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Styling the nation: fear and desire in the South Sudanese beauty trade

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Feminist scholarship on emotion and the 'global intimate' offers innovative ways to rethink nationalism as embodied, affective and lived in the everyday. This approach also brings into focus the significance of the transnational: flows of commodities, bodies and ideas that cross state boundaries and are taken up, reworked, celebrated and worried over as part of nation-making. I approach nationalism here in this way, centring the beauty salon industry in the newly independent Republic of South Sudan. Beauty salons are owned, staffed and supplied by inherently transnational subjects: migrant workers and entrepreneurs as well as members of the returning diaspora. They are also stocked with transnational material objects: hair weaves, cosmetics and beauty technologies from across Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the USA. The fashioning of the nation through these salons is thus cosmopolitan in style: orientated outward, embracing the modern and privileging a sense of worldliness and affinity with distant people and places. However, this styling of nationalism is ambivalent and contested. Clients clamour for new fashions, the latest technologies in hair and beauty, and the know-how brought by migrant 'saloonists', as they are referred to in the region. Yet this desire interweaves with a growing panic around the foreign: foreign styles, migrants, capital and commodities. Through this case study I argue that nation-making in South Sudan is fundamentally transnational – constructed not in isolation from, but explicitly through, cosmopolitanism and the modern exterior. In connection I argue that nationalism is emotional – marked at once by contradictory feelings of fear and desire that require, and indeed depend on, a foreign other. In this way I demonstrate how quotidian spaces and subjects, transnational flows of bodies, commodities and styles, and analyses of emotion can all be richly explored to better understand and theorise the operations of nationalism.

Key words Republic of South Sudan; feminist political geography; nation; cosmopolitan; emotion; beauty

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Introduction

On the 9th of July 2011, the Republic of South Sudan became the world's newest nation. As independence day approached, residents of the capital Juba busied themselves with last-minute preparations: cleaning the streets, receiving dignitaries, practising the national anthem, and perfecting the military parade. Amid this hectic schedule, hairstylists in the blossoming beauty industry worked into the night to ensure their clients 'looked smart' for the big day. Most of those braiding hair and sewing weaves had migrated from Kampala, Nairobi and Addis Ababa – attracted by the profitable post-conflict economy and in demand for their cosmopolitan knowledge of the latest fashions. With these migrants came flows of products including synthetic hair from Kenya, Nigeria and the USA, and human hair from China and India. Indeed beauty in South Sudan is emerging as a hugely profitable industry, mirroring the broader international flows of labour and capital into the new nation.

Beyond their economic import, these salons are rich sites of emotional, everyday and embodied nation-making. Clients clamour for new and cosmopolitan styles, the latest technologies in hair and beauty, and the know-how brought by migrants. But this desire is interwoven with a growing panic around the foreign. Returning salon owners and migrant stylists are accused of dominating the trade, modern fashions are seen to undermine South Sudanese values, and fears of toxicity surround the importation of cosmetics. Through these new styles Southerners are reworking their self and national image. Yet this process is marked by contradictory feelings of fear and desire that require, and indeed depend on, a foreign other.

Intimate and emotional nationalisms

Analyses of nation-state making in South Sudan have most commonly focused on formal spaces and subjects of power: military leaders and politicians and the spaces where they work, strategise, conduct warfare or

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make peace (Johnson 2003; Wondu and Lesch 2000). Related work focuses on formal political tools designed to inculcate national identification, such as a national anthem, currency and archives (Jok 2011), or emphasises the challenges to nationalism posed by on-going ethnic-regional conflict within the country (Jok and Hutchinson 1999; Mamdani 2011).

This kind of work is valuable in understanding the nature of the conflict and the post-peace nation-state making process and mirrors trends in political geographic scholarship on conflict zones, peace processes and nationalism in Africa (Carmody 2009; Daley 2006; Ramutsindela 2001). However, feminist scholars have pushed us to reconceptualise the boundaries of the political and the economic, and the spaces and scales through which these projects operate (Brown and Staeheli 2003; Cope 2004; Domosh and Seager 2001; McEwan 2000; Wright 2004). Often assumed to be trivial and quotidian, and thus irrelevant, feminist work has shown these to be significant locales through which cross-scalar, political-economic processes are worked out. In this vein, a growing body of feminist scholars are demonstrating how beauty norms and institutions reflect and rework political-economic and socio-cultural relations in places as diverse as Iraq, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Ghana, India and South Africa (Enloe 2010; Fluri 2009; Langevang and Gough 2012; Oza 2006; Thomas 2012).

Feminist political geography has also been critical of disembodied, detached and masculinist geopolitical narratives (Dowler and Sharp 2001; Hyndman 2004), opening intellectual space to revisit nationalism and the everyday, embodied geographies where the nation is brought into being, performed and resisted. Centrally here, feminists trace the powerful gendering of nation and nationalism through the assignation of masculinised and feminised responsibilities and through the symbolic construction of the male and female body *as* the nation in distinct ways (Enloe 2000; Kandiyoti 2000; McClintock 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997). This theorisation necessarily grounds nation and nationalism in place, paying attention to the ways nation is located in, produced through, and constructs particular and gendered geographies including, centrally, that of the body (Blunt 1999; Fluri 2008; Mayer 2000; Radcliffe 1996).

