Cape. I am particularly indebted to Patrick McAllister, now at Canterbury University, New Zealand. I enjoyed our conversations on the research process and his knowledge of Xhosa society was of tremendous help. I took pleasure in the many talks with Yolisa Pikie and appreciated the way in which he combined fierce arguments with a liberating sense of humour. UMAC, particularly Sean Tait, were of tremendous help for introducing me to the people of ‘Indawo Yoxolo’, and for their honest advice during the threatening episodes of the fieldwork.

I had the chance to teach and generous time to write on this thesis at the School of Anthropology, Psychology and Social Work at the University of Natal, Durban. Moreover, during that year I had the opportunity to get to
Know South Africa more intimately. The conversations with Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala gave me more confidence with regard to some controversial findings of the research. I wish to express my thanks to Jim Kiernan for sharing his tea and insights, particularly on trust and exclusion. Isak Niehaus was very generous to host me for quite some time and with great pleasure I recall the long debates on politics and power, for which I am very grateful.

I spent about the last half-year writing at Sikko Visscher's dinner table. His company made the writing easier and more fun. I enjoyed the many walks, talks, and laughs and am appreciative for his support in this last phase. I wish to thank Tanja Chute for her conscientious editing of my English and Richard van Kampen for designing the cover and layout of the text. I had several heated and constructive debates about methodological issues with Peter Zuithoff, for which I wish to thank him. Giselinde Kuipers was a huge help as she commented on numerous versions of the chapters. Our conversations on preliminary interpretations and academia in general were very encouraging. I was fortunate to develop and publish some ideas on financial mutuals with Peer Smets. I am grateful for his support during the many stages and facets of the research.

I am touched by the willingness of the Xhosa migrants in Cape Town, particularly in 'Indawo Yoxolo', to help me do the research. I appreciate their courage to cross racial barriers, tolerate me, reveal their lives, and share their inglorious thoughts and moments. In this study I have given most of them anonymity in order to minimise the risk of repercussions against them and because I do not wish to abuse their trust. Although the people are anonymous, I sincerely hope that this study reveals some aspects of their lives that are important to them yet too often ignored. Most of the people who took the time to answer my questions cannot read this. Maybe in the future one of their children or grandchildren will enjoy reading about their lives.

I cannot imagine how this research would have turned out if Edith Nokwanele Moyikwa not assisted me. Her wit and loyalty, as well as her enthusiasm to reflect on her own society and life was a tremendous inspiration. I am honoured that I was able to work with her and share a year that was tumultuous for both of us. The fieldwork experience enriched my life tremendously and I largely owe this to her. Finally, I owe a great deal to Esther Blom for her encouragement, company, and incredible support. I consider myself privileged that I could share my experiences, stories, and ideas with her. I feel very fortunate that we embarked on this South African adventure together, and I could not have wished for a better friend. For this, and much more, I wish to thank my love.
