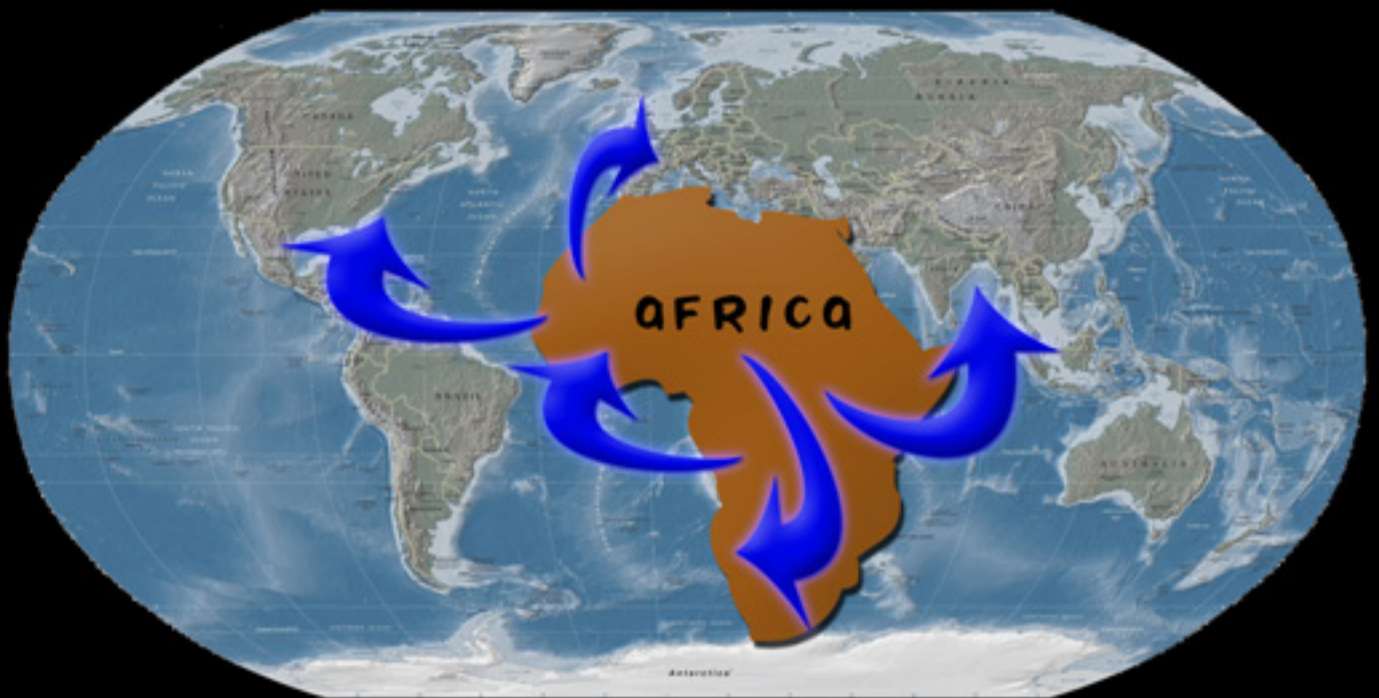


Voices of Africa



VOLUME 2 / ISSUE 2

PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Welcome to another edition of Voices of Africa. In this issue, we address the reconciliation of the past, present and future of Africa as a means of achieving longevity and sustainability. History exists to remind us of triumphs and failures hence the need to create a lifeline between the three phases. This journey encompasses the bridging of cultural differences, the incorporation of sustainable practices into the management of natural resources as well as the impact of football and the upcoming World Cup.

Our decision to feature the 2010 World Cup in this edition marks its prominence as a historical milestone, marking the first time that the event will be held on the continent, in South Africa. Along with the excitement, several concerns have also been raised regarding the readiness of the host country and continent at large. Football forms such an integral part of African culture, that it is essential to analyze how we can transform the continent's soccer prowess while utilizing this opportunity to influence discourses about life in Africa.

Beyond the scope of the World Cup, we address issues of sovereignty and survival in the presence of difficult economic and political circumstances, as well as the impact of science and the culture of sustainability on the lives of ordinary Africans. Beyond simply enjoying what this edition has to offer as you go through the pages, we challenge you to take the time to reflect on these issues and engage in meaningful dialogue.

We sincerely appreciate the hard work of all the authors and editors whose insights made this particular edition possible. We also thank our esteemed advisory board and our generous sponsors.

Sincerely,
Sheila Agiti, Executive Editor



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER STORY

4 - White to Surrender or Green to go

Green: Analysis of Nigeria's Current Efforts and Future Efforts to Adapt to the Growing Concerns of Global Warming
By S. O..Abiola

SCIENCE

**9 - Water, Savannas, and Society:
Sustaining People and Wildlife Through Better
Science**
By Daniel I. Rubenstein

**13 - Food for Thought: A Look at Triple Negative
Breast Cancer**
By Nana Ama Akuffo

CREATIVE PIECES

14 - I Represent Oromia By Pixie

15 - Hale By Nana Ama Akuffo

17 - Flood of Crimson By Tyrell Hall

18 - Scar\$ By Abiodun Azeez



White to go Surrender or Green to go Green: Analysis of Nigeria's Current Efforts and Future Efforts to Adapt to the Growing Concerns of Global Warming

By S. O. Abiola

Abstract:

Over the next century the world population is expected to continue to grow exponentially especially in already populous areas such as Nigeria, China and India. Practically all and any model utilized to analyze global warming trends over the next century predict an increase in global warming due to the emergence of increasingly industrial nations directly related to population increases. In a way the amount of cooperation and mistakes that can occur by tackling such a large issue have been foreshadowed by the actions of international governments dealing with the global economic meltdown. While GlobalWarming presents humanity with a unique opportunity to work together as a unified planet something that seldom occurs (with a notable exception being the Montreal Protocol), such a unified solution to a problem of this magnitude allows for the perpetuation of dangerous policy initiatives. For example, excessive loans in a claimed attempt to develop technology to aid in the reduction of global warming which has a high potential to turn into bribes or encourage corrupt politics. The second example being pushed even as fervently as global warming itself, population control. The objective of this paper will be to exam such issues in detail with regards to Nigeria one of the ten most populated countries, and its attempts to manage and prevent the catastrophes predicted by global warming. Not only, will these present issues be addressed based on past analysis, but a proposal for how to address the future solutions to global warming, that protects the unique heterogeneous cultural and sovereignty of Nigeria and other nations as a whole.



