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“The Man You Love To Hate”

**An Anthropological Perspective on Mutabaruka And His
Steppin Razor Radio Show**

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In memory of Sevana Leona

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Image 1: Steppin Razor (The Art of War) (Source: Mutabaruka 2013)

*i am de man
 you love to hate
 sitting in the slums of
 ghost town
 trench town
 back o' wall
 no clothes
 to hide my nakedness
 filth and mosquitoes smelling
 biting 400 years of black flesh
 scarred by whips and sticks
 i am de man
 locks entangled in
 your nightmares of
 medusas and gorgons
 unkept religious beliefs
 that pierce the side of
 your jesus in the sky
 your vinegar has turned to blood
 your water to mud
 crucifix
 choking on your life
 of neo-colonialistic attitudes
 yes I am de man
 (Mutabaruka 2005: 34)*

1. Introduction

“When yuh live inna Jamaica, there is so much tings happen that yuh really haffi deal wid it pon a level. And wi nah inna parliament and wi never vote, but wi have a voice pon the radio. Wi use a microphone to express whatsoever wi waan to express. Wi hope that the people dem gravitate and listen.”¹

Mutabaruka (SR 36: 1)

1.1. General introduction and research topic

When one thinks of Jamaica and especially of the music and arts coming from this *likkle*² Caribbean island, one may associate it with Reggae and Rastafari immediately. Reggae musicians like Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Sizzla or, quite recently, Chronixx and Protoje, might come to mind, who have had a huge influence and been an inspiration for millions, if not billions of people worldwide. In fact, even the UNESCO recognised this influence lately by inscribing Reggae on the World Heritage List in November 2018, given the fact that Reggae addresses injustice, resistance and humanity (cf. URL 1). The impact artists like Bob Marley or Sizzla had and still have on the music, arts and culture of Jamaica, especially with regard to Rastafari, is therefore certainly undisputed. However, there has been one person, who already since the 1970s, may have had an even more crucial influence on a certain sensitisation of a *Black* consciousness within Jamaica, the Caribbean and beyond.³ A *Rastaman* who has been teaching about Rastafari and its powerful essence even at a high academical level; a radio host who never gets tired of sitting or standing in front of a

¹ Please keep in mind that the consulted quotations throughout the entire thesis are true to the original. I don't provide an English translation or paraphrase of the Jamaican *Patois* (or *Patwah*), which is the Creole language of the Jamaican majority and used by Mutabaruka in his radio show as well as by most of my interview partners. Hence, I ask the reader to not be irritated by seeming misspellings or grammatical errors (as one may think of in the terms of English). The anglophone Jamaican Patois features African influences but is close to the English language (cf. Cassidy 2007: 2f.), at least one can grasp the meaning of the content. Furthermore, I used the so-called Chaka-Chaka spelling (cf. Federici/Coppola 2015; Mühleisen 2002: 195f.) to enable an easier reading experience for people familiar with English orthography. For more information on the socio-political background and development of Creole languages in the Caribbean, please cf. Cassidy 2007: 10-25 and Mühleisen 2002: 58-64. It should also be noticed that Muta likes to use the plural form and thus one can recognise that he often says *wi* (we) instead of *mi* (me).

² *Likkle* is the Jamaican Patois word used for *little*. For a detailed list of Jamaican words and their English synonyms, please see appendix C of this thesis (chapter 8.3.).

³ Since it is important to precipitate an awareness of the atrocities that slavery has brought upon people from Africa or of African descent in terms of subordination and discrimination, in this thesis *Black* is written with a capital B (as opposed to *white*).

microphone to bring awareness to social, political, economical and religious issues, who ultimately always has one aim, namely justice for people of African descent: Mutabaruka.

Born as Allan Roy Hope, Mutabaruka became famous during the early 1980s, when he successfully started to tour around the world as an avowed Rastaman and Dub/Reggae artist (cf. Interview 1: 6f.). Among other pioneers, such as Linton Kwesi Johnson and Oku Onuora (cf. Habekost 1993: 16-21), he was one of the first recording artists who educated Dub Poetry as a kind of sub-genre of Jamaican popular music. Yet, he prefers to define himself merely as a poet who would use any type of music to set his poetic verses to (cf. Interview 1: 11f.). *Muta*, as many people like to refer to him as, is not only a poet and performing artist but also an actor, music *selecta*⁴, producer, philosopher, “development thinker” (URL 2), activist, lecturer, and last but not least, a social commentator and talk show host in his weekly daytime radio broadcast by the name of *Steppin Razor* on Irie FM, Jamaica’s most popular radio channel.⁵ Irrespective of the medium he is working on or with, he always understands how to string together words to reach his listeners like a cutting edge.⁶ Being an uncomfortable and unorthodox voice within the Jamaican media landscape, the renowned Rastafarian is loved and hated in equal measure (cf. Interview 1: 8), as he manages to challenge hegemonic ideals and values rooted in the country’s colonial past.

Within the *Steppin Razor* show, Mutabaruka debates sociocultural, (geo)political, economical, historical, musical as well as religious and spiritual topics. His socially analytical, mentor-like and oftentimes reprehensive arguments are presumed to be social commentaries with a huge societal significance in Jamaica and beyond. It is therefore for a reason that he is attributed the name “Great Mutabaruka” (Interview 1: 20). The radio host is jointly responsible for an awareness raising even outside of the Rastafari, Reggae and poetry community. As a well respected intellectual person he regularly gives guest lectures at colleges and universities worldwide, e.g. at the University of the West Indies in Mona/Jamaica, at the Merritt College in Oakland/USA, at the Stanford University in California/USA, at the New College University of Toronto/Canada, at the Wits University in Johannesburg/South Africa, or even at the University of Vienna/Austria.⁷ Occasionally he

⁴ This is the Jamaican Patois synonym for selector, meaning a disc jockey who plays or *selects* tunes on a sound system (cf. Stolzoff 2000: 54ff.).

⁵ Irie FM featured 20,27 % of Jamaica’s radio listenership in 2016 (cf. MRSL 2017: 21). For further reading on Irie FM, its launch and early development please cf. Mockyen 2003: 333-336.

⁶ *Cutting Edge* is also the name of Muta’s other famous radio programme on Irie FM that has been on air since 1992.

⁷ Whereas many video and audio clips of Muta’s lectures can be found on YouTube or *ireggae.com*, his keynote address from the Seventh Conference of the Society for Caribbean Research, which was held at the University

even becomes the subject of scholastic investigation, for instance at the Rastafari Studies Conference in Mona, where a panel speaker's paper was titled "Mutabaruka: The Icon" (URL 2). In 2016, he was awarded the *Order of Distinction (Commander Class)* from the Jamaican government for his contribution to the country's music and culture (cf. URL 3). It is one of the highest orders a Jamaican citizen can receive.

The famous philosopher is reckoned a pan-Africanist⁸, whose influence is strongly affected by Malcolm X, as well as by the legendary Jamaican pan-Africanist Marcus Mosiah Garvey (cf. Interview 1: 6f., 12). In the discourse of Black liberation, the Black Power movement, the African diaspora or African-American realms of experiences, as well as of international alarming trends of racist suppression (cf. Achiume 2018; FRA 2018) and extremist – mostly white nationalist – ideologies (cf. Beirich/Buchanan 2018), the up-to-dateness and relevance of Mutabaruka's philosophy and opinions is obvious. Therefore, this master's thesis intends a synopsis of the effectiveness of Mutabaruka and his Steppin Razor broadcast, as well as a representation of his intellectual capital in a coherent view.

1.2. Research question(s) and hypothesis

Corresponding to the research topic as introduced and presented above, the main research question for this thesis is: *To what extent can a coherent worldview of Mutabaruka be ascertained and demonstrated by the analysis of his Steppin Razor radio shows?*⁹

This superordinate question implies several sub-questions, which are: What kind of narratives and (historical) perspectives emerge in the course of the Steppin Razor show? How does the broadcast contribute to form and affect the mindset within a postcolonial Jamaica and postcolonial world respectively? Which roles do Rastafari, Black Power and pan-Africanism play for Mutabaruka's narratives and representations? What are his considerations towards slavery, racism, reparation, decolonisation and African diaspora? And how are these established? How is his reception of recent political, sociocultural and societal practices (within the Jamaican and global context) represented and constituted?

of Vienna in July 2001, is published in Werner Zips's book *Rastafari: A Universal Philosophy in the Third Millennium* (cf. Mutabaruka 2006a).

⁸ Within this thesis, I refer to the notion of pan-Africanism as outlined by Horace Campbell (cf. Campbell 1988).

⁹ Even though the term of *worldview* is gradually disappearing from the anthropological community's vocabulary (cf. Pinxten 2015), it will be used throughout this thesis to refer to its original German equivalent *Weltanschauung* and to comprise Mutabaruka's overarching intellectual conception of the world. For further definitions and incitation please cf. Kearney 1984; Naugle 2002: 209-252 and Rapport/Overing 2000: 394-404.

What kind of deliberations can his social comments and narratives offer for people living in a globalised world? How can his sense of justice be pictured? Which roles do the interviews and informal conversations, as well as the participant observation as conducted during the field research, play for the analysis?

It doesn't matter where one gets the chance to see or hear Mutabaruka. It is always very special in regard to his appearance, aura, eloquence, righteous teaching and philosophising, just as Carolyn Cooper puts it in a nutshell: "Allan 'Mutabaruka' Hope inhabits a world of endless possibilities in which the power and authority of this extraordinary Rastaman are fully manifested." (Cooper 2013: 113) Mostly within his radio programmes, he knows better than anybody else how to use charm, jocularly, rebelliousness and smartness all in one to address his views and arguments in a very comprehensible and simple way that succeeds in reaching a whole nation. Since Steppin Razor is basically a talk show, Mutabaruka takes his time to depict his views on all kinds of relevant discourses, from crime issues and corrupt politicians in Jamaica to the global Chinese and American influence, to notions of Rastafari's empowerment (cf. SR 1-50).

Therefore, the hypothesis is framed as follows: The more Steppin Razor broadcasts are analysed, the more eclectic Muta's worldview crystallises. An in-depth and qualitative analysis of 50 Steppin Razor broadcasts will enable access to a coherent worldview of Mutabaruka in regard to sociocultural, economic, political and religious topics concerning the country and people of Jamaica as well as the world's population of African descent. It is assumed that his radio programme contributes to the shaping of a critical mindset and consciousness within a postcolonial field. Through his social commentaries and narratives he tries to make people aware of the history, as well as continuing effects of slavery and colonialism, and within the scope of his philosophical statements shaped by Rastafari, pan-Africanism and Black Power, he offers people an optional way of thinking and living, away from a Western-dominated (*Eurocentric*), neo-colonial and white supremacist point of view towards an African-centred or *Afrocentric* (cf. Monteiro-Ferreira 2014: 1-12) one. These assumptions likely cohere with the *habitus* and the socialisation of Mutabaruka. The theoretical concept of the *logic of practice*, as designed by Pierre Bourdieu, will help to connect the empiricism (received via the evaluation of the radio broadcasts and via the fieldwork on-site) with a theoretical setting and to explain the social structure of the field and its correlation with Muta's agency and practice. Besides, the informal conversations, as well as the interviews, that were conducted during the field research, will account for a more holistic picture of my study.

1.3. Methodology and fieldwork

“There are many ways of doing fieldwork, and it is therefore difficult to provide a simple recipe for how to carry it out.”