Two connected interventions in feminist geography complement this work on nationalism. Firstly, Pratt and Rosner (2006) have called for a rethinking of scale through the concept of the 'global intimate'. This project troubles understandings of 'global' processes as masculine, distanced and disembodied and the simultaneous rendering of the 'local', 'domestic' and 'bodily' as essentialised, feminised and characterised by everyday minutiae (Mountz and Hyndman 2006, 446). Scale is rethought by examining the intimate, the familiar and the embodied experiences of 'living and knowing the global' (2006, 448) and recognising their connections to other places, people and times. This dovetails with the decentring of the nation in transnational feminist analysis and instead the examination of different but connected racialised, classed and gendered experiences of global economic and political processes *across* nation-state boundaries (Grewal and Kaplan 1994). The global intimate also draws upon Katz's (2001) methodological and epistemological call to construct 'counter topographies'. After Pratt and Yeoh these

> trac[e] lines across places to show how they are connected by the same processes, [whilst] simultaneously embedding these processes within the specifics of fully contextualized, three dimensional places'. (2003, 163)

In this vein, analyses of a 'national intimate' understand the nation as produced through transnational flows of bodies, ideas and products and as lived and imagined by distantly located members of the diaspora, returnees or migrants (Blunt 1999; Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Mulligan 2010). This framing is instructive in theorising nationalism as performed through the bodies of stylists, clients and cosmetic traders, and in everyday spaces like the beauty salon.

Second, recent scholarship on emotional geographies offers rich opportunities to rethink nationalism. Though a diverse body of work, broadly here the emotional is understood as both reflective and productive of place-based geo/political, economic and socio-cultural shifts (Anderson and Smith 2001; Davidson and Milligan 2004; Sharp 2009). After Davidson and Milligan, 'Emotions *matter*. They have tangible effects on our surroundings and can shape the very nature and experience of our being-in-the world' (2004, 524). This emotional turn provides rich openings for understanding nationalism, complementing and extending work on 'moral panics' (Cohen 1972; Kong 2006) to consider the varied and spatialised feelings bound up with the production of a self-in-society. Nationalism can be understood after all as a *feeling* of connection, belonging, attachment and intimacy or, conversely, of emotional detachment from those outside of or threatening to the nation (noted by Davidson and Milligan 2004, 527). The set of feelings associated with nationalism are complex and multi-layered: pride, love, desire, ambivalence, anxiety, panic, anger and hatred, and they are powerful in structuring the practice of state bodies as well as everyday encounters and attitudes. Moreover these feelings are often heightened in, or directed towards, border spaces and subjects. As Agnew argues,

> Lurking behind bordering everywhere is the effect of that nationalism which has come along with the territorial nation-state: that being perpetually in question, national identity has to be constantly reinvented through the mobilization of national populations … Borders, because they are

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> at the edge of the national-state territory, provide the essential focus for this collective uncertainty. (2006, 181)

The 'borders' referred to here mark the territorial boundaries of the nation-state, but they are also found 'inland' away from these 'edges', embedded in and marking national, non-national and transnational products, workers and capital (Doevenspeck 2011). Thus, we can rethink the nation and nationalism by recognising its deeply affective quality and its production through these kinds of in-between, marginalised, feminised, embodied, and intimate border sites. This is insightful in the South Sudanese context, where the nation is produced through the emotions brought on by the transnational – desires and fears around consumer sovereignty and cosmopolitanism, and around accelerated cross-border flows of products, people and styles.[1]

Beauty and the cosmopolitan

Beauty offers a rich lens to explore the intimate, embodied and gendered nature of nationalism, as well as its inflection by the cosmopolitan. Beauty ideals are produced in place and are tied to particular economic, socio-cultural and political structures. The trade in beauty products, technologies, styles and workers allows us to trace an increasingly globalised flow of commodities, ideas and bodies that contribute to nation-making. And analysing beauty as lived, enacted and displayed opens up spaces to rethink the nation as performative.

Work on beauty and nation has primarily focused on the pageant as a moment of nationalist performance (Ahmed-Ghosh 2003; Banet-Weiser 1999; Mani 2006) or, in contrast, as a space through which to disrupt and trouble gendered, racialised and heteronormative nationalist ideals (Craig 2002; Johnson 1996). Recent geographic work on beauty and fashion has also demonstrated its complex positioning within modern and particularly faithed, racialised and gendered nationalist discourses that can also operate transnationally (Fluri 2009; Gökarıksel 2012; Gökarıksel and Secor 2011). In thinking through the ties between beauty, nationalism and cosmopolitanism in South Sudan the interdisciplinary work on the rise of the 'modern girl' in the 1920s and 1930s is particularly instructive. The Modern Girl Working Group (Weinbaum *et al.* 2008) has examined the global emergence of a cosmopolitan subject and aesthetic over this period. In this work the 'modern girl' is a heuristic device to explore the globalisation of flows of commodities and ideas about style that reflected and produced new and troubling norms around gender, femininity and race. Though the beauty trade created a somewhat standardised 'cosmopolitan aesthetic', one primarily produced in the USA and Europe, it was taken up and contested in varied ways and places. Indeed, what marked the modern girl out was this geographically reworked cosmopolitanism, after Weinbaum *et al.* (2008, 4), 'her continual incorporation of local elements with those drawn from elsewhere'.