1. Introduction:

As Nigeria and other countries of the world progress through this century, there is the growing and evident concern of global warming. To this end, Nigeria has like many countries taken the responsible step of outlining some of the issues that face Nigeria if nothing is done to address global warming. Through the creation of agencies such as the Nigeria Environmental Study/Action Team [6], funding Small Hydro projects[12], and membership in the newly formed IRENA (International Renewable Energy Agency) group[4]. Participation in these initiatives has emerged in reaction to what the Nigerian government and domestic NGOs have determined to be increased threats to Nigeria due to global warming. While these mechanisms were designed to encourage seeking solutions to global climate change, Nigeria a signer of both the Kyoto and Montreal Protocol, has decided to take a more domestic approach before seeking, international help. Such an approach has led to the consideration of nuclear power as an alternative fuel or transition power source from fossil fuels to more clean energy, small hydro plant projects, and other sources of clean efficient energy. We have even implemented reforms that by 2025 will make 36 percent of our countries energy from renewable sources [9]. While other countries are making domestic progress, the only solution to global climate change consists of a collaborative effort, the same collaboration that continues to increase global warming, globalization. More precisely the proper enabling of various countries and their domestic parties to convene to create a policy that addresses global climate change with the trust and assurance provided with other international meetings of trade or foreign policy, coupled with policies strong enough that a lapse in the agreement has repercussions for that member.

2. Analysis:

Effects of Climate Change

According to the findings of NEST, Nigeria faces five key areas that have the potential to be adversely affected by global warming, some of which are already occurring in the south with erosion in the Niger Delta, and in the north with the increasing encroachment of the Sahara Desert[6]. The five key areas that NEST considers important to Nigeria's global climate change policies are: Repercussions for Health and Human Settlements; Water Resources, Wetlands, and Freshwater Ecology; Energy, Industry, Commerce, and Financial Services; Agriculture, Food Security, Land Degradation, Forestry, and Bio-Diversity; and Coastal and Marine Ecosystems[6]. While the Nigerian Federal Government did not explicitly utilize the results of these findings, they were taken into consideration when developing Nigeria's global climate policies. The key player that is the greatest problem to the Nigerian climate change policy is oil. Not only did the NEST report repeatedly mention rising sea levels displacing millions in the Niger Delta, but also the destruction of the natural ecosystem due to the polluting effects of drilling for oil [6]. Secondly, the report also addressed gas flaring as another key issue, which Nigeria repeatedly has been trying to force oil companies to stop, and thus make a profit off their natural gas while protecting the environment [1].

3. Present:

Effects of Climate Change

Although in its infancy and recently approved by President Yar'adua in a recent budget the government created a policy for a carbon tax on petroleum. A study done on the effectiveness of a carbon tax vs. trade permits found the carbon tax initiative would be better for Nigeria in particular due to "the country already hav[ing] ways of charging and taxing relevant commodities", therefore it would be relatively easy to incorporate into global climate change policies [7]. Along the lines of furthering a cleaner petroleum industry the federal government has tried but failed numerous times to force the oil companies operating in its fields to end gas flaring [1]. The companies claiming that they lack the funding to do so, thus at the upcoming climate change meeting we seek to enact an international policy that would end gas flaring [1].

4. Role in International Efforts/Progressive Reform:

Considering Nigeria's involvement in lots of international organizations, one may wonder what the African powerhouse of Nigeria hopes to gain or propose at the upcoming Copenhagen meeting on global climate change. One important change from the idealistic but hollow policies of the Kyoto Protocol will be an increased presence of developing nations. In a world where increased globalization continues to affect the interactions of nations, developed and developing it is important to include both. Global warming has taught that leaving the fate of humanity to a few nations is always prudent. At the upcoming Copenhagen meeting, the notion of maintaining the status quo must be eliminated, i.e. the notion that the world lies in the hands of one economic group or some other conglomerate of countries. Failure to include the world's countries into a useful cooperative group that is unlike the UN, which is practically an international group with a G8 cap on top has led to the creation of numerous groups of differing ideologies, NATO, G8, G77, IRENA, OPEC, etc. While these logistic issues will create a problem in the basic construction of a new climate change framework, the most important issue to address will be giving the new agreement the measures to maintain itself. Because of Nigeria's previous experiences with money in the terms of fraud, corruption and over excessive loan policies, we propose the following suggestions at the meeting, detailed in the next section. Second to these, we suggest that all policies that encourage trade permits or credits of greenhouse emissions be eliminated. In their place to fit the capitalistic nature of the G8, the following will be proposed: Developed nations would be informed that their exchanges (exports and imports) with the developing nations they depend on would be directly proportional to their successful investment in technologies that will meet a given country's climate change expectations set at the convention and periodic installments. Three times failure to meet the expectations of that country can result in a challenge by a member developed country, which if the challenger fulfills the requirements of the challenged takes over their imports/exports until failing to meet the climate change requirements of the developing nation. This initiative will serve the multipurpose role of forcing the developed nations to compete for more resources through a green initiative. At the same time the developing nations now with the tools and means to begin mass production of cleaner technology can sell their products to the developed nations and bring the developed nations into a new green era.

4.1 Loan and Lean:

While there are commitments to developing countries in any upcoming global climate change agreement to promise services and other resources to help manage global warming, proposing loans, as a solution is a dangerous alternative. In the case of Nigeria, it took former President Obasanjo eight years to secure Nigeria, debt forgiveness and leave Nigeria with a surplus now valued at 48 billion USD (of course that registers a loss from the 63 billion USD of the preglobal economic meltdown) [8]. Since the reestablishment of a democratic government in 1999, Nigeria has made headway on the front of corruption through the creation of INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission), the EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission), ICPC (Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission), and other anticorruption agencies and policies. However, due to the ease at which loans can be accessed unlike the federal reserve which is guarded by agencies such as the CBN (Central Bank of Nigeria), corruption, bribery, and simply money wasted over ill managed governmental activities leaves Nigeria at a severe loss. Secondly, as former President Obasanjo argued you are asking a young nation, in the case of Nigeria to develop a democracy, meet basic human rights standards, etc, all at the same time while giving and then demanding returns on loans. In case of global climate change, we Nigeria, propose a solution whereby any assistance offered to any developing country, especially ourselves is not given in the term of loans, or any transaction of money for the sole development of technologies for which Nigeria lacks the necessary facilities to develop. These include but are not limited to the domestic production of hydrogen fuel cells, solar panels, etc. Nevertheless, such a technology transfer, which is evident in the Kyoto Protocol [2], should be developed on the basis that a country that uses this technology

...by eliminating loans from the agreement, these countries will now develop their self-reliance, providing jobs, security, etc and most importantly lower the tendency of corruption a direct opponent to the development of a strong democracy.

can domestically produce and manage it. This will lessen the continued dependence of Nigeria and other developing countries on developed countries for solutions in global problems. Some opponents however may argue that such a policy would economically counterproductive in the sense that these countries are being given technology for "free". However, if loans were given with the intention of allowing a country to be successful in areas where they lack funds to do so, a "free" technology transfer policy would have the impact that such loaned money would be no longer necessary. Secondly, by eliminating loans from the agreement, these countries will now develop their self-reliance, providing jobs, security, etc and most importantly lower the tendency of corruption a direct opponent to the development of a strong democracy.