Eriksen 2015: 34

In order to warrant a representative work, the qualitative research approach comprised a *between-method-triangulation* (cf. Denzin 1970: 308ff.), which in this case was a combination of empirical methods that complemented each other. Therefore, in terms of methodology, this thesis deals with a methodological pluralism: a combination of *experimental ethnographic field research* (cf. Gingrich 2013: 118f.) that implies various methods, including the evaluation of Mutabaruka’s radio shows.

Generally, the focus of the thesis lies on narratives. On the one hand, in order to receive textual scripts of Mutabaruka’s narratives, 50 randomly chosen Steppin Razor broadcasts were transcribed – in terms of *random sampling* (cf. Halbmayer/Salat 2011: 6) – from the years between 2014 and 2017. In turn, these narratives were dealt with as *texts* and analysed in the style and with the technique of Philipp Mayring’s *qualitative content analysis* (cf. Mayring 2015). Via the analysis of this collected empirical data (which, in a way, serves as an archival transcription), it was possible to gain insight into Mutabaruka’s *lifeworld*.¹⁰ Since the 50 broadcasts represent many of the different fields and topics that Muta speaks about and focuses on within his programme, it is a representative selection as it displays “a reduced undistorted representation of the main unit” (Halbmayer/Salat 2011: 6; own translation¹¹). The main unit thus consists of approximately 200 Steppin Razor shows between the years 2014 and 2017. Since it is a weekly show and I consulted 50 broadcasts, one can say that I am dealing with almost a complete year of radio shows and with a fourth of the main unit. I used five episodes from 2014, twelve from 2015, 15 from 2016 and 18 from 2017 for my analysis. All in all, 4.306 minutes of the Steppin Razor programme were consulted for my research. Access to the audio files of the respective radio shows has been provided by Duke Baysee, a Jamaican who always uploads a recorded audio replication of the latest Steppin Razor show to his own YouTube channel.¹² Thus, Baysee maintains an

¹⁰ In order to translate and define the German word *Lebenswelt*, which I would use at this point, I decided to use the approaches of *lifeworld* as suggested and employed by Jürgen Habermas (cf. Habermas 1987) and Björn Kraus (cf. Kraus 2013: 66, 145ff.).

¹¹ Original: „Eine Stichprobe ist dann repräsentativ, wenn sie ein verkleinertes unverzerrtes Abbild der Grundgesamtheit darstellt.“ (Halbmayer/Salat 2011: 6)

¹² The channel’s name is DUKE BAYSEE. He defines his own channel as following: “Please be open minded coz [sic!] this channel is controversial, educational and most times unbelievable.” (URL 4)

online archive of Mutabaruka's radio broadcasts (not only of the Steppin Razor, but also of the Cutting Edge programme), which is accessible to everybody who has an Internet connection. At this point, I want to thank Duke Baysee for his effort to provide Muta's statements, views and debates via an on-demand medium with a global and ever-accessible dimension. This is more than great work.

On the other hand, I conducted field research in Jamaica from 19th November until 7th December in 2018. There, I had the opportunity to undertake an in-depth *narrative-biographical interview* with Mutabaruka, *expert interviews* and *narrative interviews* with some of his companions, and *informal conversations* with not only listeners of his radio broadcast but also ordinary people on-site. Afterwards, all the transliterated interviews were analysed in the style of Mayring again. Furthermore, as an anthropologist I regarded the field research – at least certain phases of it – as *participant observation* (cf. Malinowski 2001: 24ff.; Beer 2008: 37-58), which enabled supplemental findings of Mutabaruka's agency and its implications as well as a *thick description* (cf. Flick/Kardorff/Steinke 2004: 3) of my research subject. The fieldwork, thus, tests the theory, or, in James Clifford's words: "it would *ground* interpretation" (Clifford 1997: 185). My results stem from the analysis of the narratives as received from the radio shows and interviews plus my empirical data as collected in the field.

1.3.1. Data collection and analysis

Within my qualitative approach, it was suitable to consult Austrian social historian Reinhard Sieder and his methodological and theoretical advisements for the data collection. As he suggests, the *narrative-biographical interview*-form (cf. Sieder 2008: 150-158) offers an appropriate method to receive subjective narrations (or *statements*, as he calls them) and thus access to the individual's (historical) practices. My approach is influenced by Sieder's inputs since they are very plausible. Mostly, I adhered to his guidelines for the procedure of the narrative-biographical interview with Mutabaruka during my field research in Jamaica. Sieder considers *seven phases* for the execution of the narrative-biographical interview: After the researcher's introduction and stage directions (phase one), the interviewee is invited to talk via an initial question or invitation (phase two). In my case, the question "Can you please tell me about your childhood and your growing up?" (Interview 1: 1), turned out to be a very fitting one for this aspect. Then, the interviewer is supposed to let the actor or interview partner talk as long and with as many details as possible and, with sure instinct, to

ask merely immanent (thus narrative- and keyword-related) questions (phase three). Towards the end of the interview, one should plan some time for exmanent questions in order to receive additional information on unexplained statements that are important for the research (phase four). In the context of my interview, I asked questions on Mutabaruka's poetry, his favourite books and films as well as detailed questions on the Steppin Razor programme and its initiation (cf. *ibid.*: 11-21). Afterwards, Sieder proposes two optional phases, one for the reconstruction of routines (phase five) and one for some form of reasoning (phase six). Hereby, both the actor and the interviewer have the opportunity to reflect on certain developments and possible theories along the narrative. A concluding talk illustrates the last step of the narrative-biographical interview (phase seven). (cf. Sieder 2008: 150-156)

Actually, these last steps were performed by my research colleague Christian Moll as he took over the interview after phase four of my interview part (cf. Interview 1: 21ff.). Basically, the narrative-biographical interview should be constructed in such a way that the actor feels encouraged to talk dissipatedly and associatively. I definitely share Sieder's opinion that such an intense and elaborate narrative seems to be the most adequate form to talk about one's life story and societal (historic) participations (cf. Sieder 2008: 151). As my thesis tries to capture Muta's coherent worldview, it was indispensable to get a close-up view of his biography and thus an insight of his agencies and developments over the years.

I also used the method of the *expert* interview (cf. Lamnek 2010: 655-658) in combination with the *narrative* interview (cf. *ibid.*: 326-330), which is similar to (if not the same as) the narrative-biographical one. Furthermore, I conducted informal conversations. Whereas the latter one, as its name discloses, is of no formal structure and shaped by a loose atmosphere, the expert interview consists of several key principles in form and content. In particular, I chose the *systematized expert-interview*, as demonstrated by Siegfried Lamnek (cf. *ibid.*: 656). Such an approach has its emphasis on the expert's practice-based knowledge of agency and experience. Lamnek describes experts as representatives of organisations or institutions (cf. *ibid.*). For my research it was important to find persons with an expert opinion on Mutabaruka and his agency. Therefore, my target group was neither an organisation nor an institution but rather a group of people who have some connection with Mutabaruka and would give an extra (although not omniscient) view on his legacy and radio achievements. With a multifaceted group of persons including Carolyn Cooper, Tony Rebel, Errol Hamilton, Priest Fego, Ishiwawa Hope, and her husband, my target (or: expert) group was completed. Whereas their own biographies and life stories would more or less stay in

the background within the interviews, the experts were encouraged to refer to my protagonist and his radio show. Lamnek characterises such an undertaking as a reference to well-defined extracts of reality: “Beim Einsatz von Experteninterviews erfolgt eine Bezugnahme auf klar definierte Wirklichkeitsausschnitte, während darüber hinausgehende (private) Erfahrungen ausgeklammert werden.“ (ibid.: 656) Nevertheless, as an anthropologist I am always interested in people’s personal experiences, most of all if they are my informants within a research context. For this reason, I combined the expert with the narrative interview and, consequently, more space was provided for my interview partners in order to gain longer, more detailed and private narratives (very similar to the narrative-biographical interview type, but without its main focus on the biographical facts). As opposed to these *open* questions and with regard to the structural form of the expert interview as presented by Lamnek (cf. ibid.: 658), I deployed a guideline for some questions. For example, I would ask standardised questions as follows: “How did you get to know Mutabaruka? What kind of influence does the Steppin Razor radio show have on you? How would you regard Muta’s significance within society?” (cf. Interviews 2-4) Thus, certain sections within the interviews show characteristics of guided interviews. Following a praxeological paradigm, Sieder proposes to reconstruct the social logic of the field’s actor empirically via an analysis of the actor’s *statements* and an interpretation of his/her agency and perspectives. At first, however, the narratives (or statements) need to be transposed into *texts* before they get analysed (cf. Sieder 2008: 148). In my case, I also transposed the statements from the radio broadcasts into texts and treated them analogous to the interview material from my fieldwork. Therefore, I received a multiplicity of statements from Mutabaruka (and about Mutabaruka). Fortunately, due to his love for talking, Muta’s statements within the radio broadcasts seem like statements from some narrative-biographical interview as they feature long and extensive narratives about his experiences and expectations in life.

For the data analysis and interpretation, I primarily followed Philipp Mayring’s suggestion for a *qualitative content analysis* (cf. Mayring 2015; 2016: 114-121). The content analysis focuses on texts, pictures or symbolic materials, i.e. any form of recorded communication (cf. Mayring 2015: 12). By means of the three autonomous basic analytical and interpretative methods of *summary*, *explication* and *structuring*, Mayring’s approach offers a flexible yet systematic categorisation of the narratives and statements, even for a bulk of data as in my research. As a possible first way, the process of *summary* serves to figure out the essential narratives. With the aim to reduce the text material to such an extent that it still illustrates a representative effigy (cf. Mayring 2016: 115), the inductive creation

of categories (as a criterion for or against consideration) should provide the basis for an interpretation with regard to the research questions and the consulted theory (cf. *ibid.*: 117). The *explicated* analysis intends to find additional material for comprehending and elucidating questionable text passages, e.g. in other text passages of the same narrative or within a contextual analysis (cf. *ibid.*: 118). For this reason, I refer to supplementary literature in the context of Rastafari, Jamaica, Dancehall, postcolonialism, slavery et al. (cf. chapter four). The third method, *structuring*, helps to filter a certain structure out of the material. Structuring with regards to content enables a content- and topic-based categorisation along each narrative/text (cf. Mayring 2015: 66). Such a subdivision helped me to establish the main chapters for my thesis (cf. chapter four), as certain textual sequences would fit contents of specific chapters.

During the analytical process, I have developed my own technique as I used a *hybrid form* of the three mentioned analytical methods (summary, explication and structuring). Although Mayring argues for a differentiating between the three forms, he also sees value in a mixed approach: “Natürlich sind auch die verschiedensten Mischformen dieser Analysearten denkbar, [...]” (Mayring 2015: 65) The hybrid form was essential in order to get an immaculate collection and effigy of Mutabaruka’s standpoints and opinions, and, subsequently, an adequate analysis and interpretation of his ideologeme plus its background, derivation and incorporation. Mayring’s qualitative content analysis helped me to locate structures and rules for a theory-based reflection and to display my specific research case. On the basis of sequential text analyses, I tried to detect Muta’s worldview as communicated within useful text sequences and interpret it with the help of Bourdieu’s theory, as introduced later on (cf. chapter 2.2.).

