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Ethiopian immigrants to Israel: The persistence and transformation of African values and practices in art and life

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We present a qualitative interdisciplinary study of seven Ethiopian potters who immigrated to Israel as adults. Data sources include cultural products (their clay sculptures), interviews, and archival photos at the time of immigration. Together these data sources show how these women carried African values (procreation, family closeness, sharing, and respect for elders) and memories of subsistence activities to Israel. They also show how the women expressed these values and practices in their sculptures. Additionally, findings reveal the contrasting, often conflicting, cultural values and practices that the women met in the broader Israeli society. Furthermore, we document spontaneous stylistic changes in the pottery in adaptation to the new environment. In Ethiopia, potters learned to work in clay by observing their mothers in an apprenticeship process. A new project will give Ethiopian immigrant potters an opportunity to use apprenticeship methods to transmit their techniques to a new generation of Israelis.

Keywords: African culture, apprenticeship, clay sculpture, cultural values, Ethiopia, Israel, social change

Introduction

Our qualitative interdisciplinary study of seven Ethiopian potters who immigrated to Israel as adults reveals both cultural continuity and change. Analysis of cultural products (their clay sculptures), interviews in Israel, in addition to archival photos at the time of immigration, reveals how these women carried traditional African values (procreation, family closeness, sharing, and respect for elders) and memories of subsistence activities to Israel. However, the interviews and, to a lesser extent, the clay sculptures also reveal intergenerational shifts and an awareness of contrasting cultural values in Israel.

Many of these traditional African values are instantiated in Nsamenang's developmental theory of sociogenesis in Africa (Nsamenang, 1992; Nsamenang & Akum, 2013). Sociogenesis, in Nsamenang and Akum's view, consists of a sequence of socially expected behaviours. Chief among them is procreation and parenthood: A person is not considered a person if he or she is unable to have children (Nsamanang, 1992). The value of family closeness is instantiated in the practice of taking children everywhere, for example, to the farm, funeral, and religious ceremonies. Another facet of family closeness is the almost constant physical contact of baby with mother or other family caregivers. This is typical of infant care in rural African villages (Bakeman, Adamson, Konner, & Barr, 1990; Keller, 2007; Keller, Abels, Lamm, Yovsi, Voelker, & Lakhani, 2005; Richman, Miller, & LeVine, 1992; Yovsi, Kärtner, Keller, & Lohaus, 2009). Furthermore, full personhood requires marriage (Nsamenang, 1992). Sharing is another important value; even babies are primed to share, a quality that is extensively trained up until adulthood and binds the social system together (Nsamenang, 1992; Rabain, 1979). Socialisation emphasises the authority of elders (Nsamenang, 1992). All of these values and practices embody social interdependence.

"Training is pragmatic, apprentice-like in nature, and systematically 'graduates' children from one role position to another, until the assumption of adult roles" (Nsamenang, 1992, p. 148). Children carry out subsistence tasks, including obtaining supplies of water and firewood. Different tasks are assigned to boys and girls; this differentiation is an indication of complementary (vs. egalitarian) gender roles. An important aspect is that this informal education takes place in the family environment. These social responsibilities have important developmental meaning in the socialisation process: "Child work is an indigenous mechanism for social integration and the core process by which children learn roles and skills" (Nsamenang, 1992, p.156). Nsamenang (1992) further states: "Children are expected to observe roles or the performance of tasks" (p. 150). Thus, observing and imitating adults are major mechanisms for informal education. These values and socialisation practices are adaptive in rural, low-tech, subsistence-based agricultural environments (Kağitçibaşi, 1982; Greenfield, 2009). Indeed, the seven potters immigrated to Israel from subsistence-based ecologies in Ethiopia; most came from isolated rural villages where the learning environment focused on subsistence skills like making pots for cooking.

Goals of this study

An important goal of this article is to demonstrate that these subsistence practices, cultural values, and learning environments are depicted in the women's art. Hence, this article is part of the tradition in cultural psychology of using cultural products to identify and analyse cultural values (Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008; Uhls & Greenfield, 2011). A closely related goal is to show a concordance between the artistic products, in which values are implicit, and responses to a set of standardised dilemmas, in which

values are expressed more explicitly. We will show, both through the visual art and through verbal responses to the dilemmas, that African values persist in Israel for these Ethiopian women.