4.2 Family Planning or Forced Population Dampening:

”Visions of impending doom have been increasingly aired in recent years, often presenting the population problem as a ”bomb” that has been planted and is about to ”go off.” These catastrophic images have encouraged a tendency to search for emergency solutions which treat the people involved not as reasonable beings, allies facing a common problem, but as impulsive and uncontrolled sources of great social harm, in need of strong discipline.”[10] Numerous sources cite an increasing population as a cause of industrialization and due to industrializations impact on global climate change, there is a direct correlation between the two [11]. When it comes to the suggested advice that these developing countries, Nigeria included, be placed on birth control to control their ”’over-population’ problem” it became evident that the objective was to ”reduce the number of Nigerian babies from being born”. However, while some may argue that the proponents of birth control, etc. ”that such strong-arm tactics are no longer used”, the question remains why are the tactics of birth control used to address global warming in the context of population management. Over time, this process has acquired the more politically correct name of ”without replacement”. If the objective under the premise of solving global warming is to stabilize the world population at some level, then why does each country have its own specific ”without replacement” number? Why are the developed nations, the claimed centers of democratic achievement and technological advancement so unwilling to simply prevent their citizens from having kids to start with, thus stabilizing the global birth rate? Or are such policies considered violations of human rights? Furthermore let us consider the countries that are advocating these polices, these ”developed nations” claim they have family planning policies that are superior to that of ”developing nations”. Let us assume blindly that they do without regard to their heightened rate of teenage pregnancies, various sexual drug usages, divorce, rape and murder of spouse rates. Let us then assume that they are so benevolent in their approach that their advice is worth considering. Last time anyone checked on such matters as following ”developed nations” the world found itself in the current situation that it is in. In other words, these polices even if at best considered benevolent are considered, they are based on the expectation that countries like ourselves, Nigeria, will follow within one standard deviation of the Western model of industrialization from conception to its current woes.

If Nigeria, or any country follows along these lines of adopting the usage of birth control, without the potential medical side effects it may present in the long run, both known and unknown, we prepare ourselves to condemn the entire world to the same fate as that of the ”developed nations”. In other words, proponents of population control are not proponents of global climate change, nor any change that would steer developing countries from the same path as those of developed nations. Thus, should such legislation be produced that Nigeria adopt birth control policies that are regulation by any agency in an effort to meet our global climate change requirements we will admittedly reject such measures. Secondly, the notion that our citizens need to be educated about such measures because they do not understand ”family planning” lacks merit. A study done during Nigeria’s experimentation with the family planning methods of the West, debunked the popular claim that there was a correlation between education and the usage of contraceptives[3]. Lastly, our current global problem, climate change is the result of artificial manipulation of nature itself, and considering the grave repercussions climate change already has for the world at large, we cannot consider the grave repercussions that artificially altering and interfering with the intimate relationships of our citizens would have on our populous. Furthermore, modern research indicates that doing so has only led to human rights abuses, which countries like us wish to avoid [5].

About the Author: S. O. Abiola is a Class of 2012 student at Princeton University. This paper was originally submitted for a course entitled FRS136: Living in a Polluted Greenhouse taught by Prof. Mauzerall. It has since been edited for submission in this magazine in its current form.

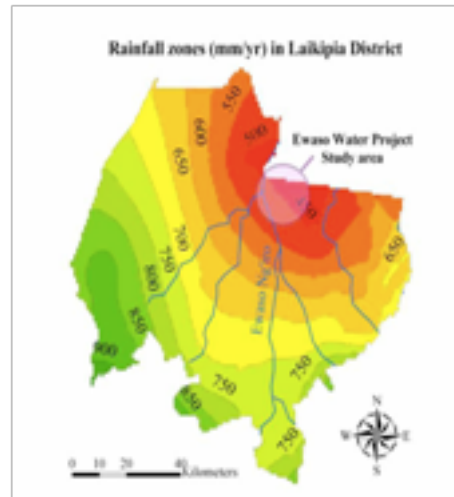
Water, Savannas, and Society: Sustaining People and Wildlife Through Better Science

By Daniel I. Rubenstein

More than two thirds of the 650 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live in rural areas and survive directly off the land. Continuing to do so becomes a challenge to communities as their populations grow and the cultural and economic fabric of social life tears. As a consequence of global climate change, some of the more water-starved regions of Africa are expected to experience significant decreases in rainfall and a significant increase in the variability of portions of the water cycle. Can these societies cope with these stresses, let alone develop? And if improving livelihoods is possible, can growth occur in ways that do not harm the environment? The 'Water, Savanna and Society' project, supported by PIIRS and PEI's Grand Challenges Program, brings together Princeton faculty and students from the Departments of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Civil and Environmental and Engineering and Politics to help answer these questions.

With a warm climate, abundant sunshine and fairly fertile soils, the resource that most strongly limits productivity of plants and animals on many African grasslands is water. Rainfall patterns not only determine vegetation dynamics, they also determine where the herds of pastoral livestock and wildlife can drink and range. In the Laikipia region of central Kenya where our 'Ewaso Water Project', as it is known to the locals, takes place, rainfall is extremely low, averaging less than 500 mm per year,

and is seasonally highly variable.



With increases in human and livestock density, rangelands have deteriorated. Understanding how and why this has happened requires unraveling the links and feedbacks between ecology and social activities.

Some interesting findings are emerging that will help predict future changes and assist in developing and implementing more sustainable rangeland practices.

Trenton Franz, a graduate student in Civil and Environmental Engineering, has focused on issues of climate and hydrology. He has shown that although overall rainfall levels have remained more or less constant over the last 85 years, the time between rainfall events has increased, which means that the intensity of each rain is heavier than in the past. As a result, less water penetrates into the soil. Increased run off not only removes essential water from the ecosystem it often takes soil and important nutrients with it.

Trenton has also shown that

once water penetrates the soil, how long it remains available to support the growth of vegetation depends on whether or not vegetation is present and if present, what type it is. When the ground is covered with vegetation, evapotranspiration can be reduced by up to 400%. Acacia tortillas with its deep tap-roots are best at preventing the loss of water, but Acacia melifera and grasses with their shallow roots are not bad either. Based on these differences in water holding potential and using spatially explicit maps of tree, grass and bare soil distributions, we will be able to forecast what broad scale patterns of vegetation could cover the region under a variety of different warming and grazing scenarios.