1.3.2. Fieldwork in Jamaica

My anthropological regional specialisation in the Caribbean as well as my interest in Jamaica and its culture and music for about 15 years now illuminate the choice of my research and thesis topic. In fact, my supervisor Werner Zips already recommended the topic to me in 2013 after he had realised my strong interest in Rastafari and Reggae. I had already conducted field research in Jamaica in 2008 and 2012. Back then, the researches had been pilot studies and not about Mutabaruka in specific. Nevertheless, I got to know Jamaica as a field and my Jamaican friends have become my informants and gatekeepers in many different ways since then. I got to know Mutabaruka, too; not only when he was the stage

host at the popular Reggae-festival named *Rebel Salute* in 2009 or when he walked barefoot in the middle of the day at Emancipation Park in Kingston and saluted me respectfully, but also as an important and influential talk show host on Irie FM where he broadcasted his other regular programme *Cutting Edge* back then. Likewise, I was able to hear his lectures at the University of Vienna in 2011¹³ and his guest talk at the *Rise & Shine Festival* in Falkenstein, Lower Austria, in 2016 (cf. URL 5). Until then, my meetings with Muta had always been on an ephemeral basis.

The very recent field research in Jamaica in autumn of 2018 was quite different, though. Unlike the prior field trips, this time I visited Jamaica with an official academical scheme. The University of Vienna granted me the so-called *Förderungsstipendium* to do field research on Mutabaruka within the context of my master's thesis. Together with German colleague Christian Moll, we had the opportunity to meet Muta at the Irie FM studios in Ocho Rios, where he usually does his radio shows. I arranged this meeting in advance, since my supervisor Werner Zips had given me Muta's telephone number prior to my trip. After a short *get-to-know* conversation, Muta consented to our research plans and promptly invited us to attend the radio studio and accompany him during the radio show. Eventually, we even received the honour to be interviewed by him live on air in the course of the Steppin Razor broadcast on 22nd November 2018 and, hence, we were able to tell the radio listeners about our university projects and research. This was participatory observation par excellence. A few days later, the Rastafarian host invited us to his house on the countryside near Jamaica's capital Kingston. There, we had the pleasure to undertake a 160-minute-long narrative-biographical interview, which we recorded with two DSLR cameras and microphones (cf. Image 2).



Image 2: Mutabaruka interview (Source: Schwager 2018a)

¹³ He was invited by Werner Zips in the course of the *Introduction to the ethnology of the Caribbean* lectures to speak about Rastafari and globalisation.

In addition, alongside our fieldwork we had the opportunity to meet and interview Carolyn Cooper (only audio interview), a retired professor for literature and cultural studies at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, as well as Tony Rebel, a famous Reggae artist and event promoter. Both of them substitute for Muta when he is abroad and cannot host his radio show. We also arranged to conduct an interview with Priest Fego, a Rastaman from Bull Bay's *Bobo Shanti* camp¹⁴ (also known as Bobo Hill), where we also had conducted participatory observation earlier as we took part in their Sabbath ceremonies. Furthermore, I interviewed a former journalist, photographer and long-standing follower of Mutabaruka named Errol Hamilton, and Christian interviewed Muta's first daughter, Ishiwawa Hope, and her husband. All these additional interviews manifest the character of expert and/or narrative interviews. Along with my personal field observations and many informal conversations with Jamaicans from different social backgrounds with whom I discussed Mutabaruka's societal influence and status, the diversity of our interview partners – ranging from a professor, a musician, a Rastaman, and a journalist to two of Muta's family members – contribute to a coherent and overarching approach and a critical study of the legacy of Muta and his Steppin Razor broadcast.¹⁵

As one may notice, my field research had focused upon conducting interviews and conversations, but not so much on participant observation. This has two reasons: My main research interest was rather the analysis of Mutabaruka's narratives from the radio shows than an analysis of his daily life and rituals, and I didn't carry out a long-term fieldwork in the conventional way, so there was less room for participant observation (e.g. to live and stay with Mutabaruka for a certain period of time). However, I tried to "take part in local life as much as possible" (Eriksen 2015: 34), sticking with Eriksen's appellation of the main requirement in fieldwork: I attended Reggae- and Dancehall-sessions in Kingston (*Weddy Weddy, Dub Club, Caveman Rub A Dub*), spent time with my Jamaican informants all over the island (especially in Kingston, Ocho Rios and Negril), took part in the Rastafari chanting of the Bobo Shantis for hours, stayed at *Inna De Yard* and reasoned with Earl Chinna Smith, one of Reggae's greatest musicians (unfortunately he refused to be officially interviewed),

¹⁴ This Rasta camp is officially known as *The Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress*.

¹⁵ In order to obviate any ambiguities, I want to illuminate that some of the formal interviews, as indicated above, were conducted together with my German colleague Christian. However, within the interviews each of us tried to focus primarily on the individual research topic. We asked some general introductory questions in the beginning of each interview, but then immerse ourselves in ad hoc-questions and narratives concerning the respective radio show, namely the Cutting Edge for Christian and the Steppin Razor for me. Consequently, our theses will be different but supplemental to each other. Besides, for my analysis I adducted informal conversations and additional field notes; data, which I collected without any interference by my colleague and I penned in my own field notebook (cf. Image 3).

participated in a recording session at the legendary Caveman Studio with Reggae-veteran and Rastafarian Fred Locks, and visited the campus of the University of the West Indies to absorb Jamaican academic life.

Nevertheless, the minimal range of participant observation is one of the reasons why I consider my fieldwork as an *experimental ethnographic* one, as I mentioned before. Another

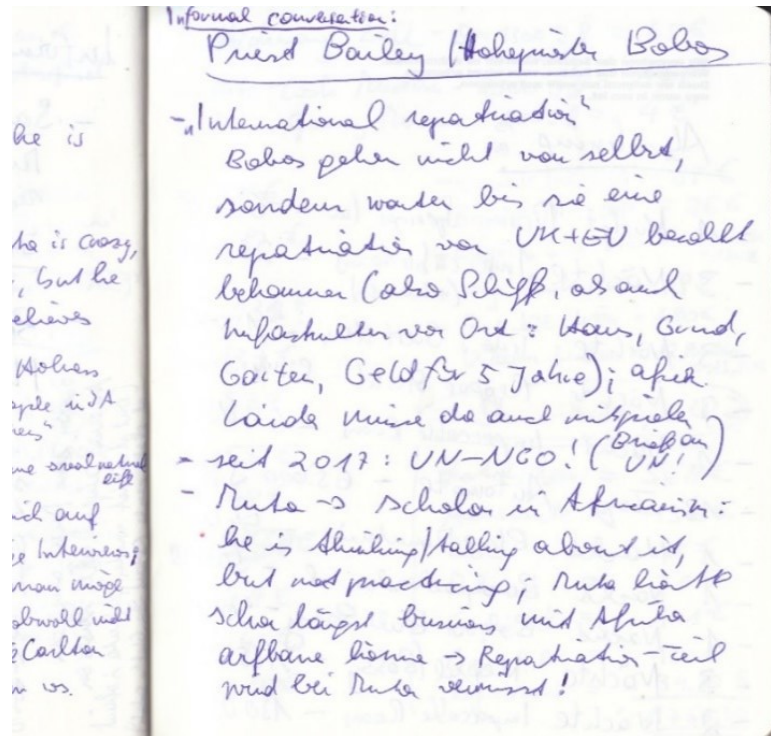


Image 3: Field notes (Source: Schwager 2018b)

reason for such a designation is my approach of consulting the radio shows as a research source. Such a *media analysis* pictures an experimental form of enquiry. In this context, I lean on Andre Gingrich, an Austrian anthropologist, who states the experimental approach as follows:

[...] as long as minimal forms of participant observations are possible, sociocultural anthropology should be as open as possible to the inclusion of other experimental forms of inquiry. [...] In addition, all kinds of source material that would be significant in conventional and in multisited fieldwork will attain higher relevance in experimental fieldwork, ranging from witnessing internet chat rooms to interviewing outside experts or scrutinizing internal reports. (Gingrich 2013: 119f.)

With his concise view, Gingrich acknowledges the eligibility of an experimental approach. Since it provides an eclectic elaboration, I can only suggest such an approach. Anthropologists should at least give consideration to it before starting new research.

1.4. Socio-scientific relevance

“Eine Wissenschaft, die gesellschaftliche Realität nur unter dem Gesichtspunkt einer Bestandsaufnahme des Bestehenden untersucht und damit soziale Praxis auf ein vollendetes Werk (opus operatum) reduziert, ohne ihren Hervorbringungsprozeß [sic!] (modus operandi) offenzulegen,

verhält sich wie ein Arzt, der eine Krankheit diagnostiziert, ohne sich für die Ursachen und vor allem für mögliche Behandlungsweisen zu interessieren.“

Zips 2008a: 241

This work encompasses a combination of my empirical data and Bourdieu's theoretical concepts. The empirical data primarily consists of Mutabaruka's narratives in the context of his radio broadcasts, which are analysed within the discourse of the interconnectedness of local lifeworlds and transnational, global, social, and cultural processes. The answers to my research questions are predicated on the analysis of narratives against the background of both local and global economical, political, sociocultural and religious encounters and structures.

In cooperation with my supervisor Werner Zips' work, this master's thesis serves as a substructure for an intended scholarly publication about Mutabaruka. It's high time to dedicate suchlike work to the Jamaican radio legend. Prior to this thesis, there has not been anthropological work that explicitly examines Muta's intellectual legacy in the Steppin Razor radio show. Thus, I hope that my master's thesis may have some relevance beyond the more narrow social anthropological interest.

Up to now, the scientific approach towards Mutabaruka and his achievements has been versatile and interdisciplinary. Apart from various chapters in anthropological Rastafari- and Reggae-affiliated books edited by my supervisor (cf. Zips 2006a; Zips 2015) or Michael Barnett (cf. Barnett 2012), for example, a sizable number of articles on Mutabaruka (or at least with reference to him) within the context of Dub Poetry were published in the fields of literature and cultural studies by Carolyn Cooper (cf. Cooper 2013), to name one, in the domains of musicology and phenomenology by Phaniel Antwi (cf. Antwi 2015), and within performance and poetry studies by Darren Middleton (cf. Middleton 2015) and Mervyn Morris (cf. Morris 1994; Morris 1996). Christian Habekost's books *Verbal Riddim - The Politics & Aesthetics of African-Caribbean Dub Poetry* (cf. Habekost 1993) and *Dub Poetry - 20 Dichter aus England und Jamaica* (cf. Habekost 1986) as well as Julie Pearn's dissertation *Poetry as a Performing Art in the English-Speaking Caribbean* (cf. Pearn 1985) offer a great contextualisation and analysis of Dub Poetry per se (with references to Mutabaruka). Whereas interview extracts of Mutabaruka can be located in the writings of Eric Doumerc (cf. Doumerc 2009, 2017), Muta's *own words* are published in several books (cf. Mutabaruka 2006a, 2006b, 2011; Mutabaruka/Zips 2008). Lastly, there

are several publications of his poems, such as his famous collection *The First Poems, the Next Poems* (cf. Mutabaruka 2005).

In my work, I lean on the basis prepared by all academics mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Their different approaches to poetry, Dub, Reggae, Rastafari, Black Power, Black consciousness, pan-Africanism, resistance, redemption, reparation, justice, postcolonialism, slavery, cultural production and embodiment, Creole language, lyricism, performance, and Caribbean literature resonate throughout my work. Moreover, my thesis intends to provide an access to Mutabaruka's worldview for an expanded audience, e.g. for individuals who are not necessarily interested in Dub Poetry, Reggae, or Rastafari. The ethnographic analysis of the Steppin Razor programme offers an in-depth insight to Muta's way of thinking and living. Since people regard him as a public intellectual and motivational speaker (cf. Cooper 2013: 113), my thesis may also *motivate intellectually* via the presentation of his pan-African worldview as shaped by a rebellious mindset and *livity*¹⁶. This text may even contribute to discern a strong stimulus as well as empowering aspects for the dismantling of nowadays status quo, e.g. the media-based bashing of the African continent, the international increase of right-wing extremist attitudes, neo-colonial power games as played by Western and Asian governments or religion's precarious utilisation of its adherers. Within global and transnational dynamics, this thesis shapes a certain consciousness and may be regarded as an argumentation, if not a strategy, for processes of *decolonising* given conditions and realities as well as of *unshackling* people from any form of suppression. My work is not only a baseline study of existing social realities, but through a focus on the historical emergence, it also tries to determine potential ways of treatment for these realities. In this spirit, I consider my approach as a contribution to an ever-emerging decolonising anthropology as it (hopefully) plays its part in an *anthropology for liberation*, a term that was labelled by Faye Harrison (cf. Harrison 1991).