The project demonstrates the powerful ties between the cosmopolitanism embodied by the modern girl and varied projects of nationalism. Never operating in isolation, Weinbaum *et al.* argue that the cosmopolitan modern girl was also 'an object of nationalist scrutiny and thus provoked a full range of nationalist desires' (2008, 15). She was often viewed as threatening and transgressive to the nation since she undermined 'traditional' roles expected of women as reproducers and cultural bearers of nationhood. In these cases, in China and South Africa for example, disciplining the modern girl was a way to express nationalist ideals (Dong 2008; Thomas 2008). In a similar vein, in India efforts to reconstruct and re-imagine nationalist memory worked to erase the figure of the modern girl and distance the nation state from what were viewed as western consumption practices (Ramamurthy 2008). Elsewhere she appeared as a transgressive subject, used to contest white racialised nationalisms (Baldwin 2008; Weinbaum 2008). However, the nation could also be produced through the modern girl, as Poiger (2008) and Conor (2008) demonstrate in the cases of Nazi Germany and Australia respectively, though this often meant that she was whitened racially. This project demonstrates that, in most cases, the cosmopolitan modern girl was disruptive to nationalist drives, but she could also be positively centred in its expression. In all cases, however, either through her troubling of or complicity with it, the modern girl's cosmopolitanism was bound up with nation-making.

Understandings, after Kant, of cosmopolitanism as an ethical universalism (Appiah 2006; Nussbaum 1994) have been critiqued as elitist, disembodied and dislocated from the specificities of place (Kurasawa 2004; Werbner 2006). Instead I understand cosmopolitanism in the vein of work on the modern girl – as a deeply contested and mobile aesthetic performed and produced through grounded transnational, political and economic ties. Rather than signalling freedom or, conversely, oppression, this understanding of cosmopolitan is fluid and place-based. Thus an understanding of cosmopolitanism as bound up with nationalism is made possible. It also enables us to imagine a subaltern, vernacular and/or working class cosmopolitanism performed through beauty practices that may seek to project upward mobility and distance from the parochial through a connection to the global or the urban (Gidwani 2006; Mohan 2006; Werbner 2006; Young 2010) or ironically to highlight one's dislocation from it (Weiss 2009).[2]

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Methods

This article draws on research conducted in June and July of 2011. Surveys of 60 salons in the main neighbourhoods of Juba, South Sudan provided information regarding trends on migrant and returnee labour, product commodity chains and clientele habits. Longer periods (between two and six hours) of observation and interviews in 28 of these salons and in five cosmetic product stalls provided insight into the everyday experiences of workers and their clients. I worked with two research assistants and translators of Juba-Arabic, Swahili and Luganda, who helped me to understand comments spoken outside of the (primarily English) interview encounters. This was complemented by visual and textual analysis of news articles, product labels, advertisements for products and salons, paintings and posters of hairstyles in and outside of salons, and actual hairstyles. Finally, I took photographs of saloon workers, owners, clients and traders, a number of which are reproduced here. These portraits served as an important memory aid, rich texts for analysis and a visual insistence of the nation as embodied.

Bringing salons to the cityscape: the owners

Zabib[3] slopes across a revolving chair in her sister's salon 'Oprah' in Atalabara, close to the University of Juba (see Plate 1). Her friend brushes her washed and relaxed hair, playing with different ways to style it, pausing every now and then to rub some product through. She carries the day's takings in a purse around her waist. Zabib is South Sudanese but has spent most of her life in Uganda and is returning there soon for school. She's just minding the shop while her sister Rose travels to buy new products. Rose returned to Sudan in 2005 after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), compelled by a sense of obligation to help develop the new nation and recognising the economic opportunities it held for her as a stylist. 'I think it was really tough', Zabib notes 'but she had to come home'. Her voice is muffled by the sound of the generator, the loud music video and the noisy street outside. It has been a busy day and shows no sign of easing up. As the sun begins to set a tall well-dressed man enters and is shown a large poster of styles with names like 'JayZee' and 'Big Boyz'. Zabib instructs the client on what would suit him, what's popular right now. He nods his approval as a stylist prepares heated towels and lotions for his shave.

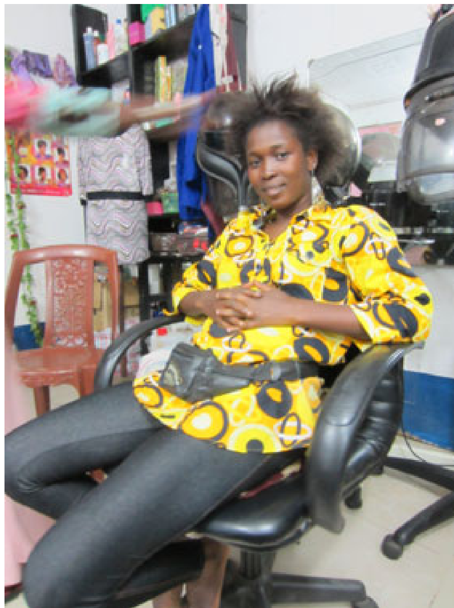

Plate 1 Zabib

Zabib's sister, and other 'returnees' like her, entered southern Sudan at the onset of the 'Interim Period' and the formation of the semi-autonomous Government of South Sudan (GoSS). During this period Southerners like Zabib's sister who had left Sudan or had been displaced internally during the war began, tentatively, to return home. They were accompanied by foreign investors from neighbouring countries like Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia (and their diasporas), as well as those from further afield including China, Lebanon, the UAE and the Philippines. Juba has seen the majority of national investment and immigration and has grown into an economic and political hub, doubling in size between 2005 and 2010 to 500 000 inhabitants (Martin and Mosel 2011). Though statistics on immigration are limited, over 9000 Kenyans and 10 000 Ugandans registered at their consulates in the city between 2011 and 2012 (Jackson 2012; Stephen 2012). Over 10 000 new businesses have been registered since 2006 (IFC 2011), with some estimates suggesting that over 80 per cent of these are foreign-owned and run (Ahmed 2011).