While water as a bottom-up factor will affect the abundance and balance of vegetation appearing in an area, feedbacks from top down forces will also come into play. Dr. Lizzie King, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology has noted that as grazing by livestock has intensified during the last two decades, native grasses have declined and have been replaced by a succulent, *Sansevieria*. Local pastoralists dislike this succulent because their their livestock can't eat it or the grasses that grow within inside *Sansevieria* patches. By examining what accelerates and controls the spread of *Sansevieria* and the way it affects water movements over the ground and the abundance of other vegetation species, Lizzie has shown that *Sansevieria* facilitates

rainfall infiltration into otherwise bare, hardened soils and it harbors populations of grasses and forbs that provide a bank of seeds for surrounding denuded areas. Sansevieria may turn out not to be the demon it is reputed to be.

Along with a team of undergraduate (Andrea Mirabal, Lisa Kelly, Brad Milligan and Chip Snyders) and graduate (Siva Sundarasan) students, I have been examining how differences in vegetation dynamics affect, and are affected by, wildlife and livestock activities. Most pastoralists in Laikipia live on collectively managed ‘Group Ranches’. Typically portions of each group ranch is set aside as a conservation area for wildlife during good times, but can serve as a grass bank for livestock during exceptionally long dry periods. We have shown that: 1) although water is equally available in ‘grazing areas’ and ‘conservation areas’, ephemeral water sources last longer and are of high quality in grazing areas. This surprising finding helps account for the observation that wildlife species such as the endangered Grevy’s zebra, make nightly forays into grazing areas when livestock and people are sleeping in their lion proof, thorn bush protected bomas and manyattas; 2) vegetation is more abundant in conservation as opposed to grazing areas, although only in grazing areas is vegetation likely to persist under trees where water retention is high and thorns can deter livestock grazing; and 3) grass production is highest in conservation areas, suggesting that the regenerative potential of vegetation in grazing areas is likely to be limited by long term human activity. Yet on a fine scale and during periods of sustained rainfall, humans appear to adjust

the behavior of their herds in ways that sustain grasslands. During light summer rains, livestock were allowed to consume all new growth of grasses, but as soon as the rains ceased, net primary production increased, suggesting that herders were dispersing their herds in ways that fostered the sustainable use of the landscape.

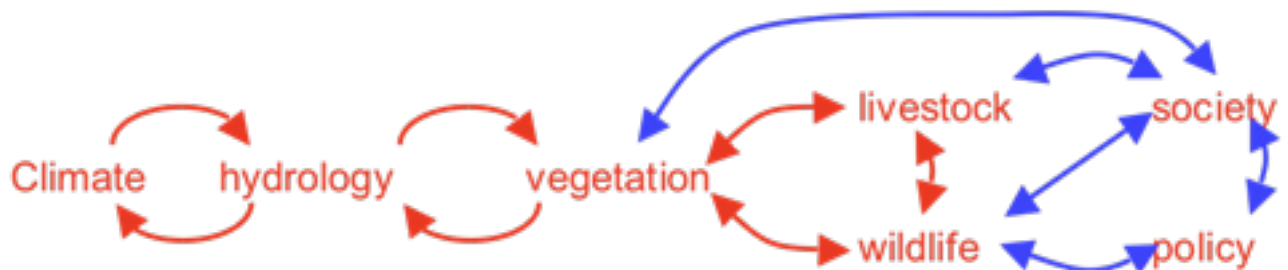
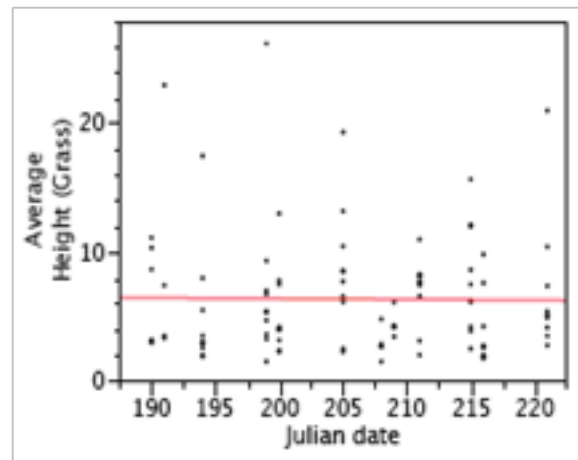
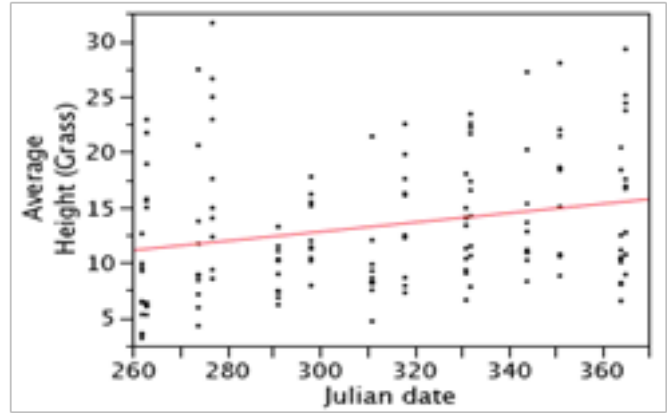
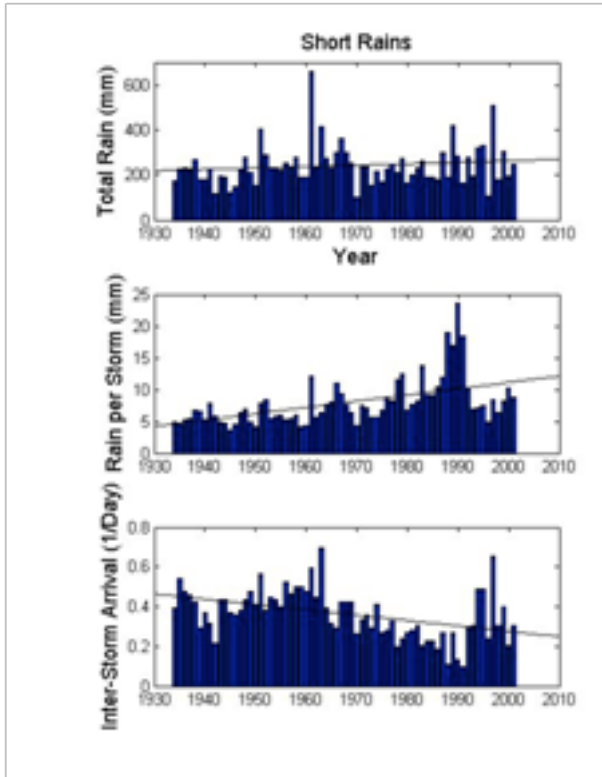


A detailed understanding of how people value their land and herds is emerging from a study on governance structures by Eva Kaye-Zweibel, a graduate student in the Politics Department. By questioning members of a number of pastoral communities about views on grazing impact, leadership and their future, Eva is finding preliminary that despite a wide range of positions, majorities in most communities believe that their lives and those of their children will improve in the future. Yet they don’t believe that their herds are large enough to sustain their families, nor do they believe that current grazing levels are harming the landscape.