Finally, this thesis provides a theoretical and empirical framework that people may harness for further studies about Mutabaruka, as I am "contributing to the cumulative growth of knowledge which is the hallmark of any science" (Eriksen 2015: 41), to cite famous anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen. Knowledge that derives from my work may be meaningful for the elaboration of an anthropology of radio fields, as promoted by Lucas Bessire and Daniel Fisher in their book *Radio Fields: Anthropology and Wireless Sound in the 21st Century* (cf. Bessire/Fisher 2012). Illustrating a subdiscipline, endeavours within

¹⁶ Rastafarians use the neologism *livity* to describe their way of living. (cf. Roberts 2014 : 190)

this context have tended to be sidelined as yet.¹⁷ Above all, my broadcast analysis with its demonstration of Muta's narratives in the Jamaican vernacular serves as a fertile ground for research in the field of linguistics.



*Image 4: Mutabaruka and author
(Source: Schwager 2018c)*



*Image 5: Tony Rebel, Christian Moll and
author (Source: Schwager 2018d)*

1.5. Structure of the work

In this final passage of the introductory chapter, I provide a short overview of the structure of the present work. The following chapter focuses on the theoretical breeding ground for the analysis. Therefore, I present subsidiary and basic theories that I consulted within the context of my research and that resonate in my thesis. In particular, I illustrate Pierre Bourdieu's concept of logic of practice. In chapter three, I portray Mutabaruka's biography with regard to the narrative-biographical interview in which he highlighted the turning points in his life. Subsequently, I picture the Steppin Razor radio programme by delineating its significance as well as a usual procedure of the broadcast. The central part, the fourth chapter, integrates the major empirical data, namely the transliterated radio shows and interviews. By means of all the conducted empirical work, I illustrate Mutabaruka's opinions along four subchapters and implement them in a theoretical setting. Ultimately, within chapter five, I summarise my research and its results in order to arrive at the conclusion.

¹⁷ Kathleen Buddle (cf. Buddle 2008), Debra Spitulnik (cf. Spitulnik 2002) and Jo Tacchi (cf. Tacchi 1998, 2000) are examples of anthropologists working on radio-related themes.

2. Theoretical review and embedment

“The relationship between theory and empirical material, or data, is fundamental in all empirical science, including anthropology. No science can rely on theory alone (it then becomes pure mathematics or philosophy), just as it cannot rely on pure facts: in that case, it would be unable to tell us anything interesting.[...] The anthropological project consists, to a great extent, of imposing ordering patterns and regularities onto the observed material, and we depend on our own theoretical abstractions in order to do so.”

Eriksen 2015: 37f.

In this section, I bring my anthropological theoretical approach forward in order to response to my socio-scientific standpoint. On a merely general basis, I illustrate a literature review and the usage and perception of certain theories in my thesis. Since my text focuses on the empirical part, the depiction of the theoretical framework is brief, but as necessary as the application of theory itself (cf. quotation above). The following subchapters depict theoretical terms and concepts that I consulted in the context of my “description and analysis” (Eriksen 2015: 46f.), as Eriksen’s notion of anthropological inquiry suggests. Along the first part and its four subchapters, I focus on the background theories for my empirical research, whereas the second part addresses the more specific theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu. Considering this juxtaposition, one should get a clear impression of the different theoretical approaches and positions as well as my own appropriation. The following approaches helped me to “observe ‘facts’ through the use of lenses made up of concepts and theories” (Silverman 2014: 71).

2.1. Scientific-theoretical basics of empirical social research

Seeing that selecting certain research and evaluation methods implicates a certain position within the research, researchers need to identify themselves with the selected paradigm. A method is always imbedded in certain theories (cf. Flick/Kardorff/Steinke 2004: 65), just as a qualitative research entails certain scientific-theoretical postures. Even though crucial distinctions between such positions are inherent, it is not always easy to draw a precise line between them as the present-day version of anthropology offers a multiplicity of coexisting paradigms (cf. Halbmayer 2010: 18). Along this work, I follow a position close to a non-

positivistic, humanist, hermeneutical and interpretative social science.¹⁸ In particular, I embed ethnohistorical, postmodern and postcolonial aspects as well as globalisation matters. The following passages effectuate a succinct delineation of my position and basic approaches that subliminally but decisively resonate within my work. These approaches illustrate my fundamental theoretical background and have been accumulated, incorporated, and intensified over the years during my bachelor and master studies and the resultant research.

2.1.1. Quality over quantity: a qualitative approach

Since there is an ongoing discussion within the anthropological community about the benefits and weaknesses of quantitative (e.g. questionnaires, statistical methods, surveys) and qualitative (e.g. participant observation, narrative-biographical or expert interviews) approaches, even leading to disagreement about the validity and nature of the discipline of anthropology as such, it may be useful to consider the distinction and categorisation as simply an overall orientation (cf. Rapport/Overing 2000: 303ff.). For my subject of investigation I chose a rather qualitative approach. Whereas quantitative methods evoke more standardisation, qualitative methods allow to “describe lifeworlds ‘from the inside out’, from the point of view of the people who participate” (Flick/Kardorff/Steinke 2004: 3), as social researchers Flick, Kardorff and Steinke point out in *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. According to them, qualitative research implies a narration of the lifeworlds in the participant’s prospect and, in turn, a better understanding of the social reality, its processes, and structures (cf. *ibid.*). I prefer this position since it was inevitable to do an ethnographic fieldwork and meet Mutabaruka – the protagonist of my thesis – as well as the other informants personally and on-site in order to *participate* and get an *inside* perspective. I could have analysed only the radio show’s narratives from my home in Vienna and sent some digital questionnaires to Muta and other people in Jamaica via Facebook to ask standardised questions on the Steppin Razor broadcast (and its societal and intellectual influence). However, in some way, such a procedure would resemble one of the schemes practiced by the so-called *armchair anthropologists* (cf. Halbmayer 2010: 6f.) and such a

¹⁸ For detailed definitions please cf. Eriksen/Nielsen 2001: 102-104, 146-150; Geertz 2001: 3-30; Halbmayer 2010: 16-22; Rapport/Overing 2000: 173-176, 326-330; Silverman 2014: 255-275. Please note that the close connection between the research topic and Jamaican popular music, as well as poetry, provided a hermeneutical approach insofar as it was possible to clarify certain arguments and themes via an embedment and interpretation of lyrics and poems by Mutabaruka and other artists.

contentious approach is, as all anthropologists should know, out-of-date and was never my intention. In fact, I prefer to cite Gupta and Ferguson, two anthropologists from the USA, who both stress the need for fieldwork as follows:

As all graduate students in social/cultural anthropology know, it is fieldwork that makes one a 'real anthropologist,' and truly anthropological knowledge is widely understood to be 'based' (as we say) on fieldwork. (Gupta/Ferguson 1997: 1)

In the anthropologist's profession, the characteristic quality is fieldwork, or – as Ernst Halbmayer calls it – *ethnographic experience*, which is generated through a long-lasting and intensive relation to the field (cf. Halbmayer 2010: 53). Halbmayer defines the quality rather as an intimate and personal knowledge of practice than a merely verbal collection about it (cf. *ibid.*), and I agree with him. Combining the long-lasting and intensive experiences from my three field trips to Jamaica over a time period of ten years (cf. chapter 1.3.2.) with the analysis of the radio broadcasts provided an appropriate knowledge production and the emergence of impeccable results.

Philipp Mayring suggests a theoretical setting for qualitative research methods in his book *Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung*. He defines *five principles for a qualitative thinking*: intense subject-orientation (not theories or methods but human beings are the subject-matter), emphasis on description (the necessity of an incipient description of the related discourse), interpretative analysis (in terms of hermeneutics the research must be interpreted), research in the natural/trivial surroundings (attempt of closeness to everyday life) and a certain perception of the generalisation of results (need for an explicit justification of a generalisation) (cf. Mayring 2016: 19-24). As a consequence, he elucidates these five principles along so-called *13 pillars of qualitative thinking*, via which he emphasises research concepts such as openness, control of methods, preconception, introspection, researcher-subject-interaction, historicity, and the problem-based approach (cf. *ibid.*: 24-39).¹⁹ My approach is strongly shaped by Mayring's notions as I regard them as feasible and comprehensible. In a qualitative procedure, the researcher or observer appears with his/her subjective perception and *interaction* (cf. Mayring 2016: 31f.), for example if he/she undertakes participant observation and does interviews (like I did). That actuality constitutes a certain quality along the research process and is incorporated into the findings in form of the researcher's *introspection* and *interpretation* as well (cf. *ibid.*: 29-31). Surely, such a

¹⁹ It would go beyond the scope of my thesis to dwell on the 13 concepts. For a detailed explanation please cf. Mayring 2016.

proceeding demands *openness* by the anthropologist, in order to keep an eye on the *unexpected* (cf. *ibid.*: 28). Since the researcher becomes part of the research, he/she eventually “is at one and the same time an interactant, a part of the field of events under observation” (Rapport/Overing 2000: 304). In fact, an interaction is essential to attain social reality, as Rapport and Overing point out:

To write an authentic anthropological text is less to represent an absolute reality than to fabricate a fit of a particular generic kind between two types of conventional activity (exchanging spoken words and arranging written words), and hence to write social reality. (Rapport/Overing 2000: 305)

Even though this statement may sound clumsy and oversimplified, one can grasp this when reading my analysis, as I consistently interweave the narratives (spoken words) from the radio broadcasts with the ones from my observations in Jamaica, and let my own *interactive* field experiences be integrated into the writing process (the arrangement of written words). My thesis intends to expound a social reality, a reality in which Mutabaruka negotiates his views and positions via the medium of his Steppin Razor programme. However, qualitative research doesn’t simply express reality or carry out any form of exoticism but rather uses the “unexpected as a source of insight and a mirror whose reflection makes the unknown perceptible in the known, and the known perceptible in the unknown, thereby opening up further possibilities for (self-)recognition” (Flick/Kardorff/Steinke 2004: 3).

Presumably, without qualitative research measures it would have been harder (if not impossible) to get an appropriate research result or detect the unexpected. I cannot envision writing about Mutabaruka’s views and opinions without ever having interviewed him, or to analyse the Steppin Razor radio broadcast without having participated in a live broadcast on-site. Therefore, I agree with other anthropologists who claim that a qualitative method of knowledge-acquisition delivers *deepness*, whereas a quantitative one may facilitate *broadness* (cf. Ebermann 2010: 5). It depends on the way the researcher wants to design his/her research and whether the focus is on deepness (in form of obtaining biographical data, opinions, experiences, expectations etc.) or broadness (e.g. via overall statistics). Sometimes, a combination may be fruitful as well (cf. *ibid.*: 4f.).²⁰ The only quantitative

²⁰ Further reading of authors such as Denzin (cf. Denzin 1970), Halbmayer and Salat (cf. Halbmayer/Salat 2011), Lamnek (cf. Lamnek 2005) and Bernard (cf. Bernard 1998) offered me a detailed insight of qualitative research via theories and concepts that resonate in my text as well.

reference in my work is the representation of the Jamaican radio listenership statistics from the *All Media Survey* by MRSL (cf. chapter 3.2.4.).