The January 2011 referendum on independence returned a 99 per cent vote in favour of separation from the Republic of Sudan (SSRC 2011) and the country became independent in July of that year. In anticipation, the flows of foreign investment, along with the significant presence of international development agencies, have combined to produce a vibrant internationalised post-conflict economy. Amid the old buildings ravaged by war, darkened for need of electricity, and pockmarked with bullets, there is a good deal of new construction. Gradually the once-impassable city roads are being paved and widened to accommodate the many SUVs that now roll through. Humvees are not an uncommon sight. Within these imported cars

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ride South Sudanese men and women in suits, wearing expensive new watches and polished leather shoes, and preparing for meetings at the Ministry, with co-investors on their latest project, with co-workers at the UN, the World Bank, and any one of the hundreds of non-governmental organisations based in the city. Saloonists like Zabib meet the professional styling needs of this emergent 'working class'[4] and so, along with a host of new hotels, office buildings, market stalls and housing developments, beauty shops have become a visible part of the cityscape. Salons attached to expensive hotels like Sahara, Paradise, and Home and Away provide not only beauty treatments but also clothing from Lagos, shoes from Dubai and the highest quality beauty products from Europe and the USA. In the busy Ministries area, over 15 salons squeeze along the road, providing copy, shoeshine and photography services along with beauty treatments for their clientele. Here government administrators, security guards, undersecretaries and even honourable Members of Parliament get their nails polished, their heads shaved, a strand of loose hair re-sewn. Upscale salons like 'Athiei' line the area around Thong Ping – a popular neighbourhood for new, gated housing developments as well as a host of Lebanese, Indian and Chinese businesses. In the growing suburbs of Gudele, salons jostle with new petrol stations and stalls selling imported construction materials and furniture. But for the best deals, clients head out to Jebel market on the outskirts of Juba under the shadow of the mountain. Pushed out of the city centre as it developed, Jebel is now a hub for salons and the traders supplying them: a city of stylists, with streets of cosmetics stalls, and walls and walls of hair.

Like much economic development in the city, the salon industry marks the emergence of the autonomous nation-state. It has emerged out of the hope and opportunity produced through the peace agreement as well as the sovereignty of the Government of South Sudan, which both promotes and regulates development and investment. Currently, the new country depends almost entirely on oil revenues shared with the Government of Sudan. However, as their relationship remains fragile, and with a weak national skill base caused by decades of conflict, promoting a more diverse economy through foreign investment is increasingly prioritised (Martin and Mosel 2011). During the interim period the semi-autonomous Government funded foreign 'missions', now converted formally to embassies, which sought out investment from elsewhere in Africa, Asia, Europe and the USA. The Government has promoted micro, small and medium enterprises in the country, creating the South Sudan Investment Authority and passing the 2009 Investment Promotion Act (IPA). This aims to promote favourable tax regimes, reduce bureaucracy, protect industrial and intellectual property rights, and facilitate repatriation of profits and dividends (GoSS 2012). The government plans to join the East African Community economic block (ERGO 2011), has signed numerous memoranda of understanding with ministers of finance regarding future investment and, in October 2011, hosted the South Sudan Investment Conference and Trade Fair. Due in part to these efforts, private sector investment in formal economic ventures has dramatically accelerated since the signing of the peace, with the majority of private sector investment concentrated in Central Equatoria State and the capital of Juba (Martin and Mosel 2011).

Yet this desire for foreign investment is bound up with anxiety and a fear that foreigners will exploit the wealth of the country with little benefit to its citizens. In their study of urbanisation and development in Juba, Martin and Mosel note that

> most of the profit generated by the international private sector does not serve the southern Sudanese economy, [it] bypasses its banking system and is relocated to neighbouring countries rather than invested locally. (2011, 13)

This anxiety underpins recommendations in the Investment Promotion Act that South Sudanese hold at least a 10 per cent share of companies[5] operating there. The act also states that foreign investors must apply for an investment certificate, which is only granted if the investment contributes towards the development of the nation-state through, for example, employment for nationals, their technological training or infrastructural development (IPA 2009, number 24). This shapes foreign investment in the country in powerful ways with many new construction projects, from street lighting, water treatment, hotel development, and the new public basketball stadium, taken on by foreign companies with South Sudanese partners.

This requirement is true also for the beauty salon industry. However, since she is South Sudanese, Zabib's sister benefits from this new economic climate without the complication of requiring a national business partner. Yet, returnees like her still incite anxiety and anger among 'stayees' who remained in the country during the war. Memories of their suffering mingle with a feeling that those who spent the war in exile had unfair access to education and occupational opportunities (Newhouse 2011; Pantuliano *et al.* 2008; Wood and Phelan 2006). These tensions fall along complex lines of difference, in part gendered (since far more men than women were resettled internationally), ethnic-regional (where some were favoured for resettlement and others living on or near borders found escape to refugee camps easier), and class (as those with resources sent their children to relatives or schools abroad). Even refugees from poor, rural backgrounds, and who, after resettlement, formed part of the

working poor, found their access to educational resources, paid formal employment and credit in the diaspora enhanced their class-based status back in South Sudan (Erickson and Faria 2011; Grabska 2010). Returnee owners opening their salons just after the peace highlighted these tensions, noting that the Interim Period was one of unruliness, unpredictability and hostility where robbery, land grabbing, assault and gun crime was common. For example, when Margaret returned from Kampala in 2005 to open a salon she found her business was targeted at night. She took to sleeping inside it, amongst her dryers and curlers, her shampoos and her conditioners, to fight off theft and property damage. Her story of return was typical and as such most owners waited out the first few unsteady years of peace in the diaspora. Yet despite these problems owners spoke of their strong desire to come home and rebuild the region. By 2007 the majority of owner interviewees operating now in Juba had returned and set up the businesses they had dreamed of in exile.