However, there is an equally important thrust to our analysis: In coming to Israel, the women immigrated from poor, low-tech, subsistence-based villages with informal education at home into a diametrically opposed societal surround, one that is wealthy, commerce-based, urban, diverse, and technologically sophisticated, an ecology in which education takes place at school. Tönnies' (1887, 1957) term *Gemeinschaft* (community) summarises the first type of ecology; his term *Gesellschaft* (society) summarises the second type of ecology. That is to say, the seven potters emigrated from a Gemeinschaft environment in Ethiopia into a Gesellschaft environment in Israel. A different set of values and practices was adaptive in such an environment. Thus, another major goal of the present research is to highlight the contrasting, often conflicting, cultural values and practices that the women met in the broader Israeli society.

Values adapted to a Gesellschaft ecology are very different from those adapted to a Gemeinschaft ecology (Greenfield, 2009). They include gender equality (vs. complementarity), romantic relations (with de-emphasis of marriage), and a strong focus on personal independence (vs. familial interdependence) (Manago, Greenfield, Kim, & Ward, 2014). These values are fostered by a learning environment in which formal education is very important. As a consequence, our research has another key goal, to show the participants' awareness of contrasting values in the society to which they immigrated and the resulting intergenerational shifts in the Gesellschaft direction that they have experienced with their children.

Nature of creativity in the two ecologies

In a Gemeinschaft ecology, creativity is often expressed in utilitarian items, and designs are traditional. In the domain of textiles, for example, woven and embroidered designs created for clothing are intended to identify the wearer as a member of the community, so clothing textiles are similar in design from person to person. As community ecology moves in the Gesellschaft direction, designs become more elaborated and individuated. This transformational process of textile design took place in a Maya community in Chiapas Mexico, as the community moved from a primarily subsistence ecology to an economy based on commerce and money (Greenfield, 2004). Our comparison of the current production of the Ethiopian Israeli potters with clay sculptures depicted in archival photographs from Ethiopia will illustrate this same principle.

Method

The participants in context

The seven participants, born and raised in Ethiopia, are all grandmothers in their sixties, seventies, and eighties. Their histories, art, and values are part of a larger three-generation study that will demonstrate an intergenerational transformation of values from Gemeinschaft-adapted to Gesellschaft-adapted as the ecology shifted in each generation: from grandmother to daughter to granddaughter. Our seven participants have born witness to these intergenerational changes.

The seven women are part of a large population of Ethiopian Jewish citizens, also called Beta Israel in Hebrew, House of Israel. Their community developed and lived for centuries in the area of the Kingdom of Aksumand, the Ethiopian Empire, which is currently divided between the Amhara and Tigray regions. These regions are in northern and north-western Ethiopia, in more than 500 small Jewish villages spread over a wide territory, alongside populations that were Muslim and predominantly Christian. Most Ethiopian Jews were concentrated in the area around and to the north of Lake Tana in the Gondar region and spoke Amharic (Kaplan & Salamon, 2004; Quirin, 1992; Salamon, 2003). The remaining members of Beta Israel were Tigre; they lived in the Tigray region and spoke Tigrinya.

Ethiopian Jews consider themselves descendants of the Dan tribe of ancient Israel. "Many longed to move to Israel for religious reasons; others [emigrated] because of poor living conditions and oppression in their home country" (Resnick, in Greenfield, 2016, p. 1). Unfortunately, they experienced race prejudice upon their arrival in Israel, which caused severe disillusionment (Interview with the head of an Ethiopian community organisation, July, 2014). By the end of 2017, there were 148 700 people of Ethiopian descent in Israel; including 87 000 people born in Ethiopia and about 61 700 native-born Israelis (about 41% of the community) (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

One could consider these women and the Ethiopian community in Israel as part of the African diaspora (see for example Tchombe & Mbangwana, 2013). However, that was not their intention when they emigrated. Instead, they saw themselves as making *aliyah*, meaning "going up" in Hebrew, and the word for return to Israel, considered as the homeland. Indeed, the longing to go to Israel had been present for generations, even before the establishment of the State of Israel.

Six of the seven participants create pottery several times a week in the Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop in Be'er Sheva, Israel, where all the participants live. The seventh practiced pottery in Ethiopia before immigrating to Israel. As participants in the research, the artists were promised anonymity; and we preserve this anonymity in reporting the research interviews. However, it would not be ethical to present their artistic products anonymously. Different ethics apply in psychological science and art. In addition all of the photographs of the clay sculptures in this article, identified with the names of their makers, have already been published as part of a brochure/catalog (Greenfield, 2016) when the works were shown in exhibitions in Los Angeles. Hence this is public information. The photographs of clay sculptures in this article contain the same identifying information as in Greenfield (2016). While quotes from the anonymous interviews represent all seven participants, only three have sculptures pictured in this article. Hence, it is impossible to associate a specific participant with a specific quote.