2.1.2. **“In the field”: field considerations**

“Indeed, we would suggest that the single most significant factor determining whether a piece of research will be accepted as (that magical word) ‘anthropological’ is the extent to which it depends on experience ‘in the field.’”

Gupta/Ferguson 1997: 1

My field site – as in form of a physical manifestation on earth and in a more territorialised sense – is the island of Jamaica, an insular state of the Caribbean archipelago that is predefined by a long colonial history²¹. Up to the present, the Spanish and British colonial legacy in Jamaica is tangible as this small Caribbean “fouled state” (Zips 2008a: 12) is embedded within a postcolonial and post-slavery framework; the country’s constitution and legal system is still based on the model of former colonial power Great Britain (cf. *ibid.*: 248). Thus, I consider my field within a *large-scale setting* (cf. Eriksen 2015: 41), namely a postcolonial setting in a globalised world. Apart from being my place of fieldwork, Jamaica serves as a reference point (*case analysis*) or indication for certain sociocultural, geopolitical, economical and religious developments that may have occurred nearby and even in other world regions influenced by colonialism and its accompanying structures and processes (i.a. slavery, class division). Mutabaruka knows how to use a universal approach within his rhetoric. The numerous Jamaican references in his narratives provide examples of his points of view or are used in order to corroborate his views. To make my point clearer: In a figurative sense, Muta’s spoken words are significant and of valid not only for Jamaica, but for a *global entity* of oppressed and (formerly) enslaved and colonised people. For the most part, the radio host creates a link between the global African diaspora. In addition, the Internet (where his broadcasts are stored) enables a fast global and long-distance *flow* (cf. Hannerz 1992: 4) of his narratives and meanings. For these reasons, I don’t want to narrow down my research field by strictly localising it in Jamaica. Turning away from the traditional localised field site in the Malinowskian way (cf. Halbmayer 2010: 9) and following Kirsten

²¹ A great demonstration of the colonial history of Jamaica and the Caribbean offers the German book *Die Karibik: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 1492 – 2000* (cf. Hausberger/Pfeisinger 2005). Moreover, a recent insight into the colonial aftermath and a portrayal of today’s Jamaican society provides *The Voice of the Jamaican Ghetto* by the controversial incarcerated Dancehall artist Vybz Kartel (cf. Palmer/Dawson 2012).

Hastrup and Karen Fog Olwig, who “wish to examine the historical and social significance of these ‘cultural sites’ as focal points of identification for people who, in their daily lives, are involved in a complex of relations of global as well as local dimension” (Hastrup/Olwig 1997: 11), I would define my field as *a global field of relations* (cf. *ibid.*), in which Mutabaruka determines pertinent relations and constructs and negotiates his identity represented through his narratives.

In a broader (and more deterritorialised) sense, my field is the globalised world; a world in which exchanges have come to pass on all levels of people’s lives (including their culture, meanings, and expressions) with a momentum and intensity most notable in recent decades through mobility, certain technologies and trade, but also in the past through imperialism and colonialism. Within the debates on globalisation, Ulf Hannerz’ exegesis falls into place as he speaks of an interconnected world and not least of a “global ecumene” (Hannerz 1996: 6f., 44-55). In his famous book *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*, the Scandinavian anthropologist breaks the once determinant local/global dichotomy and uses the term of the global ecumene while alluding “to the interconnectedness of the world, by way of interactions, exchanges and related developments, affecting not least the organisation of culture” (*ibid.*: 7). Two aspects, namely “the mobility of human beings themselves, and the mobility of meanings and meaningful forms through the media” (*ibid.*: 19), have transformed the world into one single field of ongoing exchange and interaction (cf. *ibid.*). That is an interesting facet, since Mutabaruka also uses a form of the media, the radio, in order to spread his opinions and provide them for further interaction and implementation. In addition, Hannerz’ notion of culture supports the deterritorialisation of my field. His view emanates from the designation of what he calls a *world culture*:

There is now a world culture, but we had better make sure we understand what this means: not a replication of uniformity but an organisation of diversity, an increasing interconnectedness of varied local cultures, as well as a development of cultures without a clear anchorage in any one territory. And to this interconnected diversity people can relate in different ways. (Hannerz 1996: 102)

Similarly, Thomas Hylland Eriksen speaks of a global age and a global information society in which anthropologists may “look into the relationships between the global and the local” (Eriksen 2015: 371). Considering such an endeavour, one has to incorporate a historic dimension and contextualisation in order to understand the relationships and interplays of today’s global and local elements and entities. When speaking of a globalised world, the term of a (post)colonial age is within reach, as the European (transatlantic) colonial

expansion – started by Christopher Columbus’ first voyages at the end of the 15th century or probably even before through Viking expeditions since the 10th century (cf. Pringle 2019) – had lastingly connected people from near and far. Since I analyse Mutabaruka’s narratives in which he positions himself as a Rastaman fighting against (post)colonial repercussions on a global level, for my research field the reciprocal connections of the local and the global described by Hannerz and Eriksen as well as Hastrup’s and Olwig’s approach of a global field are of tremendous interest and provide a better explanation of my field: a *global (transnational) space*.

Nevertheless, as the quotation in the beginning of this subchapter shows, it is still essential – if not the norm – for an anthropologist of any major anthropological inquiry to have an experience *in the field*, which means one should go out “into a *cleared place of work*” (Clifford 1997: 186), as James Clifford debates. Whereas fieldwork in such Malinowskian tradition remains the essential feature of the discipline, the conception of where and what a field is and thus where one can *go out into*, has only recently been discussed (cf. Gupta/Ferguson 1997) and varies hugely within the anthropological community. A field, accordingly, could be one’s home town, a distant location in a mountain village, the anthropologist’s office, or possibly a non-spatially defined realm (cf. Clifford 1997: 187f., 194f.; Gupta/Ferguson 1997: 28f., 34ff.). In the latter spirit – just to give a hint to the versatile and interchangeable field typology – my field is rather an African-Caribbean intellectual sphere with a ramified interchange of experiences, narratives, views, and metaphors than a bound and localised field on Jamaican soil as was illustrated at first. Principally, I try to navigate through the multidimensional interweavement and correlation of the global and local stimuli whilst distancing myself from any form of antagonism by these two terms.

Another fitting theoretical field definition that I consult within my analysis is presented by Pierre Bourdieu. For content-based reasons, I present an illustration of it in chapter 2.2.1.

2.1.3. Ethnohistory’s historic and critical dimension

“Ethnologische Forschung in ehemaligen europäischen Kolonien sieht sich häufig mit einer sozialen Realität konfrontiert, die von Widersprüchen bestimmt wird. Die jeweiligen Kämpfe um Machtpositionen in den sozialen Arenen des Lebens entzündeten sich

freilich in jedem Staat an unterschiedlichen Konfliktlinien, abhängig von den partikularen historischen Faktoren.“

Zips 2008a: 248

Historical aspects are usually stored in a researcher's backpack²². If an anthropologist doesn't blend out such aspects, they are likely to be implied within the subordinated discipline of *ethnohistory*. In their book *Ethnohistorie*, Karl Wernhart and Werner Zips argue that anthropological research mostly happens in a historical context, in which, however, the researcher and the researched one hardly share the same cultural and historical background:

Weitaus häufiger treffen sie sich in einem bereits ausdefinierten Raum politischer Machtbeziehungen. Kolonialismus, Nord-Süd-Gefälle und die gegenwärtige Globalisierung und deren Probleme („Globalisierungsfälle“) bilden den Bezugsrahmen ethnologischer Forschung. Diesen Kontext in den Mittelpunkt zu stellen, ist eines der Hauptanliegen der Ethnohistorie. (Wernhart/Zips 2008b: 9)

Through this quotation, one may infer the crucial asset that is inherent in ethnohistory, as the discipline tries to reconstruct history and its dynamics as well as critically analyse power relations, ideologies, and resources via the methodological equipment of critical hermeneutics, such as anthropological fieldwork (cf. Wernhart/Zips 2008a: 18). Occupying an ahistorical vantage point is impossible for ethnohistorians. Even Mayring pursues such a view when he mentions the concept of *historicity* and stresses the importance of implying a historical dimension in one's research (cf. Mayring 2016: 34). This resembles the ethnohistorian's outlook, although on a more superficial basis.

In my study, it is impractical to put aside the historical aspect of my field and its agents. As outlined in the previous subchapter, the framework of my field is entangled with the impact and aftermath of colonialism, slavery, the phenomenon of globalisation, and certain power relations shaped (not only, but for a long time) *in the past*. In terms of a reconstruction that embeds the historic dimensions, an ethnohistorical approach helps me to identify the dynamics of those historical processes and the reasons for specific occurrences. Furthermore, it helps foreground the context of my field's actors, and elaborate *oral history*. Through the method of the narrative interview and the analysis of radio broadcasts, I received *subjective narratives* and, in turn, access to the *historical practice* of individuals and Mutabaruka, respectively. The practice shows the conjunction and connection of *individual and society*. A critical analysis of the historic micro (the individual's or

²² Here, I lean on a statement by my supervisor Werner Zips during a bachelor seminar in October 2012.

collective's agency) and macro structures (social/societal structures) reveals the interior correlation of both and offers me an initial point to unfold critique of leadership and power within the meaning of *ethnohistory as a critical science* (cf. Zips 2008a: 235-247). Thus, this work contributes to the debate on the necessity of collocating *justice as an empirical category* in ethnohistory or the discipline of anthropology in general, as suggested by Zips (cf. Zips 2008b).

In order to present a coherent picture of the ethnohistorian's theoretical fundament and his/her reception of *structure*, let's examine following statement:

Wir betrachten die gesellschaftlichen ‚Verhältnisse‘, in denen Menschen leben, gleichzeitig als Voraussetzung und Resultat ihrer reproduzierenden und (potentiell) verändernden Tätigkeit. Menschen sind daher nicht ‚Eigentum‘ der Strukturen. Vielmehr werden die Strukturen aus sozialwissenschaftlicher Perspektive erst durch die aneignende Tätigkeit der Subjekte zur sozialen Wirklichkeit. In den Mittelpunkt des Interesses treten die aktive Gestaltung und Reproduktion gesellschaftlicher Verhältnisse durch die praktische Tätigkeit der Subjekte im Handlungszusammenhang ethnischer und politischer Gemeinschaften. Die Menschen erscheinen daher weder gesetzmäßigen Entwicklungen objektiver Bedingungen völlig unterworfen, noch erschöpft sich ihre Tätigkeit in funktionalen Handlungen. (Wernhart/Zips 2008a: 24)

It makes sense for me to follow such an ethnohistorical notion since structure is pictured as a very dynamic entity in which the individual acts through his/her practice and through which the individual actively constructs social reality. Nevertheless, as Wernhart and Zips continue, it would be a mistake to speak of *free* individuals with equal opportunities: “Daß [sic!] Individuen ihre eigenen Interessen ins Spiel zu bringen vermögen, besagt aber noch nichts über ihre Möglichkeiten, diese Interessen durchzusetzen.“ (ibid.) In my thesis, I am interested in an individual, namely Mutabaruka, and his practice/agency as well as in the social structures of the field. In this context and analogue to the ethnohistorical notion, Bourdieu's logic of practice offers a great theoretical guideline to negotiate between the structures and practices and to surmount a pretended dichotomy of the same.