Certainly then, tensions between stayees and returnees persist. Yet these different histories of mobility also provide the foundations for contemporary transnational nation-making. Returning salon owners rely on relatives who stayed for advice on living and working in Juba, negotiating the complex politics of everyday life there, and to vouch for them when they seek out local suppliers, property to lease and operating licences. Conversely, salon owners use international contacts established during their time as refugees to recruit foreign stylists, develop transnational supply networks and to learn the trade. In this way the relationship between 'stayees' and 'returnees' is as complex as the transnational nationalism being worked out in South Sudan. Fear and anxieties bound up with nation-making exist in these relations, but they have also facilitated the transnational flows of bodies, products, ideas and economies on which the new nation increasingly depends.

Looking smart: the clients

Elizabeth is approaching her fourth hour in an upscale salon along Thong Ping road. The colour scheme is orange and black – including the entirely imported leather seating, mirrors, dryers and product shelving. The bright hues dim momentarily when the electricity fails and the lights falter as the back-up generator lurches into gear. She is getting the usual, the removal of her old hair weave followed by a shampoo and conditioning treatment using imported products supplied by the salon. Her hair is then braided tightly with synthetic fibres to create the base for a new weave. Elizabeth has chosen a synthetic product made by the Ugandan company 'Darling' and the style is a straight ash brown that her hairdresser cuts into a sleek bob. All in all, the trip costs her 150 SDG,[6] about US$50, and she will return again in just a few weeks.

Perhaps a quintessential 'modern girl', Elizabeth is a young South Sudanese woman who has lived for the last 15 years in the USA. She has land in the city of Wau and is looking for a plot in Juba as she builds her organisation for women's rights from the city. She's on the phone as she sits in the salon, taking a call regarding her recent work lobbying parliamentarians for a marriage age of 18. Elizabeth has business plans too, maybe creating a consultancy firm or leasing her land to companies seeking markets in the country's 'second city'. She's seen as wealthy, compared to many who stayed during the war or who were displaced in neighbouring countries. But she's taking a considerable financial risk giving up her job in the USA and moving back to Juba where the living costs are so high. She argues that her salon visit is not a luxury but a necessity. 'It's very important here', she says, 'to look smart.'

Elizabeth is part of a growing urban elite in Juba, but her look is one that those with far more modest and/or unreliable incomes seek to emulate, even if it means missing meals or struggling to make rent. As one saloonist notes:

> If you apply for a job with short hair they doubt you. It's important to look beautiful for an interview, in Sudan and in Uganda too. You have to plait and extend your hair to make it look nice … It is more important than eating dinner.

Clients often articulated the close ties between personal appearance and the presentation of an educated and employable urban self in a city with growing competitive and profitable private and development sectors. Here one's hairstyle, and the associated use of imported chemical treatments and salon technologies required to maintain it, communicates class, competency, expertise and professionalism. One client argues,

> Even if your clothes are not very beautiful, your hair and nails can be. At school – that's where it is cultivated, that is where you are told you have to look smart. If you don't look smart you will not be recognised as someone who has been to school … it doesn't have to mean high wealth, even if life is not so smooth some person will go to the saloon to get their hair and nails done.

Fifteen years ago, just as Elizabeth moved to the USA, synthetic hair was entering the East African beauty market. According to Suwat, a Kenyan stylist in Moonshine salon, at that time 'weaves were only for those that could afford it'. As the trade has expanded, it has adapted to take advantage of this demand across class, developing hair products priced variedly according to quality, style and length. Two synthetic brands, 'Angel' and 'Darling' are imported from Kenya and Uganda and dominate the market, with a range of styles and lengths to fit sharply differentiated budgets. For example, three hairstyles are now popular in South

Sudan. The first, and cheapest, is 'pencil' or 'lines', the plaiting and sewing of synthetic braids to form tight, neat lines. Kampalan styles often include a shock of bright blue or pink, although in Juba saloonists note that clients are still more conservative in their tastes, more commonly choosing dark brown, black or, occasionally, blonde. 'Twisting' is another popular style, painstaking and more expensive given the labour hours involved, but leading to a full, loose head of synthetic hair. A third popular trend (and Elizabeth's preferred style) uses layers of hair weaves, sewn to cover the head. In each case clients can adapt the fashion to their budget, with shorter eight inch weaves costing around 30 SDG or US$10, increasing by 5 SDG for every couple of inches of hair. The quality of the fibre also varies, and is priced according to how closely it emulates real hair, which remains rare and very expensive. This variability in the cost of weaves has increased their accessibility, but the allure of their past exclusivity remains, bolstered by their imported status and their association with other, also imported, chemical products and hair technologies. Keeping up with these new fashions has emerged as an important preoccupation in the post-war moment, communicating upward mobility, ease with the norms of the rapidly emerging service and development sectors, and a cosmopolitan fluency with international products and styles.