Four of the participants (Nos. 14, 18, 25, and 31) came to Israel in the 1980s via Sudan. We know that at least

two of the four came with Operation Moses, which took place in 1984 and 1985. Operation Moses involved the air transport of about 8 000 Ethiopian Jews from Sudan, where they had survived an arduous journey by foot and were living in refugee camps. More than 4 000 had died along the way (BenEzer, 1995). One of the potters lost her sisters and her oldest son in Sudan. The remaining three potters (Nos. 12, 16, and 23) came to Israel with Operation Solomon in 1991. In Operation Solomon, 14 325 Ethiopian Jews from the Gondar region were airlifted to Israel from Addis Ababa after undertaking a dangerous journey of hundreds of miles by car, horse, and foot (Ayalen, 1992).

Six of the seven participants are Amharic speaking, the official language of Ethiopia. One speaks Tigrinya, a language spoken in Tigre, at the northern tip of Ethiopia, and in Eritrea. All of the artists dress in long Ethiopian-style dresses, confirming the continuity of their African cultural identity in the Israeli surround.

All interviewees live in peripheral, low-economic neighbourhoods in Be'er Sheva with a high percentage of Ethiopian immigrants. Some live in apartment buildings that used to be "reception centres" when they arrived in Israel. Some describe some familiarity with non-Ethiopian Israelis. However, connections are usually institutional – with welfare, medical, and educational agencies – or through their children, some of whom have become well-versed in Israeli culture. Others feel isolated from the broader Israeli community: No 18 said "*Me, with me, there are no Israelis, Ethiopians alone, alone in* [their houses] *... I have two whites (in my building) I have a neighbour (do you know them?) They are not at home,* [they are] *working.*"

All of the participants were informally educated at home in Ethiopia; their education revolved around subsistence tasks like preparing food and making pots; none had the opportunity to go to school. Most of the participants (No.12, 16, 18, 25, and 31) made functional pots in Ethiopia, but not statues. Only one participant (No. 23) had an art teacher who taught her how to make the kind of figurines she is now making in Israel. One participant (No. 14) did not work with clay in Ethiopia.

Data sources

Selection of the sculptures

In the summer of 2016, Michael Hittleman and Patricia Greenfield selected pieces from the Ethiopian Clay Workshop for two shows in Los Angeles. Because this was our corpus for the analysis of the sculptures, the principles behind the selection are important; they indicate the cultural and psychological inferences that can be drawn. The first principle was aesthetic: to select the most beautiful and well-made sculptures. The second principle was to select a variety of content, not to repeat themes. In fact, there was, and continues to be, a tremendous repetition of key themes. Because of this principle, the selection can be considered quite comprehensive thematic ally. However, because many of the artists overlapped in depicting major themes, it would not be meaningful to try to associate value themes with artists. Instead, it is more meaningful to consider the themes as a group production.

Interview data

In order to create a brochure for the exhibition (Greenfield, 2016), Patricia Greenfield briefly interviewed each artist about their life history and experience in the workshop; Michael Weinstock translated her questions into Hebrew and the Hebrew answers into English. Oshrat Rotem later interviewed the cohort of artists as participants in her three-generation study of social change and cultural values in the Ethiopian Israeli communities. It was partly a semi-structured life history interview; and partly a structured interview consisting of 14 dilemmas. In each dilemma, the participant had to choose between two perspectives, a Gemeinschaft-adapted perspective and a Gesellschaft-adapted perspective. Thereafter, she was asked the reason for her choice. Both the life history data and two of the 14 dilemmas are used here; these dilemmas were selected because of their relevance to the art. They are presented along with the responses they elicited.

Only two of the participants, No.14 and 18, were able to be interviewed by Oshrat Rotem in Hebrew, confirming the linguistic isolation of the group as a whole. The others were interviewed by a translator in Amharic. As with the clay sculptures, we consider the interviews as a group.

Archival photographs

Our final data source is Michael Weinstock's research at the Oster Visual Documentation Center of The Museum of the Jewish people at Beit Hatfutsot in Tel Aviv, where he obtained archival photos of Beta Israel in Ethiopia in the 1980s (Weinstock, 2016). These photos reveal the village environments and practice of pottery before immigration to Israel. One photo (Figure 10) also shows the change in technology and education in Israel at the time of Operation Moses in the 1980s, the first mass immigration of Ethiopian Jews.