2.1.4. Revising power structures: postmodern and postcolonial notions

Even before the attempts of the present Viennese ethnohistory to bring into focus and criticise the asymmetric and rigid relation between the observer and the observed, primarily the *postmodern paradigm* and the *postcolonial movement* have challenged the anthropological community and its conventional ethnographies over issues of *othering* and uneven power structures between researching subjects and researched objects since the

1960s. In the days of ethnography pioneer Bronislaw Malinowski in the first half of the 20th century, the researcher was unthinkingly regarded objective and neutral in his/her doings and was thought to be able to put himself/herself in the position of the *natives*. Back then, the researcher felt privileged compared to the *non-written people* who were represented in monographs without ever being asked about their own views and perceptions. (cf. Karall/Weikert 2010: 43) Since criticism arose through postmodernism and *the reflexive turn in anthropology* (cf. Eriksen/Nielsen 2001: 60), such unidimensional methodological and epistemological procedures are not any longer integral parts of the anthropologist's *sensus communis*. In fact, current ethnology or anthropology rests upon a non-paternalistic, self-reflexive, transparent, pluri-vocal, interactive, and discursive paradigm (cf. Karall/Weikert 2010: 44). In this thesis, I pursue the manifestation of Mutabaruka's views and opinions as received within a postmodern discourse. However, I don't follow an unadulterated postmodern approach. Like many other anthropologists, I am simply postmodern-*inspired*, as I also try to display descriptive as well as objective work (in terms of the social reality and social structure of my field); two characteristics that have been criticised by postmodernists (cf. *ibid.*: 44f.).²³

Overlapping with the postmodern approach which primarily debates the textual production in itself (cf. Clifford/Marcus 1986) and the question of representation (cf. Halbmayer 2010: 52) as well as the relationship and interaction between researcher and researched one in order to fashion certain research ethics (as pointed out before), the *postcolonial critique* in science and arts has shaped anthropological ventures effectively in a similar way. Postcolonial theorists, who often descend(ed) from ex-colonies and come/came from disciplines such as literature studies (cf. Eriksen/Nielsen 2001: 143ff.), argued "that formerly colonised peoples become dependent on the models and knowledge systems of the former colonisers" (Eriksen 2015: 318). They criticised that anthropology had been a discipline with an inherent colonial mindset aiming to force non-white people to incorporate a "Western body of knowledge" (*ibid.*: 49). Within the postcolonial movement, students and scholars primarily criticised this immanent ideological bias in the discipline's former direction as well as the *eurocentrism* and *ethnocentrism* that had been practiced for

²³ For an overview of postmodern agendas or the reflexive turn within the anthropological community, please cf. Eriksen/Nielsen 2001: 135-157; Lindstrom 2013; Zips 2008a: 131-176. A circumstantial depiction is offered by James Clifford and George Marcus in *Writing Culture* (cf. Clifford/Marcus 1986).

a long time by designating *otherness* in an exoticised and homogenised way (cf. Eriksen 2015: 45f.; Kreff/Knoll/Gingrich 2011: 72ff.; Rapport/Overing 2000: 12f., 16, 98).²⁴

For my thesis, the employment of the term *postcolonial* in the style of (some) postcolonial theorists is important, namely that the *post* emphasises the continuous effect of colonialism on the present configuration of identities and social realities rather than an end of colonialism after (Jamaica's) independence (cf. Ashcroft/Griffiths/Tiffin 2002: 2; Robotham 2000b: 90; Slemon 1995). Leaning on postcolonial (and postcolonial *influenced*) writers such as Frantz Fanon (cf. Fanon 1963), Paul Gilroy (cf. Gilroy 1993) or Edward Said (cf. Said 2003) doesn't mean uncritically following any hostile stance over Western (or Northern) paradigms and discourses. My aim is quite contrary to such a view; it is to overcome any form of excluding essentialism in scientific inquiry. I also consider Jamaican anthropologist Don Robotham and his critical, progressive view on the concept of postcolonialism, which he regards as derived from the Western rationalistic tradition and, furthermore, as rather obsolete since it would privilege difference over commonality:

Although this concept [meaning the postcolonial concept; author's note] seeks to ensure that the discipline is firmly anchored within the challenges of the worlds of today and tomorrow, nonetheless it still locates anthropology too much within the Western historical trajectory and makes it difficult for the field to embark on that wide-ranging re-centering which is required if it is to meet the challenges of the coming period. [...] In other words, world development presents us with an opportunity for the first time to develop a truly 'multipolar', or, to be more accurate, a 'non-polar' anthropology within the framework of a modernity and humanism which is neither 'Western' nor 'Eastern', neither 'North-South', 'South-North', 'North-North', nor 'South-South', but which deeply affirms human values. (Robotham 1997: 360)

In this text, I address similar thoughts by transcending suchlike dichotomies or binary oppositions and by avoiding "to repeat the excluding practices from the North" (Castro Varela/Dhawan 2015: 286; own translation²⁵). My aim is to present a critical yet *connective* viewpoint but for all that, I want to contribute to the deconstruction of colonial knowledge and power (re)production since, through the analysis of Mutabaruka's narratives, my thesis nourishes an anti-colonial and anti-oppressed contingent and brings alternative consciousness to the surface. A postcolonial-oriented discourse thus endorses a non-

²⁴ For further postcolonial reading, cf. Asad 1973, Said 2003 or Spivak 2008. An overview and critical reflection provides Castro Varela/Dhawan 2015. Furthermore, Leclerc's *Anthropologie und Kolonialismus* (cf. Leclerc 1973) will supply one with an idea of the relationship between colonialism and anthropology.

²⁵ Original: "Einige der wichtigsten postkolonialen Texte sind zudem notorisch voraussetzungsfull, weswegen der postkolonialen Theorie im Allgemeinen vorgeworfen wird, die ausgrenzenden Praktiken des Nordens zu wiederholen, während ihre Produktionen für die postkolonialen Subjekte im Süden, für die sie vorgibt zu sprechen, nur eine geringe Bedeutung haben." (Castro Varela/Dhawan 2015: 286)

Eurocentric and interconnected vantage point from which it is possible to examine and deconstruct the often hidden ongoing effects of (neo)colonialist and (neo)imperialist power and knowledge forces on contemporary life, whether in Jamaica or the global scope, whether of political, sociocultural, economic, or religious constituents, whether within debates on class, gender, “race”, or sexuality. In correlation with my ethnohistorical approach, a basic interest of this work is to regard postcolonial as well as postmodern aspects as ways of critically analysing and revising the power structures of the research field in form of a *decolonised ethnographic writing*, such as the postcolonial theorists plead for. The point is to rather contribute to a social criticism than only rethink and decolonise the anthropological course of action per se.²⁶ In this regard, my supervisor Werner Zips makes a sound argument by redefining anthropology’s right to exist: According to him, the contribution to an improvement of the social climate via critical reflection about hegemonic relations should be a parameter or criterion for the eligibility of social science and intercultural anthropology (cf. Zips 2008a: 137).

2.2. Basic principles of the *logic of practice*

After I demonstrated my general theoretical background, let’s now observe the main social theory I use for my analysis. As an anthropologist, the following overarching question needs to be interrogated: How do I constitute my conception of society? In order to answer such a broad question, I primarily relate to the theoretical concept of *logic of practice* by Pierre Bourdieu (cf. Bourdieu 1990), who was one of the best-respected and influential French anthropologists and sociologists of the 20th century. At the centre of his praxeological approach, Bourdieu contemplates an analysis of the interrelations of *human practices*, which he defines as the interests, aims, and strategies of actors within a research field plus the collective memory, incorporated knowledge, structures, and history. Practice is the most important object of study for a social scientist, as a researcher can undertake empirical research due to the practice. On the basis of Bourdieu’s terms (or *tool kit*) – such as *field*, *habitus*, *capital*, *practice*, *interest* and *strategy* – the practice and thus the logic within a

²⁶ Zips broaches the issue of an advancement of the postmodern discourse by implementing rational criticism of irrational power structures in order to transcend such structures. He advocates that injustice is a determinable size that can be reconstructed via the dialectics of social structures and individual practices. (cf. Zips 2008a: 173)

particular social field of research can be determined.²⁷ (cf. Bourdieu 1990: 52-65; Zips 2008a: 235-255)

In the following three subsections, I present Bourdieu's specific theoretical terms of *field*, *habitus* and *capital*. I use this conceptual triad because it turned out to be convenient for incorporating the knowledge and material derived from my ethnographic procedures (fieldwork, interviews, broadcast analysis). Therefore, Bourdieu's logic of practice and its terminology serve as a theoretical breeding ground for the analysis and interpretation of Mutabaruka's practice, the structure of the field, and the narratives from the radio shows and interviews. It should be mentioned at this point that I subsequently do not expound a detailed exegesis of Bourdieu's theory but rather a delineation of *my application* of his main arguments and criterions.

2.2.1. The *field* framework: a micro/macro-correlation

At first, the theoretical concept of *field* is illustrated. Since the field is included in Bourdieu's vocabulary, it seems reasonable to present his approach in this chapter and not in the one about other notions of field (see chapter 2.1.2.). However, there are similarities and analogies between those theoretical field definitions that will be revealed in this section.

Bourdieu understands the field as a microcosm that is embedded in a social macrocosm. The implementation of his idea of field offers a way of relating to other objects of the field and of ascertaining the external macro structures that have impact on the research field:

The scientific profit to be gained from knowing the space from which you have isolated the object under study [...] resides in that, by knowing what you do and what the reality from which the fragment has been *abstracted* consists of, you can at least adumbrate the main force lines that structure the space whose constraints bear upon the point under consideration [...]. Thus you will not run the risk of searching (and 'finding') in the fragment studied mechanisms or principles that are in reality external to it, residing in its relations to other objects. (Bourdieu 1992: 232-233)

Bourdieu describes the microcosm as the fragment and the macrocosm as the space in which the fragment relates to other fragments and he accentuates the need for the search of mechanisms within the macro sphere. In some way his approach reminds me of the

²⁷ In addition it should be mentioned that all these terms are subject to a dynamic deployment, as they are not ultimately defined (cf. Zips 2008a: 244). For this reason, I consider the implementation of Bourdieu's theory and its tool kit as rather open and dynamic than inherently consistent.

incorporation of the global/local terminology as illustrated earlier: Whereas the global may be regarded as the space, the local may be considered the fragment. In fact, Bourdieu's theory and its terminology facilitate an analysis of a local lifeworld that is considered to be a particular context within an all-embracing system (cf. Zips 2008a: 237). The scientific determination and analysis of the field happens, on the one hand, via the study of the field's entanglements with other fields (within that *space* or *macrocosm*), and on the other hand via the analysis of the field's negotiating actor(s) and the(ir) individual practice (within that *fragment* or *microcosm*). Most of all, Bourdieu tries to overcome the (often argued) antinomy of an objectivist *structuralist* and a subjectivist *constructivist* point of view (cf. Wacquant 1992: 7ff.; Zips 2008a: 251, 255). With a *total science of society* in his mind, he employs a *social praxeology* that first identifies the structures from outside (in form of objective external constraints affecting interaction), and then the structures from inside (in form of the actor's subjective lived experience). Although both are equally necessary, epistemological priority rather lies on the objectivist than subjectivist understanding. (cf. Wacquant 1992: 10f.)

In addition, the celebrated French scholar supposes a field that doesn't display any end result of processes like *syncretism* or *hybridity*²⁸, but a field that discloses "an arena, which has emanated from historical battles over control and power and is currently shaped by disputes and conflicts about distinction and the distribution of available material and immaterial goods" (Zips 2008a: 253; own translation²⁹). In this context, the historical aspect of Bourdieu's field theory reminds me of the undertakings by ethnohistorians (cf. chapter 2.1.3.) and adds up as I combine the ethnohistorical perspective with Bourdieu's notions. As pointed out next, the field's structure correlates with the actor's habitus and is specified through the distribution of various forms of capital.