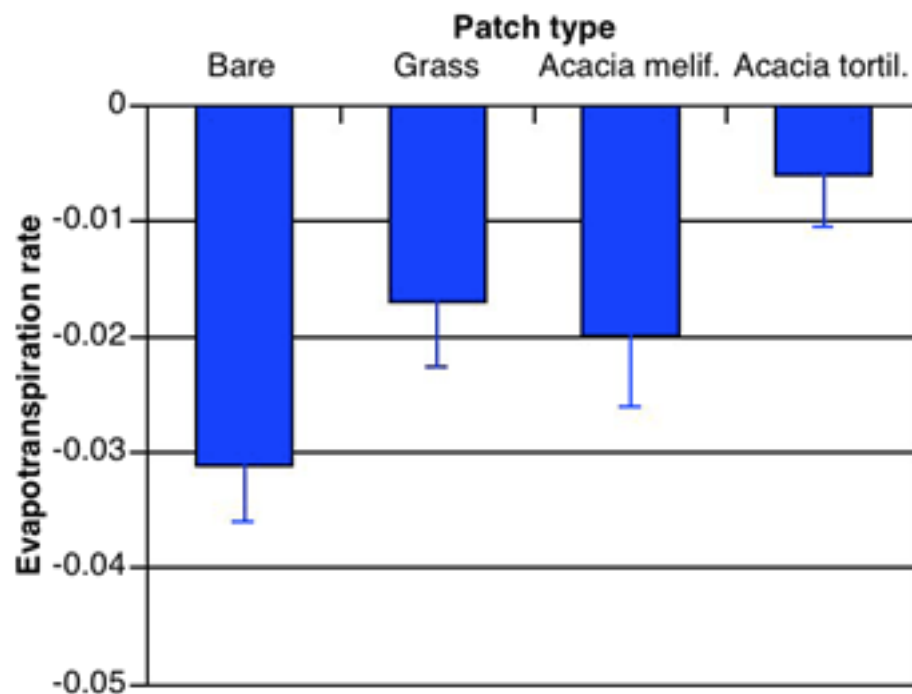
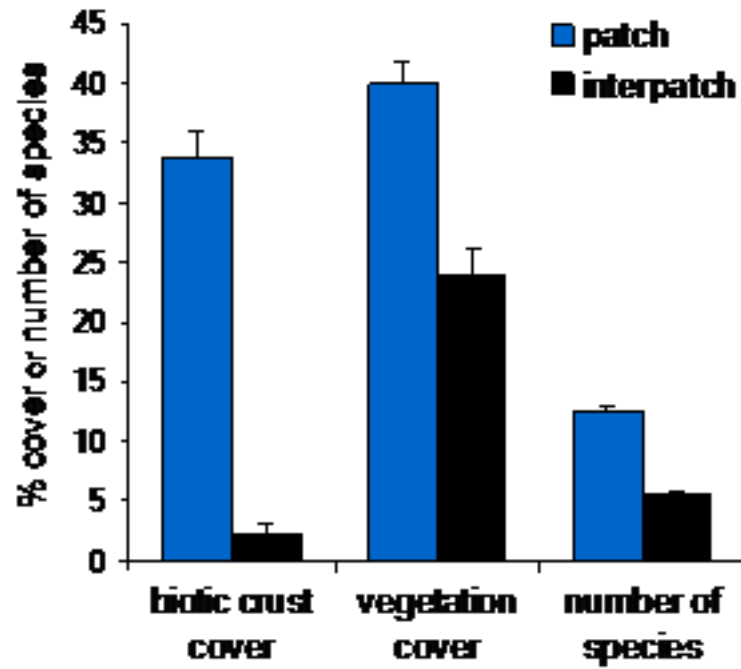
Our findings suggest that under ‘normal’ rainfall conditions this likely to be true. But in semi-arid landscapes where rainfall is highly variable and less rain is penetrat-

ing the soil, the detailed dynamics of this ecosystem that are emerging from our studies will hopefully help the Laikipia pastoralists avoid Garrett Hardin’s ‘Tragedy of the Commons’ and adopt more sustainable rangeland management practices that will improve livelihoods and conserve economically valuable wildlife.

Associated Graphs



Associated Graphs (cont'd)



Food for Thought: A Look at Triple Negative Breast Cancer

By Nana Ama Akuffo

A few weeks ago, I was watching *Black in America II*, the program presented on CNN in collaboration with *Essence Magazine*. Lying on the couch in the multi-purpose room of one of the dorms, I watched as news anchor Soledad O'Brien interviewed Dr. Lisa Newman, an African-American surgical oncologist who specializes in breast cancer. Dr. Newman shared with us her encounters with the disease, particularly her research on an aggressive form of cancer known as Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) that affects black women on a greater scale than white women. In fact, she gave rather striking statistics that showed that, of cancer patients, black women are more than twice as likely to get TNBC than white women. Considering population differences, this is a rather disconcerting finding.

As part of her long and arduous quest to find a cure—or at least a breakthrough—she journeyed to Africa to compare the DNA of Africans to that of their descendants in the United States to see if she could find out why this form of cancer is so common in black women. She chose Ghana, my home country, because Ghana's coasts were significant slave trading posts during the transatlantic slave trade.

While in Ghana, Dr. Newman worked at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital. I watched as she extracted a tissue sample from a woman on a hospital bed. The fascinating

amalgam of emotional expressions on the woman's face made the moment rather somber. She looked dejected, scared, defeated, and weary, and I wondered if she too was a victim of the egregious disease.



Dr. Lisa Newman is convinced there's a profound link between Ghanaian and African-American women with TNBC.

Immediately, my hand rushed to my bosom and I thought to myself that perhaps I should get a mammogram as soon as possible, so as not to end up in the same situation or worse. But a more distressing realization came when I grasped just how lucky I was to be only a thought away from a mammogram. I don't know how much progress breast cancer research has made in Ghana, but I still thought the woman was lucky to have this intelligent doctor examine her. However, there was something else that was disconcerting about the familiarity of the woman's face. Her

tired eyes, down-turned mouth, and dark chocolate complexion, slightly wrinkled with age, reminded me of my grandmother, who had to be flown from Ghana to England for a life-saving operation.

I wondered how many Ghanaian women—most of them not as privileged as my grandmother or me—were victims of the same fate; living, suffering and dying from such an aggressive form of cancer with no means of aid.