Connecting data sources to study goals

The archival photos reveal the ecology from which the potters emigrated, the subsistence activities in which women engaged, and the changed learning environment in Israel. The sculptures are an implicit expression of values that were adaptive in this ecology; the interviews make these values explicit. As an art form, the sculptures reflect both traditional themes and the changing nature of creativity when one transitions from subsistence ecology to greater material resources. The interviews also provide information about the potters' learning environments as children in Ethiopia and how these learning environments were adapted to the subsistence ecology. Finally, the interviews reveal the potters' experience of cultural loss and cultural gain in a radically changed environment.

Results

Subsistence practices at the time of emigration

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show women's subsistence practices in the Jewish community of Wallaka in Gondar in the 1980s. This is about the time of Project Moses which brought most of our artists to Israel as young to middle-age adults, well past the developmental period in which cultural values are established (Minoura, 1992).

Figure 1. Beta Israel woman winnowing grain, Wallaka, Ethiopia, 1984. Photo: Doron Bacher. The Museum of the Jewish people at Beit Hatfutsot, The Oster Visual Documentation Center.

Figure 2. Jewish woman making pottery in a village, 20 km from Gondar (Lake Tana), on the road to Dabat. Ethiopia, April 1983. Photo: Sandro Carabelli, Italy. The Museum of the Jewish people at Beit Hatfutsot, The Oster Visual Documentation Center, courtesy of S. Carabelli.

Specifically, Figure 2 shows an Ethiopian Jewish woman shaping a pot in 1983 in a village near Gondar. Six of the seven participants worked in clay in Ethiopia. In their villages, they made functional items used for subsistence, such as bowls. In line with African values, subsistence activities were gendered: one artist told us that only women worked in clay.

One of the artists (No. 23) turned from practical items to making figurines for sale when her husband left her and she needed money. She learned this skill from a private art teacher from the capital. One sees here a connection between commercialisation and creating an item that is not functional for the community, but is for sale to outsiders. Greenfield (2004) found this same connection with weaving in a Maya community in transition to a commercial economy. From Figure 3, it is clear that the clay artist in our study was not alone in creating figurines to sell in the market in Wallaka.

Figure 3. Beta Israel members selling clay artefacts in the local market, Wallaka, Gondar Region, Ethiopia, 1984. Photo: Doron Bacher. The Museum of the Jewish people at Beit Hatfutsot, The Oster Visual Documentation Center.

Continuity and change in clay sculpture

However, the tradition of making clay figurines was not a new one, as can be seen from a collection of clay figurines (see Figure 4) from the 1960s, two decades earlier. What is perhaps most interesting is that the themes depicted here are also present in the current work of the Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop: pounding wheat (Figure 12), couple embracing (Figure 14), babies in both arms (Figure 5), and even a pregnant woman with a necklace and a high neck decoration (Figure 6). Hence, the artists are not only depicting life as they remember it in Ethiopia; they are also continuing artistic depictions that originated in Ethiopia.

What is equally clear is that the themes are now executed in a more complex and differentiated way (compare Figure 4 with Figure 5, 6, 12, and 14). This process occurred spontaneously, with no input from Workshop personnel. That is, there are no "teachers." A striking example is rabbi figures made in the 1980s (Figure 7) compared with those made in the Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop in Israel (Figures 8, 9, and 11).

Figure 4. Pottery figurines made by Beta Israel women, Wallaka, Ethiopia, 1960s. Photo: Ya'akov Brill. The Museum of the Jewish people at Beit Hatfutsot, The Oster Visual Documentation Center, courtesy of Harel family.

Figure 5. Mother with babes in both arms. By Adiseh Baruch, 2016. (Dates here and in subsequent slides are date of purchase. Date of creation is not known.)

Figure 6. Pregnant woman with a necklace and a high neck decoration. Unknown artist, 2016.

Specifically, the rabbi figures made in the workshop are more differentiated and elaborated, compared with the identical figures seen being fired in Ethiopia in Figure 7. According to Greenfield's theory and research, individuation is part of the culture change that occurs in the shift from a Gemeinschaft to a Gesellschaft ecology, where subsistence tasks are less arduous and artists or artisans have more time to devote to their work (Greenfield, 2004, 2009).

However, in Israel, the focus on productive activity was different from the very beginning. High tech skills, a characteristic of a Gesellschaft ecology, were emphasised. From the time of their arrival in Israel, this was the kind of education their children, the second generation, were going to receive. Figure 10 shows an Ethiopian boy learning computer skills in the 1980s.