²⁸ For further explanations of these terms please cf. Eriksen 2015: 313.

²⁹ Original: "Ein Feld ist [...] eine aus historischen Kämpfen um Herrschaft und Macht hervorgegangene Arena gegenwärtiger Auseinandersetzungen und Konflikte um Distinktion und Verteilung der verfügbaren materiellen und immateriellen Güter." (Zips 2008a: 253)

2.2.2. The *habitus*, a mediating tool

“It is because subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know. The habitus is the universalizing mediation which causes an individual agent's practices, without either explicit reason or signifying intent, to be none the less ‘sensible’ and ‘reasonable’.”

Bourdieu 2013: 79

The *habitus*, Bourdieu's most emphasised term, is the ensemble of a person's percipience-, interpretation- and action-patterns, which is determined by socialisation and accumulated history. Thus, everything one knows, reflects and does is one's habitus, or as Zips debates: “Der Begriff des Habitus verweist auf das ‘zur Person gewordene Soziale’.” (Zips 2008a: 242) The habitus is also very persistent, but still potentially dynamic and modifiable. Social practice depicts the individual's agency in a social field according to the individual's habitus or, in other words, practice shows the process of the *externalisation* of the habitus. Since the habitus follows a social logic that is connected to the field, the logic of practice becomes obvious via the inspection of the habitus, its behaviour and relations in a social field. (cf. *ibid.*: 245-255)

In my thesis' third chapter (*Introducing Mutabaruka and the Steppin Razor radio show*), Mutabaruka's socialisation becomes apparent and detectable. His reflected statements and reminiscences of his childhood, adolescence, and adulthood as well as his interpretations of society implicate essential catalysts for the pursuit of a characterisation of his habitus. Loic Wacquant, a former student of Bourdieu, pleads with social scientists to “recognize that the consciousness and interpretations of agents are an essential component of the full reality of the social world. [...] It matters that individuals have a practical knowledge of the world and invest this practical knowledge in their ordinary activity.” (Wacquant 1992: 9) Mutabaruka's narratives (with all their meanings) as orally conveyed in the space of the narrative-biographical interview offer an insight into his *historical practice*, his practical knowledge, and his correlation with society. His agency (or practice) plays a crucial role for the detection of the habitus. Thus, by means of Bourdieu's approach and concept of analysis, the field's social structure (or social conditions) and the logic of practice are revealed. I interrelate the social history of the field to Mutabaruka's history, which arises through his habitus. Bourdieu's theorem brings the historicity of both the field and the

individual into focus. However, the habitus refers to the unconscious structures as it implies a *forgotten* history:

The *habitus* – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present. [...] The habitus is a spontaneity without consciousness or will [...]. (Bourdieu 1990: 56)

The analysis of my research field comes to pass through the analysis of my negotiating agent in the field – Mutabaruka – and his habitus. Via the supplied narratives in the scope of the Steppin Razor broadcasts (plus, again, the narrative-biographical interview), I received certain subjective constructions and interpretations of Muta's worldview and his opinions. Subsequently, I had to distinguish these interpretations as well as the social agency of the Rastafarian host within the field (as expounded above) in order to uncover and visualise his habitus. It was also beneficial to analyse to some extent the habitus of other actors within my research field, i.a. of competing actors (who fight for potential positions in the field). In this context, I consulted the theory of *group* and *class habitus*, as suggested by Bourdieu (cf. Bourdieu 2013: 80ff.). Thereby, certain practices, interests, strategies and, after all, structures became apparent. When exposing the habitus, a vital question is how the percipience-, interpretation- and action-structures were inscribed in the habitus. It contributes to tracing and detecting the internalisation, or rather the embodiment, of diverse structures within the habitus (cf. Zips 2008a: 247). Especially in conjunction with Mutabaruka and his Afrocentric position as a Rastafarian, a quest for traces of the impact of certain African as well as colonial experiences on the thinking, interpretation, and agency of Jamaican people with African lineage can be provided.

With the concept of habitus I try to mediate between the structure and the practice, the society and the individual, as well as the present, the past and the future. Bourdieu defines such an approach as follows:

Practices cannot be deduced either from the present conditions which may seem to have provoked them or from the past conditions which have produced the *habitus*, the durable principle of their production. They can therefore only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the *habitus* that generated them was constituted, to the social conditions in which it is implemented, that is, through the scientific work of performing the interrelationship of these two states of the social world that the *habitus* performs, while concealing it, in and through practice. (Bourdieu 1990: 56)

In the next subchapter, which is also the last one before I present the empiricism-related part of my thesis, I elaborate on the *capital* terminology that is very useful for the mediation as well as the description and characterisation of certain interpretations (from the narratives) and the social agency of the actor(s) within the field.

2.2.3. **“Not like gambling”: the three (or four) forms of *capital***

By describing different forms of *capital*, Bourdieu provides a theoretical approach for the visibility of the unconscious structures (of agency) because “it is traced back to the capital that the interplays of societal life [...] do not proceed like simple gambling, where a surprise is possible at any time” (Bourdieu 1983: 183; own translation³⁰). The implementation of capital expressions completes the essential concept of Bourdieu’s social theory. He defines three general types of capital: the *economic*, the *cultural* and the *social*. Economic capital characterises assets, possessions, and funds and may be converted into money. Cultural capital comprises education (general knowledge), books, and works of art and can be institutionalised in form of academic titles. Social capital is the capital of social relations and coheres with the membership or affiliation to a certain social group. It can be institutionalised in form of titles of nobility and, like cultural capital, it may be converted into economic capital. According to Bourdieu, people put effort into the accumulation of capital to a greater or lesser extent and for various reasons within a specific setting of field. (cf. *ibid.*: 185-195)

The three forms of capital are not delimitable in a strict sense but rather intertwined with each other. Moreover, if they maintain value and significance in a particular field, each can be transformed into another form of capital, the *symbolic* capital. Bourdieu turns his attention to the symbolic capital as he considers it as the predominant in every field of social relations. Thus, according to Bourdieu, actors of all circumstances accomplish relationship work and invest in social acceptance, respect and honour, which eventually would be foregrounded through the actor’s prestige and standing in society. Symbolic capital becomes invaluable mostly in societies with less options for economic capital. (cf. Bourdieu 1990: 112-121; Zips 2008a: 266-273)

By means of the theory of capital, Bourdieu wants to demonstrate the correlation of every present and past situation in life. With reference to gambling, as cited above, he

³⁰ Original: “Auf das Kapital ist es zurückzuführen, daß [sic!] die Wechselspiele des gesellschaftlichen Lebens [...] nicht wie einfache Glücksspiele verlaufen, in denen jederzeit eine Überraschung möglich ist.“ (Bourdieu 1983: 183)

illustrates that one cannot change one's social status through social agency within a short time span. In fact, the accumulation of capital *takes time*. The aspect of the immaterial symbolic capital is of great interest in the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data. Generally, Bourdieu's logic of practice enables a theoretical framework so that the outcomes result rather *from the practice(s)* than from any basic assumptions. With his praxeological theory-design and the dynamic categories of field, habitus, and capital, it is possible to scrutinise positionings of expressions in practice and analyse deep structures of a social field, unveiled through the uncovering of unconscious incorporated structures. Bourdieu's view at the world and its conceptual design mirrors my own perception. Within chapter four, I demonstrate an applied use of Bourdieu's terms as they correspond to my empirical data.

3. Introducing Mutabaruka and the *Steppin Razor* radio show

This chapter attempts to introduce Mutabaruka as well as the Steppin Razor programme. In order to provide an accurate demonstration, I rely on my empirical data received during my fieldwork in Jamaica. First and foremost, Muta's statements from the narrative-biographical interview serve as a guideline to represent his adolescence, his main influences, his devotion to Rastafari and his rise to stardom as a performing poet and radio host. I want to emphasise the fact that I consult narratives as they were told to me by the protagonist himself. Thus, the following depiction is mainly a narration of Mutabaruka *in his own words* with hardly any reference to a third party's resource.

In the second subchapter one may become a *listener* of the Steppin Razor broadcast. The chapter presents an explicit programme operation, i.a. via an audio-visual and descriptive delineation. One should then have a better understanding of the modality of this particular Jamaican radio show. I also introduce the programme's team that works offstage as well as some (statistical) information about the show's popularity and range of influence.

3.1. The "Great" Mutabaruka

In the following subdivisions, which portray various important phases in Mutabaruka's life, I try to reproduce the life story (or at least the most important parts of it) of one of Jamaica's most known radio hosts in chronological order. Although I am sure that he covered the most crucial turning points in his life, it is possible that the autobiographical narratives as received in the narrative-biographical interview are subtotal. Hence, this chapter, provides an introduction rather than a complete autobiography. By using numerous quotations I cast an intimate glance at his experiences, relationships, and transformations.

3.1.1. Kingston Technical High School days: the Black Power and poetry experience

Mutabaruka, whose birth name is Allan Roy Hope, was born on December 26th, 1952, near Rae Town, an inner city community in the South of the Jamaican capital of Kingston. Since

his father had passed away early, he primarily grew up with his mother and his grandmother, who lived in a different community in Kingston:

I never have no serious contact wid mi faada. My faada died when I was 8 years old. So I never really know him as such. But my madda is the one who I live wid. Wi live together, and I also used to visit mi grandmadda in a place named Jones Town. Well, I never have no fantastic ting, just a ordinary likkle youth a grow up inna Jamaica. At that time wi never know nuttn 'bout ghetto and poor, enuh. I never know my madda was poor. But she was! Wi used to live inna one room, mi and her share the same bed. (Interview 1: 1)

When talking about his childhood, Muta, who is an only child, points out that he hadn't been aware of the poverty his family was going through. However, he remembers that they were moving a lot. Due to high rents or dissatisfaction, he and his mother would relocate from one house to another. In a Steppin Razor broadcast, he mentions former domiciles in Allman Town, Woodford Park and Spanish Town (cf. SR 38: 4). Regular resettlement was, as the radio presenter points out, an experience of a "normal Jamaican" (Interview 1: 1). In his view, he just did what a normal child did: playing in the streets and attending school. Every Sunday he also attended mass at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, a Roman Catholic church in Kingston. (cf. *ibid.*: 1, 8f.)

After he had finished Wesley Primary School he attended Kingston Technical High School. This was the time when he first lived separately from his mother since she had decided to stay with her new husband. It was also during that period, namely the late 1960s, when Muta became acquainted with the Black Power movement through the inspiration and ambition of two teachers, Locksley Comrie and Marcus Garvey Junior. Comrie, who had been chairman of the Kingston Technical High School Board and very much into the Black Panther movement, introduced a young Mutabaruka to certain books as well as to Malcolm X's *Message to the Grass Roots* (cf. Malcolm X 1965), an audio album from 1963 that features the famous speech of the same title by Malcolm X. The books Muta used to read during his schooldays were *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (cf. Haley 1999), about which he asserts that "it was the most inspiring book I ever read up to dis day" (Interview 1: 12), as well as *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* (cf. Garvey 1986), *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (cf. Rodney 1972), *Black Skin White Masks* (cf. Fanon 1996), *The Wretched of the Earth* (cf. Fanon 1963), *The Black Jacobins* (cf. James 1938) and *Black Power* (cf. Carmichael/Hamilton 1967). Back then, however, it was illegal to own and read books about Black Power, as Muta remembers:

And then in those days in Jamaica the books that was dealing wid Black issues was banned from Jamaica by the prime minister named Hugh Lawson Shearer. So wi had to disguise the books, like tear up the cover and put a book that was talking 'bout love, enuh, Mills and Boon book. But wi still read dem, undercover! And wi couldn't allow nobody to see it. In those days having those books was like having ganja. Police ketch yuh, they arrest yuh. But wi read dem as youth, and that started to motivate mi. (Interview 1: 2)

In order to be able to secretly read and reason about *Black consciousness* issues, Marcus Garvey Jr., who was the oldest son of Jamaica's national hero Marcus Garvey and who used to teach engineering at the Kingston Technical High School, invited Muta and his friends to "these likkle underground meetings where these political parties used to have dem meetin', not the PNP or the JLP, just some likkle communist party, Marcus Garvey Jr. party." (ibid.) When he was still in school, Mutabaruka became part of the Jamaican Black Power movement and started to absorb a Black consciousness outlook. (cf. ibid.)