I imagined that there were many.

Too many.

...and I wondered...revisiting the image of the woman on the hospital bed...

...And wondered, until my heart started to ache.

CREATIVE PIECES

I Represent Oromia

Anonymous

*Where would I be without you?
What would I be without you?
Without you, I will not find...
The beautiful girls that got every-
one drooling
Without you, I will not find...
The brave soldier that stopped
Mussolini drilling
Oromia, Oromia, Oromia.*

*That's why I represent you
Every day of my life
Every second of my breath
Until the day of my death*



I represent Oromia, the red, green,
red, and Odaa tree in between

A country that is so beautiful, yet
unrecognized

The country so rich, yet its people
are starved to death

The country with brave warriors,
yet its people are burned in the hell
of colonization

The country with the first demo-
cratic system, yet its people are
ruled by a dictator

The country with so many talented
speakers,

Yet they are not allowed to speak
the truth

Oromia, the country with rich
minerals

The country with so many brave
generals

Oromia, the country with beautiful
weather

Beautiful greenery in the winter or
summer

The mother of the first mankind

Its people are one of a kind

I wish I can rewind 100 years back
to see,

My people happy, my country free

*I miss you everyday, until the day I
go back*

*Until then I gotta carry the pain on
my back*

*The pain that I cant see you when I
want to*

*The pain that I cant live in you like
I want to*

Oromia, Oromia, Oromia

*I won't forget you, please don't
forget me*

*I will come back, but I just don't
know when*

*It will be like heaven then, the day I
see you again*

The day my back drops its long

waited pain

I have tears in my eyes as I write
this poem

Its mixed with tears of joy and sad-
ness

I feel sad, because I have you yet I
can't live in you

I have family back home, yet half
of them are in jail

I have so many friends, yet half of
them are not even alive

What's got me in tears is

The fears of not seeing what I once
cherished

The fears of not finding my child-
hood friends

The fears are endless

*I will be back and I will see you
free*

*Until then I will carry the pain
In my stomach, in my chest, in my
brain*

*Oromia, Oromia, I will see you
again*



Halo

By Nana Ama Akuffo - Vassar '10

Lying on your bed, my head rests limply on your chest; it soars with every inhale, bounces with every word and vibrates with every laugh. One arm is draped lazily across your torso, whilst the other lies hidden underneath you. The fingers of one of your hands is making a journey as your fingertips lightly caress my shoulder, my forearms, stopping at my fingertips then return to make the journey again. You do this over and over, leaving a comforting and warm trail along my lazy arm. Your other hand is playing with my hair, abstractedly pulling on one chemically straightened strand at a time.

You're recounting something funny that happened at football practice today, detailing how you skillfully tackled the ball away from the other guy—leaving him face forward in the grass and dirt of the field—and scored the winning goal. The pride in your achievement shines through your voice, as you and this other player have been involved in a rivalry for star player on the team—among other things—since you met. Not to mention you used to be roommates.

But for the first time I'm finding it hard to listen you. Exhausted from a four - hour chemistry lab, I am more concerned about your role as a pillow than your talent on the football field. The scent radiating from your freshly showered body is a welcome substitute to the aseptic aroma of "science."

The contentment in your voice eclipses the somber monotone of

my lab partner requesting that I pass the beaker of acetaldehyde.

But it's not his voice I'm hearing right now—it's yours. And I'm not in the lab anymore; I'm in your room lying on you, on your bed.

The lazy hand now moves to push onto your chest temporarily as I lift my body up--so that I can be closer to your voice--then falls back into place across your torso. I rest my chin on your shoulder and sigh gratefully. You turn your head to place a soft kiss on my forehead before asking "What's up?"

"Nothing. Reminiscing about chem lab today."

You laugh knowingly and my head convulses along with your shoulder. The feeling excites amusement in me and I begin laughing along, but not before adding "Ah! Chem just dey bore*."

I am not aware when your laughter ends, but shortly thereafter, you press your mouth onto mine, bringing the entertainment to an end and replacing it with a subtly erogenous one. And as I enjoy the kiss, all I can think is that we've been here before...

I remember in secondary school, only a few moments after the last bell of the last class, us making our way to an empty and well secluded classroom; making ourselves invisible in the corner to allow us the privacy to share sweet, tender kisses like now. And we would

carry on our amorous activity until interrupted, usually in the form of a call from my younger sister, yelling at me from the other line that the driver is in the car park and it's time to go home...

**Everywhere I'm looking now
I'm surrounded by your embrace
Baby I can see your halo
You know you're my saving
grace**

An affair that ended along with high school, only to be rekindled in university...

**You're everything I need and
more
It's written all over your face
Baby I can feel your halo
Pray it won't fade away**

It took me a while to realize that the music was coming from my cellphone. But I let it ring in my jeans pocket, much too involved in the equally insidious embrace of here and now to answer. On this lazy Friday afternoon, I don't want anything to interrupt lying here with you like this.

Knock knock knock

But as fate would have it, a knock on the door does, bringing the moment to an abrupt end.

Knock knock knock

The knock is more impatient this time. We both look and watch as the door knob turns but the door remains shut, locked and unyielding.

"Hold up!" You yell as we both begin to get up off the bed. I'm

hoping it's not one of your little friends—or even worse, my little friends—wondering where I have been since class ended. The discovery of the truth would condemn me to a subject of gossip. So you usher me to get behind the door and out of sight, just like those invisible corners. You move to unlock the door, but pause to brush your hand down your face—a sign of exasperation—before opening it but only slightly so that you can poke your head out as your body blocks the view of inside. From behind, I can see neither your face nor the interloper but I hear your voices.

You greet, simply, “Yo”
“Hey man, did I wake you?”
“Not exactly...” you reply with a significant pause, “What’s up?”
“Oh I just wanted to return your book.”
I stiffen as I recognize the unwelcome voice from the intruder; I’m tempted to move closer so I can see his face but a clicking sound stops me—and also the fact that I am trying to be inconspicuous here.

“What are you doing?” the question comes out in your voice.
“Tryna call my girl...”
I can almost picture you rolling your eyes whenever he brings up that he has a girlfriend while you supposedly don’t:

“So you can cry to her about how I destroyed you in today’s game?” Your tone is taunting. I hear him suck his teeth loudly before declaring, “Fuck you, man”

You respond to the insult with a laugh and he laughs along good-naturedly. I simultaneously suppress the urge to giggle.

“Anyways,” I hear you speak

again, “you need to monitor that chick. She’s probably just in her room. Go find her there.”

“Whatever. I just came from there and I remembered you lived in the building too so I just came and dropped this off.” I hear him pause to sigh before he starts up again, “Later man. Go back to sleep...or whatever it was that you were really doing...”