At the same time, skills with a subsistence origin were devalued. One of the artists, who had been in the workshop for 25 years, said that they had started with 57 members, but many found work, and the group dissipated. Clearly by work, she meant paid work; and this definition of work signals the transition into a more commercial economic environment, intrinsic to a Gesellschaft ecology (Greenfield, 2009). At the moment the group comprises only six women; in addition to work, death has taken others.

Depiction of education in the family and respect for the authority of elders

One important feature of the learning environment in African villages and in Gemeinschaft ecologies more generally is that education takes place in the family. An example of a specific learning environment instantiating this sociodemographic feature is found in Mamit Sheto's statue that she describes as "*Rabbi reading the Torah, with grandson listening*" (Figure 11). A value that is consonant with this practice is respect for the expertise of the older generation (Greenfield, 2004; Keller, 2007). The fact that the artist constructs the grandson as listening embodies both the grandson as learning from his grandfather and the grandson's respect for a teacher who is an older authority in the family.

A gendered learning environment reflects gendered subsistence roles

Gender roles were ascribed by birth. When asked what her brothers did, Participant #16 replied: "T*hey ploughed like their father.*" Participant No. 14 said: "*In Ethiopia, dad goes to work, and his son watches him. The daughter also watches her mother.*" For women, education at home centred on learning the subsistence practices allocated to females, such as food preparation and pottery. In response to the question "*What would you do when you were a little girl?*" participant No. 12 described her learning environment: "*My stepmother would give me house tasks, and I would do them (like preparing food for example)… She would let me grind the flour…. I dealt with pottery. I made clay pots and everything that had to do with clay.*"

In line with the allocation of food preparation to females, all of the statues that show food preparation are female figures such as Figure 12.

Gender roles: Social change and persistence

However, the role of preparing food and doing housework ascribed to women by birth was no longer so adaptive in the Israeli environment where women were joining men in working outside the home. Recall that our interview included cultural dilemmas occurring because of sociodemographic shifts; conflict concerning gender roles was the theme of one of the dilemmas. In each dilemma one character advocates for a Gemeinschaft-adapted perspective and a second character advocates for a Gesellschaft-adapted perspective; the participant must decide who is right.

Here is a social dilemma that pits food preparation and other household tasks as a female obligation, ascribed by birth (Gemeinschaft perspective), against equivalent gender roles for males and females (Gesellschaft perspective):

> *Orit (Admalash) and Yossi (Takla) are a married couple. They have three children. Orit works outside the house every day until five o'clock. Orit expects Yossi to help her with the various housework (preparing lunch, washing dishes, cleaning the floor, etc.), but Yossi refuses and says that these are not the work of a man and that she should do them. Who is right, Orit or Yossi? Why?*

One of the potters took the Gemeinschaft perspective – that the woman is responsible for the subsistence task of feeding the family. However, two of the participants understood the social change going on as a result of the immigration process. Participant No. 31's response shows an understanding of the difference between Ethiopia's strictly ascribed gender roles and Israel's role equivalency between men and women. Participant No. 31 begins by saying that Yossi is right because a man will work outside. In contrast, a woman "*would take care of the children, and cook at breakfast, dinner… This is our law, our community.*" But on further probing, this same participant talks about one of her sons and his wife in Israel: "*My son…, his wife works and he works. He bathes the children, puts them to sleep, gives them food; and she cooks and does other things. Help each other.*" The interviewers further probed the difference between Ethiopia and Israel. Participant No. 31 summed it up by saying, "[In] *our community it is forbidden. But here everything is permitted.*" Here she is articulating the difference between

Figure 7. Baking clay rabbi figurines, Wallaka, Gondar Region, Ethiopia, 1984. The Museum of the Jewish people at Beit Hatfutsot, The Oster Visual Documentation Center.

Figure 8. *Kes* (Ethiopian rabbi) with Torah. By Adiseh Baruch, 2016.

Figure 9. *Kes* **(**Ethiopian rabbi) bringing home sheep**.** By Adiseh Baruch, 2016.

strong norms, adaptive in a Gemeinschaft ecology, particularly where there is resource scarcity (Gelfand et al., 2011), and the importance of choice and alternatives that are important values in wealthier, more highly educated Gesellschaft ecologies (Greenfield, 2009; Stephens, Markus, & Townsend, 2007).