Yet, it seems there is a fine line to tread between 'looking smart' and embracing too readily imported trends. In the tumultuous days of adjustment following the peace, as Southerners came home in growing numbers, anxieties surfaced around style – how both the nation and its women should look. In 2008 the arrests and beatings of 27 young women in Juba for wearing 'tight trousers' and mini-skirts prompted widespread debate in the print and online media (Dak 2008; Grabska 2011). The arrests resulted from a local order issued by the Juba county commissioner banning 'all bad behaviours, activities and imported illicit cultures' (HRW 2009). The incident mirrors the moral panics around the modern girl that occurred in the 1920s and 1930s as imaginaries of the ideal national female body became intermeshed with emerging transnational flows of cosmetic products and cosmopolitan styles (Weinbaum *et al.* 2008). The Ministry for Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs was quick to condemn the arrests, stating that women's rights and equality would be respected in the new Republic of South Sudan. Yet, similar incidents have occurred elsewhere in the towns of Malakal, Rumbek and Yei, as well as border areas with Kenya where police have also arrested, stripped and/or fined women because of their dress (HRW 2009). In the diaspora, concerns about women's style have also surfaced in debates around South Sudanese beauty pageants, with tempers rising over whether contenders wearing western clothing and hair styled after Beyoncé can appropriately represent their nation (Faria 2010). In each of these cases nationalist debates have centred on women's bodies and styles, raising questions about what a woman of the new South Sudan can do and be. Those that discipline women justify their actions by putting into opposition the modern/imported/cosmopolitan and the traditional/local/national. Yet in the same moment, and in the same places, those adopting these styles blur and complicate such distinctions. These incidences highlight how the state and its citizenry are negotiating, with ambivalence and sometimes violence, the dramatic shifts in the region as it opens up to new migrants and returnees, and to new styles and ways of being.

Styling the nation: the saloonists

Accommodating the desire of post-conflict subjects to 'look smart' – to embody cosmopolitanism through technologies of the self – are those 'saloonists' who travel from their homes in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and the Congo to sew weaves, paint nails and treat hair in the city (see Plates 2 and 3). In an airy upscale salon in the Ministries district, Rukia and her friend Lillian are trying to stay busy. It is a quiet Tuesday, and the looping Congolese music videos can't keep their attention; they've seen them many times. The salon owner is travelling, buying new products for the shop, and only when she returns will they have a new selection to choose from. Rukia and Lillian are young Kenyan women in their twenties who met at Unity College Beauty School. Rukia came first a year ago and encouraged Lillian to follow – a common story of chain migration that means salons in Juba are often staffed solely by Kenyan, Ugandan or Ethiopian stylists. Though most beauty workers are young women, young men have also migrated to Juba, primarily as mani-pedicurists. They

Plate 2 A saloonist in Jebel market

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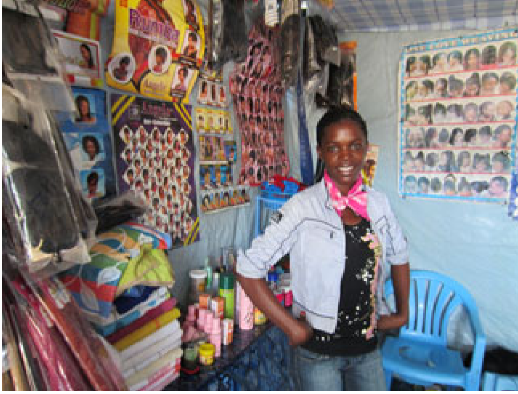

Plate 3 A salon owner in the Ministries district

operate mobile salons on the street, offering services for about 6 SDG or US$2 per foot.

Stylists spoke of the number of factors that attracted them to the beauty business, noting often that it was less physically demanding, better paying and more creative that the other options of laundry, ironing and cleaning. As Irene, a Ugandan saloonist notes,

> working in a saloon is a bit comfortable. Here we have free time, I enjoy my work. It's also creative, it's fun – I get to keep my mind working and I like to make my customer satisfied.

The creativity of saloonists is central to their role in fashioning the cosmopolitan nation. Saloonists described the pleasure they felt in researching new styles on the Internet, in magazines and hair product style guides, and through observation of men and women in the towns they had lived and travelled through. The names of the products they use demonstrate the influence of western pop culture; 'Rhianna', 'Alicia' and 'Beyoncé' are popularly stocked. Also prevalent are the 'Pro-Yaki', 'Hi-Yaki' and 'Ultra High-Yaki' styles created out of the Japanese synthetic fibre Kanekalon. Closer by, the countries of Kenya and Uganda also provide an important marker of style. Rebecca, of Vivian's Saloon, notes,

> I show the clients what is popular in Kampala. They're a little bit behind here, and if you stay too long then you get behind too. But I also make new styles, I see what the posters suggest and then I fit it to the face and her hair to see what will look best.

On arrival in Juba, saloonists innovate, testing out new styles suited to the hotter and dustier conditions in Juba and in keeping with the more conservative preferences of clients. Where they meet resistance to new styles and products, saloonists describe varied strategies to cajole clients. They model new styles on one other, display product posters with models sporting a host of fashionable styles, and they tell clients of the popularity of the style in the capitals of Nairobi and Kampala. Though still rare, some have also begun to host public events (sponsored by foreign companies like Darling hair) that introduce women to new styles and the company's products. In these ways, saloonists import and develop new trends, blending the foreign with the local and participating in the styling of Southerners and the nation.