And there’s a pause which I know you use for some non-verbal exchange. I’m almost certain it’s that notorious countenance—sometimes in the form of a head nod—I see many guys give each other to congratulate them on a deed that usually involves a female and is relatively devious. From my place behind the door, I rolled my eyes at the machismo and use the opportunity to retrieve my cell phone from my pocket. When I read the information about the ‘missed call,’ I bite my lip.

“Later” you reply at last, wasting no time in closing the door and lingering for a minute before you turn, to find me standing with a leg out, both hands on my hips and glaring—playfully, really—at you.

“Who –” before I can finish, my cell phone blasts again, but I ignore it. “Who are you calling that chick?”

Without answering my question you reach closer to grab my cell from me to look at the number, and shake your head when you realize who it is.

“Maybe you should keep your phone on vibrate,” you say and signal at the door. “If I had let him call you, we woulda had ourselves an R. Kelly situation.”

The comment is funny, but the truth of it forces me to suppress a smile.

**I can feel your halo halo halo
I can see your halo halo halo**

The phone continues to sing like the endless cry of a petulant child, but we still ignore it. Something tells me this would be a good time to leave before someone else comes looking for me.

“I need to go,” I say out loud and grab it from you as I make my way to your bed to pick up my book bag and any evidence of my visit before moving to stand at the door next to you “He’s probably in my room by now.”

In a chivalrous move you open the door so that I can pass through. But right before I leave, we exchange a few more kisses and you make me promise to come see you tomorrow and also to keep my phone on vibrate so as to freely carry on whatever activities we get involved in. I smirk as I say that I will and follow with a long, deep kiss.

I don’t leave immediately after the door closes. Instead, I lean back on it with both feelings of satisfaction and relief...

**I can feel your halo halo halo
I can see your halo halo halo oo
ooh**

...and I finally flip the cellphone open:

“Hey Baby...”

* ”Chemistry is annoying”

Disclaimer: “Halo” Lyrics by Beyonce Knowles

Flood of Crimson

By Tyrell Hall '12

Two little brown eyes,
On a little brown face,
Stare into darkness,
Where a demon awaits.

A devil's disciple,
His rifle glints in the moonlight
And spots another victim
In his line of sight



Saltwater streams flow from the dark circles
The brown face knows that this man is hurtful
He's another vicious militia that's in the village
Any innocent creature he sees, he will kill it

The little face hid in a hut made of straw
But the gun huffed and puffed and blew down the walls

The little brown eyes on the little brown face
Didn't see the murderer who had sealed their fate
Didn't see the attacker, too blurred was their vision,
Blinded by a flood from the forehead above,
of crimson.

Scars

By Abiodun Azeez '12

Her older sister shook her head crossly, and her older brother chuckled cautiously behind the kitchen counter. She didn't know which was worse—her mother's gaze, or her father's contained agitation. She didn't want to take in her parents' wrath or disappointment at this moment. She was determined to plead and cry until her parents agreed to what she had asked: No Africans at her party.

It wasn't that Bolade didn't enjoy the company of her people. In fact, she loved African parties. It gave her and her family the opportunity to see dozens of people, both family and friends, that they hadn't seen in months, sometimes years: Aunt Femi and Uncle Dayo who babysat her when she was only a few months old, Papa New York who gave her and her siblings a generous amount of money each time he saw them, Pastor Adegoke who had founded the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Mama Chioka who made the most splendid meat pies in Nigeria, numerous "cousins" with whom she played tag late into the night, and countless others. She would dance along to the music of Sunny Ade and Evangelist Bola Are with aunts and uncles, her siblings and cousins—and her father, more relaxed than usual, would manage to coax her mother, who always resisted dancing, onto the center of the floor. But most of all, like many Africans, she enjoyed the sustenance: gallons of Malta, Fanta, egusi soup, fried rice, plantain and moi moi. The memories revealed the betrayal

behind the demand she now made. She would not only be sacrificing one of her most cherished occasions, but her family's happiness.

But she couldn't invite Africans to the party because she would be inviting her American peers. The tastes of the two groups were much too different to reconcile. What food would she serve? No doubt, the sight of goat meat and the sting of peppe soup on their tongue would shock the senses of her classmates.

But she couldn't invite Africans to the party because she would be inviting her American peers. The tastes of the two groups were much too different to reconcile.

Yet, Africans wouldn't consider it a real party if the serving tables were covered with chips and lemonade and potato salad; there had to be jollof rice, meat, eba, and scotch eggs at least. What about music? If she put on Gaou, her confused peers would sit along the walls nervously laughing at the disorderly movements of African dance. If she put on Miley Cyrus' See You Again, squealing American girls would swarm the dance floor while the Africans would roll their eyes and immediately demand music that they could dance to. She could envision the clash of their expectations and sense the resulting em-

barrassment. She wouldn't be able to survive the pain of her classmates' disappointment or anger following such a party. Two years in America had taught her better.

She wished her family would nonchalantly agree to her wishes for her first party in America. She wished that at least one of them would stand up on her behalf, to say that her stubborn behavior was all right and that she was not a brat. But her sister, who had grown bored with the episode, retreated to her room. Her brother had stepped into the dining room to take a phone call.

It was Bolade's mother who finally conceded: "My dear, if that's what you want..." Apparently, her father had ceased to listen. She could only see the back of his head, outlined by the glaring light of the television screen on which BBC was broadcasting the frail and bloody bodies of Sudanese men returned from combat.

Bolade had been standing in front of her full-length mirror for the past seven minutes. She wore her party dress—hot pink, knee-length, peppered with sequins at the top, and poufy at the hem. She'd bought it eagerly at the mall when she'd realized that it resembled a dress that Kiki Palmer had worn at an award show. Now she regretted her choice. The dress left exposed discolorations on her legs caused by mosquito bites and old cuts, and the poufy hem made her look eight instead of twelve.

Though she had gotten her hair washed and set the night before, portions of it looked frizzy and awkward. Her shoes appeared clunky compared to her scrawny lower legs. The bracelets and earrings that her mother had lent her for the occasion now seemed cheap and gaudy. What would Chris Harris think? She scoffed. Who was she kidding? He probably wouldn't show.

As she examined herself in the mirror, she thought back to her first day of school in America. Her classmates had stared at her face nervously, and even the teacher had regarded her pitifully. She remembered that it was the same day she accidentally stepped on the new Nike's of Richie Hughes, who'd gotten so mad that he blurted a string of unfriendly words at her: "You...hideous face...ugly little girl!"