Participant No. 23 also articulated this difference between Ethiopia and Israel: "*Once, when we were in Ethiopia, men did not do housework. But in Israel, the man also works at home. I have a son who does laundry,…takes care of the children, gives them food.*" She evaluated the change positively: "*Basically this is good.*"

Participant No. 14 understands this same difference in gender roles between Ethiopia and Israel. However, she evaluated it as: "*Not good, not good, not good.*" She says:

> *There are many men in Israel, it's hard for them... they go to work, come back home, have kids at home,* (now she is imitating a commanding feminine voice) *Clean!. Cook! Prepare! Wash it! Wash the floor! What can I tell you, bring the plate and clean it! .... Wash the child! Feed the child! The husband doesn't rest. Not resting. Not resting is difficult, it is not easy. It's not easy. But people will hate me ...* (Laughs).

It is clear that she realises that her views are countercultural in the Israeli context.

Finally yet importantly, one artist (No. 16) took the Gesellschaft perspective and said that the woman is right, thus displaying a value that she could most likely not have endorsed in Ethiopia. Perhaps this awareness of radical differences in the two environments is the reason for, in Israel, a sense of disruption of intergenerational transmission. Undoubtedly, these women are aware that their subsistence skills are not adapted to the Gesellschaft world of Israel. Yet the broader Israeli community does not consider the women's production to be art.

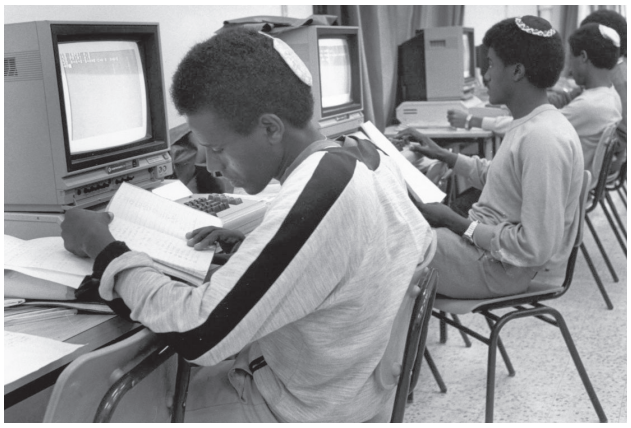

Figure 10. Pupils from Ethiopia studying computers in "Mikvah Israel" Agricultural High School, Israel, March 1986, Photo: Doron Bacher. The Museum of the Jewish people at Beit Hatfutsot, The Oster Visual Documentation Center,

Changing patterns of education, work, and life

When asked "What is important to you to pass on to future generations?" participant #12 replied: "*What can I tell them, they live their life.*" Her intonation expresses that she realises she is not relevant to how they live their life. This realisation is because education and work have been

Figure 11. Rabbi reading Torah, grandson listening. By Mamit Sheto, Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop, Be'er Sheva, Israel, 2016.

Figure 12. Pounding wheat to separate it from the chaff. By Tziona Yahim, Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop, Be'er Sheva, Israel, 2016.

radically transformed. Focusing on education, participant No. 18 said: "*My children, grandchildren will learn, will know, not like me. I do not learn; I do not know how to speak; I cannot read. Learn, do well I will tell them*."

Participant No. 14 described the loss of value of parents as educational role models and the physical separation of emerging adult children from their parents. As stated above, she said: "*In Ethiopia, dad goes to work and his son watches him and learns what he is doing. The daughter also watches her mother.*" But she went on to contrast this form of education with how things work in Israel:

> *Here in Israel, from the age of three months you put [him] in kindergarten. And what does he learn from his parents? When he grows up he goes to university; he does not stay with his parents. This is a problem.*

The description of learning in Ethiopia also highlights the importance of observation in informal education in Gemeinschaft ecologies (Greenfield, 2004; Nsamenang, 1992; Rogoff, 2014].

The devaluation of subsistence skills in Israel and the value placed upon wage work and formal education is very painful for these women and compounds the loneliness of losing physical closeness with children and grandchildren. Participant No. 14 continued:

> *I did not work in Israel. If I were a worker I would be a person. ...If I were a worker I would be bus driver,* [I would work in] *an office….I know* [how] *to read very little. I studied with the children. No one taught me. ...It's hard for me. My heart aches. Time has gone, 35 years gone. The children, everyone in his house, left alone. Hard for me.*

She has concluded that, in Israel, one must work for money to be considered a person and therefore feel like a person.

Race prejudice complicates cultural loss and acculturation to a new ecology and set of cultural values

The Ethiopian Jews have encountered deep racial prejudice in Israel, including humiliating conversion requirements despite their ancient Jewish roots (Gal, 2003; Mekelberg, 2015). Participant No. 14 spoke about discrimination against the next generation, the children of Ethiopian immigrants: "*The children find it difficult in the Land of Israel….If a child makes a mistake, they put him in jail; they abuse them in school, even in the army; they discriminate against them, they abuse them.*" Participant No. 31 had the following perspective: "*Some hate us because we are black. The country is good, the government is good, but there are lower levels that do not allow integration.*" Racism and discrimination have greatly compounded the difficulties of culture loss and adapting to a new ecology and set of cultural values.