For most saloonists, the decision to migrate to Juba was economically motivated. Competition in cities like Kampala and Nairobi is fierce, and stylists can go for days without seeing a client. In Juba respondents see an average of two to six customers in the week, rising to over 20 between Thursday and Sunday when they regularly work past ten o'clock. The strong Sudanese Pound was also a strong motivator for the move to the city; though the cost of living in Juba is high, Lillian still manages to send home three times what she could have saved in her home of Nakuru Town in the Rift Valley Province. She uses a mobile phone service to send her earnings to her parents for her three-year-old daughter. At this rate, like many aspiring migrants in the industry, she hopes one day to return home and open her own small business.

The large proportion of migrant workers in the salon industry mirrors that of the economy as a whole (Martin and Mosel 2011, 15). As I have noted, many Kenyans, Ugandans, Congolese and Ethiopians are working in Juba, but so too are those from further a field, including Lebanon, the Philippines, Thailand, China and the USA. Some new migrant paths reflect standing political ties that pre-date the peace, particularly with Uganda and Kenya, yet this diversity also speaks to the attraction of South Sudan for work since the signing of the peace. However, tensions around the foreign described above also extend to migrant workers. Saloonists described the demand by salon owners and clients alike for their know-how, but also told stories of harassment. These included regular demands for papers and (both legitimate and illegitimate) fees by police and government workers, landlords hiking up rent, violence at the hands of drunken soldiers and harassment by South Sudanese neighbours frustrated with their own lack of personal gains. Clients and stylists alike acknowledged these anxieties could manifest as xenophobia, a growing problem in the city (see also Mbogo 2011). One stylist described a recent dispute with a man who she believes was hired by her landlord to intimidate her into leaving or accepting a rent increase. Broken mirrors, a smashed fan and bruises marked her salon and the bodies of herself and several of her stylists as sites of violence. Others spoke of the frequent hostility they experienced from some clients themselves, particularly those unfamiliar with immigrants and immigrant experiences:

> Most people here think that we are here to steal or to profit and then to take the money away. They will say 'go invest in your own country'. But when we come we rent land with no house, no nothing and we build a place to live. When we leave we leave it for them – and they'll chase you back home after five years so they can find someone to pay more to live in the house you built!
>
> If they stayed inside during the war sometimes they say they hate foreigners – they're never friendly. But if they spent time outside they are appreciative because they know how it was to be a foreigner.

Lastly here, stylists note the contradictory attitudes of Southerners who criticise the perceived dominance of the economy by foreigners but who are, at once, intrigued and drawn to the styles, fashions and beauty techniques that they bring with them. Suwat notes:

> Those Sudanese that stayed here can be back-biting. They are very much in Arabic and then it is difficult for them to adapt to all the English and they are frustrated we can't talk to them. But still they can be very excited about the salon. They come in and want to get inside the drier, to sit in the chair, they want to know everything that is going on!

Stylists like Rukia and Lillian moved to Juba to take advantage of the burgeoning economic opportunities offered by this high-risk, high-return city. In doing so, however, they also contribute to a particular rendering of the nation – one that is fundamentally transnational and cosmopolitan and thus deeply fraught. Through their creativity they participate in the styling of the South Sudanese body, inculcating in their clients, and those who admire the styles their clients sport, aspirations to a cosmopolitan, worldly and modern aesthetic. This is made possible by transnational flows of commodities, bodies and styles and is valued both by the international development industry and private investors who form the key employers in the new nation. It is also a relational process, with saloonists innovating and adapting foreign fashions to the particularities of the South Sudanese setting. Again then, new postcolonial nationalisms in South Sudan are produced through border crossing subjects and styles, and through a mix of emotions. Though deep-seated anxieties around migrants exist, these are bound up with a desire for beneficial integration into East Africa, and for the fashioning of a new, cosmopolitan nation.

Exotic/toxic mobilities: the traders

Like salon owners and their clients, migrant stylists work to produce the cosmopolitan modern girl and nation. Yet their ambivalent treatment points to deeper challenges facing South Sudanese citizens as the country emerges from war. Deepening transnational connections to East Africa and afar are an important part of the political, economic, social and cultural development of the South, yet they also threaten the integrity of the nation-making project. Perhaps best embodying this contradiction are those subjects who are at once national and transnational: Southerners contributing to the development of the country, but doing so through their heightened mobility.

Levi is one such subject (see Plate 4). When stylists in Jebel market run low on a particular lotion, relaxant or weave, they cross the busy streets to a stretch brimming with newly imported products. If they've worked there for just a little while, they know which trader has what they need (and if not, a far superior alternative). Levi is a young South Sudanese man in his twenties. He spent much of the war travelling between Uganda, Congo and Kenya – learning how the markets worked, the best trading routes and how to negotiate official and unofficial border fees so he can still turn a profit. Unlike many young men clamouring for government positions Levi has no interest in civil service. He started selling aged seven on the streets of Kampala, gradually saving money and buying steadily larger stocks of goods. He paid his own way through school in Uganda, taking years out to work and save, returning when he could to complete his 'O' and 'A' level exams. He uses connections to family and friends scattered throughout East and West Africa during the war to build supplier networks.

Levi's stall is one of the largest selling hair and beauty products – taking up a double lot and positioned lucratively on a corner brimming with busy saloons. It is bursting with products and he wants to expand further. To keep it this well stocked he remains incredibly mobile, taking the bus down to Kampala every two weeks on the newly improved A43. This is his favourite city for shopping and while there he scopes out Majestic Plaza, Mukwano Arcade and Gazaland Market for the best deals. He knows the markets of Nairobi well too and he also buys fake 'real' hair from Nigeria and Togo. More rarely he travels to Dubai to find better

Plate 4 Levi in his stall in Jebel market

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deals still and to access rare products, including real hair entering the market from China and India. His business is a lucrative one, with imported products between two and five times the retail price in Uganda and Kenya. He sells curl activators and cuticle cleaners in Juba for twice their price in Kampala and hair weaves for three to five times their price there. In part this pays for import taxes and the time and cost of bus travel. But Levi also knows the value of desire for foreign hair products in a country that does not produce its own and cannot yet compete with the exotic promises of lotions, weaves and polishes from afar.