It didn't help that in the mirror she could see her friend, Manuela, sitting on her bed glued to the television set. Manuela had come to Bolade's house early to help with set-up, and as she laughed watching MTV's My Super Sweet Sixteen, she looked more beautiful than usual. Manuela, who always dressed a little above her age, wore a powder blue dress that showed off her developing hips, slightly muscular legs, and the flatness of her tummy. She had shiny chestnut brown hair, full lips blanketed by lip gloss, a radiant smile, stunning eyes, and unblemished skin. Perfect skin. Her make-up had been done by one of her four sisters, and though Bolade's mom had scornfully commented (not to Manuela, of course) that it made her look seventeen instead of eleven, Bolade had wished that she was able

to wear make-up. It might have helped her a lot.

"I look terrible in this dress," Bolade sighed.

"Girl, are you kidding?" Manuela asked in surprise. "You look gorgeous! You look better than Kiki Palmer in that dress."

Though Bolade didn't believe it, she smiled weakly and patted the bottom of her dress to tame the hem. This was as ready as she would be for the party.

"Omo da da, you look beautiful in that dress sha," her mother crowed as she and Manuela descended the stairs. "Ahbi, let me look at you." Bolade frowned at the sight of her mother's white t-shirt and loosely tied, neon orange and green iro. She wasn't yet dressed for the party and Bolade cringed at the thought of her guests who'd be here any second, seeing her mother like this. At least her father was at work. Most people judged his solid countenance as sternness, and she didn't want him to make her guests feel uncomfortable.



Bolade's anxiety abated as she scanned the living room, her wonderful party space. She (well, her mother) had spent quite a bit of money on the decorations, music,

food—all chosen carefully by Bolade herself—and party gifts. Her guests trickled in one by one, then in groups—each nicely dressed with a wrapped present in tow. Angela, Bobby, Tamara, Kristin—people she had never expected to see were arriving. Then, God, in His graciousness and as a special birthday present to her, answered the prayer she had made twice a day for the past week: Chris Harris showed up. He told her that she looked "really nice" and gave her a neatly wrapped box that fit into the palm of her hand. She imagined a wedding ring inside, but instantly shooed away the ridiculous thought.

Bolade expected that after all the guests arrived, the party would begin. Yet, her guests appeared apprehensive, eyeing the room cautiously and jumping back a bit each time her mother offered them snacks. They didn't dance to See You Again, Single Ladies, or any song that played. They barely ate. They stood off to the side in groups whispering amongst themselves. It was as if they were prisoners planning an insurrection rather than seventh graders at a birthday party. Bolade's sister, Ebe, tried to jumpstart the party by encouraging the groups to dance, but realized their resistance was unrelenting and gave up. Bolade didn't know what was wrong, and she didn't know what to do. Should she approach them and ask? No, they would think she was trying too hard. The only advice that might be helpful could come from Manuela—but where had she gone?

In search of Manuela (and to distract herself from her party), Bolade scanned the rooms upstairs,

and then the kitchen before she saw a strip of light emanating from the backyard door left ajar. Placing her right ear near the gap, she heard muffled voices. She opened it a bit more and leaned in.

"...you look really sexy in that dress," Chris Harris's voice said.

"Yeah, thanks." Manuela said, probably flipping her hair back seductively. "But I'm not interested. Well, not that...but I would never be able to go out with you anyway."

"Why not? I would love to go out with you." Bolade stopped breathing.

"I don't want to say too much, but I might have a friend who's interested in you and I never betray my friends."

"Who?" he prodded.

"I can't tell you," she said softly.

"Lemme guess: Maria?...Sandy with the huge boobs?"

They laughed and he continued: "...Janet?...Allegra?...Yolanda?...Cassandra?...Bolade?" He stopped. Why did he stop?

"So, it's Bolade!" he said.

"I didn't say that!" Manuela responded defensively.

"You didn't have to say it. I saw it in your eyes." He scoffed. "She's the last person on earth I would date..." Bolade's heart tremored. "...I mean her body isn't half bad, but her face....the scars on them. My father says they're African tribal marks. I have my own theory: You know, most Africans are cannibals...and probably as she tried to eat one of her victims, with the last of his energy he clawed at her face. It's really creepy to think about...I didn't even want to come to this party. My mom forced me to come because the teacher personally called, and we felt kind of

trapped...I bet no one wanted to come..."

"You didn't have to say it. I saw it in your eyes." He scoffed. "She's the last person on earth I would date..." Bolade's heart tremored. "...I mean her body isn't half bad, but her face....the scars on them.

The party neared its end. Bolade had missed most of it, and in spite of the calls of her mother and sister, remained tucked away in a corner of her closet. She only came out after Ebe discovered her. Ebe asked no questions. She told Bolade that it was time to cut the cake. Downstairs, her guests were gathered around the cake—an impressive hot pink and white, sprinkled heart with twelve lit candles spread around its border and one at its center. She noticed that hardly any of the food had been eaten. The music had stopped, and the room was strangely dark. Next to Manuela stood Chris Harris, whose expression Bolade couldn't make out through her blurred vision. As Bolade settled into the gathering, Manuela placed an arm around her shoulder.

"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear Bolade..."

As she stared at the flames of the candles, the stinging on her facial marks intensified.

"Now blow out the candles and make a wish," someone said, just as the flash of a camera blinded her.

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- [3] FA, T. (1978). A study of the role of the yoruba husband in family planning: Implications for family planning education [Abstract]. 117. Retrieved from <http://db.jhuccp.org/ics-wpd/popweb/basic.html> This study attempted to determine the role of the Yoruban husband in decision making for family planning as well as the factors which influence this decision for or against family planning. Some factors considered were: the role of the Yoruban husband in other family matters, the type of communication between spouses, the decision making process between spouses, the desired number of children, the effect of educational status of respondents on family planning, and the KAP of the couple in family planning. Results showed that 52 of 100 husbands made the ultimate decision when to or not to have a baby in particular while 29 husbands responded that together with their wives, they decide on family matters and when to have the next baby. The desire for more children decreased as the number of children increased in each family. Men with 4 or more children desired a lower number than those with 3 or less. 97% of the men interviewed had heard about family planning. 75% had knowledge of at least 1 family planning method, while only 50% claimed to be practicing family planning. Of the 184 respondents who claimed to have heard about family planning, 5.27% were male and 47.3% were female. 74 of 184 respondents who claimed to have heard about family planning practiced it. 27 of 74 family planning users were male and 47 were female. About 67% of the males who claimed to have heard of family planning got their information mainly from the mass media (journals, books, television, and radio) while 68% of all females who claimed to have heard about family planning got their information mainly from professionals (nurses, doctors, hospitals, and clinics). Results showed no difference between the level of education and the practice of family planning among the 97 males who claimed to have heard about family planning. Results for health education information and services indicated the need to improve the methods and techniques for dissemination of information on family planning, the need for establishing pragmatic training programs for health workers in family planning, and in overall reorientation of family planning programs involving the Yoruban male who is the decision maker of the Yoruban family. (author’s modified)
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