Other African values and their Israeli transformations

Procreation

As in other Gemeinschaft ecologies, large families and fertility were very much valued in Ethiopia (Dyer, 2007; Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Figure 13 depicts a statue of a pregnant woman with a baby on her back. Clearly, the two children will be spaced closely together. Equally important is the expression of physical closeness between mother and child, exemplified by the positioning of the baby on the mother's back, a very common depiction by the Workshop artists.

The value of procreation was made explicit in the responses to the following scenario:

> *Rina Solomon, 30, is studying for a master's degree at Ben Gurion University. Rina has been dating Reuven for several years and they do not intend to marry in the short term. Rina says they will marry when they want to have children and she wants to bring children only after she finishes her degree. Rina's mother pleads with Rina to get married and raise a family. She says Rina is an adult and a family is the most important thing, more than studies and careers. Who was right, Rina or her mother? Why?*

Participant No. 23 comes out squarely for the Gemeinschaft-adapted value placed on fertility and reproduction. She said that the mother is right because:

> *...it will be difficult to have children after you are older. If you are giving birth at a young age, you have the strength and patience to take care of them. If you give birth in old age, you will not have patience.*

Participant Nos. 14 and 18 also agree with the mother; both emphasised the physical negatives of having children when you are older. Participant No. 14 said: "*You know*

Figure 13. Pregnant woman with baby on her back. By Mamit Sheto, Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop, Be'er Sheva, Israel, 2019.

what, giving birth in time …you have a healthy child; everything is good. Waiting and enjoying life, having fun, ruining her womb; it's an unhealthy child."

Participant No. 25 is in the middle; she said: "*On the one hand, children are good, but on the other hand it is equal education.*" When pressed for a decision on the dilemma, given that Rina is 30 years old, she said: "*She is right. She has studies in her head. She'll finish, get her diploma. Then what she wants, two or three* [children]*, whatever she decides.*" She herself was married off by her father when she was nine years old. She also talked about her own daughter who had carried out a plan to get a job first and then marry. The participant noted that her daughter now has three children. She herself had four. As we saw in a Maya community in Chiapas, Mexico, mothers think about their children's future in the current economic environment; they do not generally get stuck on bringing up children the way they were brought up if the economy is radically different (Greenfield, 2004).

Participant No. 12 was particularly interesting because she integrated the dominant Israeli view that you should develop yourself to the maximum through education with the Ethiopian fertility value; she said that Rina should stop her studies and get married. When asked why, she said it is because: "S*he could have a… child, and the child would learn for her (he would realise her dream).*" She saw the desirability of intergenerational change, but also there is a wistfulness about the mother sacrificing her own dream. Participant No. 12 herself got married at about age 17. She has never been to school.

Participant No. 31 came out squarely with a Gesellschaft adapted perspective. It is interesting that the economic motive, so important in living in a commercial (rather than subsistence) economy, is the basis for her view. She replied to the dilemma: "*First of all, study, finish, then marry. There are salaries and there are children, and she will raise them. Study, have a wedding, have a pregnancy – it is difficult.*" Here she seems to mean that doing all three things at once is difficult.

Procreation vs. romantic love

The artist, Mamit Sheto, described the statue in Figure 14 as "*boyfriend and girlfriend.*" She noted that she did a lot on this theme; but she was very clear in her interview that this kind of scene is something that you see in Israel, but not in Ethiopia. The statue and her comment signal awareness that romantic relationships are a value in Israel and that Ethiopia, as she knew it, did not subscribe to this value. In contrast to the Gesellschaft-adapted value of romantic love is the Gemeinschaft-adapted value of procreation, both implicit in the art and explicit in the scenario responses, as discussed earlier (Manago, Greenfield, Kim, & Ward, 2014). Despite Mamit's interpretation of cultural difference between Ethiopia and Israel, we see in Figure 4 a clay statue of a couple embracing made in Ethiopia in the 1960s.