As is the case for most finished goods (Martin and Mosel 2011; IFC 2011), South Sudan has virtually no manufacturing sector for beauty products. Instead these have a complex commodity chain of product development, production and distribution before traders like Levi import them to South Sudan. Some staples in the beauty industry – like Angel and Darling hair products – are made and sold in Uganda and Kenya. Though many other imported goods are made in one of these two countries, they are often licensed to companies based elsewhere in Africa, North America and Europe. In addition many beauty products come from East Asia or countries in the Middle East. Levi's products reveal the increasingly transnational nature of commodities sold in the new nation, the deeply constrained ability of South Sudan to produce domestically and, consequently, its dependency on international markets. In lieu of a strong primary and secondary sector, and with the relatively open borders to East Africa and the ports of Dubai, entrepreneurial subjects like Levi will continue to profit.

However, mirroring worries around returnee fashions and migrant workers, the transnationality of these products has also prompted anxieties about the integrity of the nation. Levi assures me that all his products are originals and that he never trades in expired goods, saying he works hard to build his reputation in this regard. His comments speak to recent scandals where poor quality, counterfeit cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and chemical treatments from abroad have been implicated in the death and disfigurement of Southerners. The incidences are part of a body of rumour around the deliberate poisoning, in varied forms, of Southerners by non-Southerners in South Sudan, Khartoum in Sudan and countries of exile like Egypt (Nakimangole 2011; *Sudan Tribune* 2011a 2011b), prompting an outcry around lax import regulations and the inability of border staff to control smuggled goods. These fears echo rumours of poisoning in colonial Sudan that occurred as local communities developed ties with foreign people, products and ideas (Leonardi 2007). As the South opens up to international commodities, this popular discourse has resurfaced, along with a sense that outsiders, as well as the old enemy of the Government of Sudan, pose a growing threat to the economic and biological integrity of the South Sudanese body. Levi's success in the rapidly growing cosmetics trade speaks again to the desire for these products and the reorientation outwards of the economy and the individual. But the fears around his products also suggest a collective anxiety about this new order of things.

Conclusions

South Sudan's emerging beauty industry offers valuable insights into broader contemporary and transnational political and economic shifts. These include the return of Southerners from the diaspora; the important role of migrants and transnational entrepreneurs; and the international flows of commodities to the South. In these ways the beauty industry is deeply bound up with nation-making. These transnational shifts are producing new imaginaries of the nation and what it means to be (and style) a South Sudanese. One national imaginary, exemplified by critics of 'imported cultures', is more conservative and nostalgic, and is seemingly threatened by the new. The other styling of the nation is outwardly oriented, inherently cosmopolitan and tied to notions of liberal freedoms and the modern. This imaginary of the new nation is viewed by some as inauthentic, deeply troubling and indeed threatening, a tension emerging not only in urban areas like Juba but across the South where immigrants and Southern Sudanese returnees are settling (see Grabska 2011). Yet in many ways this imaginary more accurately reflects the shifts at work in the South, where heightened mobilities and close ties with cosmopolitan cities like Kampala and Nairobi are increasingly influential in shaping the development of the nation.

Beyond a focus on locally rooted and formal political tools of or threats to nationalism, this study demonstrates the inherently transnational nature of the new nation-building moment – one produced through the cross-border flows of commodities, bodies and styles. Observing nationalism through the lens of beauty also highlights its deeply ambivalent, contradictory, messy and always emotional nature. Fear and panic are bound up with the desire for and embrace of the trade. Anxieties around foreign and returnee salon ownership, the transgressions of new styles, xenophobia towards migrant stylists and fearful rumours of poisoning from imported beauty products are also important to pay attention to. They speak to the instabilities, the tensions and the ruptures also inherent in the styling of a new nation – one that is transnational, cosmopolitan and turbulently re-oriented outwards.

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Notes

1 This cosmopolitan nationalism is neither unique to South Sudan nor the contemporary moment, though it is less well-explored in this context. For example, Apter argues that nationalism in the booming petro-state of late 1970s Nigeria, expressed through the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), mirrored global circuits of Pan-Africanism and the oil trade. He notes 'the boundaries of the new nation form were fluid and variable, narrowing into local icons of cultural tradition and fanning out into global expressions of Pan-African unity' (2005, 23).

2 That is not to deny the trade's dominance by wealthy nations like the USA and France, nor the racialisation of beauty norms in terms of whiteness (Tanita 2012; Thomas 2012). However, understanding cosmopolitanism narrowly as a set of elite values, aesthetics and politics ignores the complex ways it is taken up, reworked and embodied in seemingly peripheral places.

3 Pseudonyms are used where requested. Participants gave permission for the photographs to be taken and for the publication of those images included in this article.

4 Those working in formal, salaried employment are described as the 'working class', in contrast to its established usage elsewhere.

5 During the debates, calls for a higher national stake between 25 and 40 per cent were also voiced (GoSS 2009 in Martin and Mosel 2011).

6 The Sudanese Pound (SDG) was the currency in use at the time of research. Several months later the country transferred to the South Sudanese pound (SSP).

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