Family togetherness and sharing

These Gemeinschaft-adapted values are depicted in multiple ways in the sculptures. One example is shown in Figure 15. There you see a clay sculpture of parents and a child sharing a large Ethiopian bread. They are physically close to each other and the son has his arms around the parents. In her interview, participant No. 12 said: "*... in Ethiopia…, everyone sat together and ate, a lot of laughter. But here everyone [is] in his corner.*"

Even more physical closeness is seen in Figure 16 where we see a mother, father, and two children all embracing. This family embrace is an interesting contrast with the dyadic embrace that is paradigmatic in Gesellschaft environments. Participant 16 said: "*The hearts are far away. In Ethiopia, the hearts were close… The connection with the children in Ethiopia was better.*"

Conclusion

Research in the field of emigration has tended to ignore the experience of female emigrants and focused more on that of men (Boyd, 1986). This situation has resulted in emigrant women becoming "invisible" or "stereotyped". However, gender has a substantial social significance in every culture, and it is important to understand the emigrant experience from the female perspective (Dion & Dion, 2001). This article has focused on the experience and art of seven Ethiopian women potters who immigrated to Israel. We have used Nsamenang's theory (1992) to understand their African lives, art, and values. Further, we used Greenfield's (2009) theory to connect the women's experiences, their values, and their art with the socio-cultural shifts they have undergone in the process of emigration from Ethiopia to Israel.

Figure 14. Boyfriend and girlfriend. By Mamit Sheto, Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop, Be'er Sheva, Israel, 2016. Note that this piece is signed, a mark of a movement away from art as a community expression and toward art as an individual expression. This is the only signed piece.

Figure 15. Family of three sharing a piece of Ethiopian bread. Unknown artist, Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop.

Figure 16. Family. By Adiseh Baruch, 2016.

We have seen that the six members of the Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop primarily create sculptures that depict and reflect African life and Gemeinschaft-adapted values of their Ethiopian villages of origin: Respect and learning from elders, procreation, complementary gender roles, physical closeness, and sharing in the family (Nsamenang, 1992; Greenfield, 2004). However, as predicted by Greenfield's theory and prior research, the representation of these themes has become more complex and individuated, a response to the physically easier life circumstances and conditions for creating pottery in a Gesellschaft environment (Greenfield, 2004, 2009). Indeed, making pots to fulfil survival needs has disappeared; learning to make pottery in the household has disappeared. These Gemeinschaft adaptations have been replaced by a more Gesellschaft ecology: an institutional cultural environment that fosters creating artistic sculptural forms.

While the clay sculpture depicts life and expresses values in their Ethiopian villages of origin, the interviews show the awareness of a radically changed ecology and the struggle of our seven participants to adapt to more Gesellschaft-adapted conditions and values. These women realise the importance of formal education in Israel. At the same time, they mourn the loss of their ability to serve as respected educators of the next generation. They also mourn the loss of family togetherness and often feel all alone with children working outside the home and grandchildren at school from a very early age.

Turning research into community action

We felt it important to apply our research to serve the community and to promote the intergenerational continuity of this African artistic tradition. Therefore, we end with the service project that has grown out of our ethnographic and curatorial work with the Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop. After discovering the workshop, the six artists, and their magnificent production, it became clear that these six elderly women could be the last to practice the art of clay sculpture. It also became clear that their art was appreciated neither in the Ethiopian community nor in the broader Israeli society. We wanted to do something to rectify this situation.

When our collaborator, Michael Hittleman, purchased 35 pieces for our exhibitions in Los Angeles, we requested, and the Workshop agreed, that the money would be utilised to transmit Ethiopian clay art to the next generation of Israelis, both Ethiopians and others. Additionally, Michael Hittleman shared profits from the sale of the sculptures in Los Angeles with the artists, the first time since their immigration to Israel they had been paid for their work in clay. We hoped that these payments for their work, divided equally among all the women, would foster their identities as valued artists.

To follow up the transmission goal, in March, 2019, we met with the directors of the Ethiopian Jewish Arts Workshop and Startup, an affiliated organisation that helps Israeli youth transition from their compulsory service in the Israeli Defense Forces to civilian life. Both organisations agreed to start an apprenticeship program in which the six artists would teach young people from Startup their techniques for working with clay. They will

have an opportunity to teach their apprentices the same way they learned as children.

The artists will be paid for their time by the Workshop, and the learners will be subsidised by the Startup organisation. This will be the first time the women have earned wages since coming to Israel, something that we know from the interviews will be extremely meaningful; recall that one of the artists said: "If I were a worker I would be a person." We hope that this apprenticeship program will foster appreciation of Ethiopian Israeli clay sculpture both inside the Ethiopian community and in Israeli society, as well as contribute to its continuity in future generations of Israelis of all national origins. This effort will also transmit an element of African culture to the next generation through a teaching process that is indigenous to the community.

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