In one of his radio shows, he reminisces about that formative period as follows: "Mi was a Soul bwoy inna mi school days. Afro wig, Dashiki bell foot pants and all dem ting deh. A Black Power business, enuh!" (SR 24: 3) Apart from Comrie and Garvey Jr., there was also Misses Pusey, his English teacher at the same high school, who inspired Muta in a different way, namely by noticing and supporting his gift for writing poems, from the very beginning. He remembers that she even encouraged him to read his first ever written poem in front of the whole class. It was a short but beautifully written poem:

Birds are lovely things to see,
just to see them flying free.
Birds with many colours,
it's wonderful to see them flying for hours.
(Interview 1: 2)

Even though this was very much the opposite of the militant poems he would write later on, the *Birds* poem was the beginning of Muta's affection for poetry, as he points out in the interview:

And I tink that was what motivated mi to continue, because I realise that it was accepted and dis is sumting that I could express miself. But it tek a turn from nature poem, because I was very politically motivated, Black Power motivated. So, I started to write poem that was socially conscious, was socially politicised tru the Black consciousness movement. (Interview 1: 2)

Another reason for his enthusiasm for politically motivated poetry was his fondness for poems from what he calls "the American experience" (ibid.). In conjunction with this,

he mentions African-American poets such as Gil Scott-Heron, Sonia Sanchez, Nikki Giovanni or the so-called *Last Poets*, a group of various poets and musicians who all have had a strong impact on him.³¹ (cf. *ibid.*) Furthermore, he emphasises that he was never impressed by other poets that he would regularly listen to at Kingston's university back then,

[...] because the poems wasn't excited. It was annoying. It was monotonous, it was just dead. [...] And mi and mi friend dem used to laugh. 'Caw wi a say, the poem deh it come like Humpty Dumpty sort of. I mean, some serious poems, but it never relate to wi as a youth who a look fi sup'm different. It was more like the Last Poets that strike wi! Enuh, these Black Power poets who a say revolution will not be televised. Dem poet deh really ignite wi.'³² (Interview 1: 3)

Here, Mutabaruka alludes to Gil Scott-Heron's recorded poem *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (cf. Scott-Heron 1974), whose title was a popular slogan for the Black Power movement in the 1960s. At an early stage in his life, the young poet was already very influenced by revolutionary notions of *Blackness* in terms of politics and poetics.

A very important and enduring inspiration he refers to is Jean-Baptiste Mutabaruka, a Rwandan poet whom he got to know through an anthology of African poems named *Writing Today In Africa* (cf. Mphahlele 1967). When he read Jean-Baptiste Mutabaruka's poem *Song of the Drum* (see appendix B: 8.2.) in the said anthology, it reminded him of his own poem *Drum Song* (see appendix A: 8.1.), which, in his view, sounded alike. (cf. Interview 1: 2) Consequently, the analogy of his own poem and the one of the Rwandan poet amazed him to such an extent that he eventually adopted the Rwandan poet's surname and thenceforth started to publish his poems with that name: "As a youth now I say 'I like that name, Mutabaruka, I rather tek that name'. And, first I said Mutabaruka, then I said Mazisi Mutabaruka. But then, eventually, ova the years I say Mutabaruka. So, I started to write the poems in that name."³³ (*ibid.*) It was also during that time that he felt the need to publish his poems and present them to a wider audience:

I wanted dem to be published by any means necessary. So, I send the poems there, here and everywhere. I put dem in Marcus Garvey magazine. And Swing magazine, it was like the Ebony magazine of Jamaica. It tell about entertainment, sports, fashion, all a these tings. So I sent a poem to

³¹ The Last Poets are often considered to be the forefathers of Hip-Hop. The group is still active and celebrated its 50th anniversary with the album *Understand What Black Is* released in May 2018. (cf. URL 6)

³² Humpty Dumpty is a character in an English nursery rhyme, mostly portrayed as an anthropomorphic egg. The name is used as an allegory for fragility, weakness, clumsiness, inaction and indecision. (cf. URL 7)

³³ "In Rwanda, Mutabaruka is a special name which is given to people who survived a war and returned home. It can also be given to a child of a mother who experienced hardship and destruction in a war, or to a person who encountered very difficult situations and risked his life, and survived without being harmed or having problems." (Hollington 2015: 195)

dem, about festival. And they publish it. That now was really like sup'm else, enuh, fi actually see one a mi poem dem inna magazine. It was like a big ting fi see the poem. I tink they give mi four dollar. (Interview 1: 2)

This moment in 1971, when Muta was still attending school, marked his first-time earnings from crafting words. From that point on, the monthly *Swing* magazine published his poems continuously; the magazine would even release a whole book with his poems in 1973, a collection called *Outcry* (cf. Mutabaruka 1973). Subsequently, encouraged by these “valuable” (Interview 1: 3) publications, he would also recite his poems at the aforementioned political underground meetings. (cf. *ibid.*)

3.1.2. Twelve Tribes of Israel days: the first Rastafari experience

It was at Kingston Technical High School when some school mates and Mutabaruka started “to lean towards Rasta [...] and to examine dis Rasta ting” (Interview 1: 3). Having been equipped with a Black Power mindset already, the revolutionary poet found his path to the Rastafari organisation by the former name of *Ethiopian World Federation Charter 15*, which afterwards became the renowned *Twelve Tribes of Israel*.³⁴ This grouping had opened new doors for his perception of Black Power and spirituality:

Wi realise seh, alright, the Black Power is a good ting, but what dis was offering now was sumting other than just being Black Power. It was Black Power plus. What is the plus? The plus was a more spiritual ting, a more looking towards sumting, enuh, looking towards Africa. Becaw the Black Power movement it never resonate to mi as a African ting. It resonate to mi more as a socio-political ting weh you waan Black people fi get a betta life, no matter weh dem is. But dis Rasta ting now, it start to resonate not only as a socio-political, but a spiritual ting weh it tek yuh into yourself now and it waan yuh to live a certain way wid the same black consciousness. So, mi and mi friend dem start to examine it and wi go join the federation. (Interview 1: 3)

At the organisation's former headquarters on Davis Lane in Trenchtown, Rastafarians and Muta frequently contemplated the concept of repatriation and going back to Africa. During his days at the Twelve Tribes, he started to read the Bible as well as literature about Africa and its ancient history. After also being steadily inspired by the words of Marcus Garvey Jr. at school, Muta's whole conception of Rastafari started to reverberate more and more: “And then what happened now, the Rasta ting look more functional to mi, enuh! Becaw it never exclude Black Power. So, today now at dis day I would realise seh

³⁴ For more information on the Ethiopian World Federation (EWF), its establishment, aims and its notable division of so-called charters or locals, please see Bonacci 2013: 74-78.

Rastafari is a Black Power movement wid a spiritual consciousness. That is really what it is to mi.” (ibid.) As he emphasises, he had been quite taken by the liaison of a socio-political force and a spiritual consciousness. In those days, he considered his transformation towards being a *Rastaman* as even more invigorated by the self-exploration of the ideas of Leonard Percival Howell, a Jamaican who had encouraged his fellows to worship a Black king instead of the colonial white supremacist king of England and is said to have started the first *Rasta movement* by praising the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie I. in 1930.³⁵ In order to support and prove his Rastafarian belief with its key aspect of Selassie’s divinity, Muta also consulted certain passages and verses of the Bible, a practice that has been very characteristic of Rastas from the Twelve Tribes up to now. (cf. ibid.)

3.1.3. Nyabinghi days: the second Rastafari experience

Nevertheless, after having followed the Twelve Tribes of Israel over a short period, Muta became distressed with the group’s tremendous biblical basis, or rather argumentation, and with the fact that its structure was basically assembled like a Christian organisation. But what the poetic Rastaman missed the most was a certain Rastafarian livity; a livity that he would eventually find and learn about in another Rasta community, namely the *House of Nyabinghi*.³⁶ Whilst remembering his early Rastafari days, Muta foregrounds the differences between the two Rasta Houses:

I spend a likkle time in there, but then the Twelve Tribes now start to mek mi feel like Christian, enuh. Like yuh haffi read the Bible. I mean, I read the Bible right tru! But, it never offa mi again a livity weh woulda call a livity. So, wi continue the journey and the search until wi buck up now the Nyabinghi man dem. [...] And wi kinda start to just move forth between Nyabinghi and Twelve Tribes. A mi find seh the Nyabinghi more connected to mi, to mi consciousness! Becaw what the Nyabinghi do, is like it wake up a certain consciousness inna yuh. And it was opposing all the tings dem that I was opposing when I was Black Power. So it was almost like anti-white supremacist, while the Twelve Tribe wasn’t anti white-supremacist. It was more incorporating everybody, like a Christian organisation. Black, white, brown and then waan send dem to Africa. [...] Marcus Garvey say “Africa fi Africans, those at home, and those abroad”. So, really wi start to tek a Marcus Garvey stance! The Twelve Tribe was more Christian and about reading. The Nyabinghi man dem was like fire bun and blood and earthquake. Plus dem was have a livity! The livity now was weh woulda call the ital livity.

³⁵ For more information on Howell and his influence on the genesis of Rastafari, please cf. chapter 4.4.1. or Lee 2003.

³⁶ Basically, a *Rasta House* means a distinctive grouping of certain Rastafarians. Barry Chevannes specifies the origin of the House as following: „The concept of House seemed to have originated in the second phase of the movement’s development [at around 1955; author’s note] when, as a result of the reform activities of the emerging Dreadlocks, the movement split into two orders or Houses: the House of Dreadlocks and the House of Combsomes, that is, those who comb their hair.” (Chevannes 1998: 16) The most popular Houses are: Bobo Shanti, Nyabinghi and Twelve Tribes Of Israel.

That never inna Twelve Tribe, becaw the only ting dem never eat was pork. The Nyabinghi man dem now, dem nah eat no animal product, nuttn! Anyting weh leather dem bun it out! Yuh know dem way deh. So, it a progress your consciousness now in another life. (Interview 1: 4)

Although meanwhile the Rastafarian philosopher had finished high school, worked for the Jamaican telephone company and rubbed shoulders with his future first wife Yvonne Peters, one of his biggest steps for *another life* was just ahead: As he incorporated a *Marcus Garvey stance* and a new notion of Rastafari imbued by an *ital livity*³⁷, he realised that he wanted to leave Kingston and start a living on the countryside. Together with Yvonne and their first daughter Ishiwawa, he moved to a self-made board house in Johns Hall, a wild place outside of Montego Bay in the Jamaican parish of St. James. They stayed there on a go-and-return basis, as in the beginning they regularly went back to Kingston and Ocho Rios. (cf. *ibid.*)



Image 6: Jamaican countryside, St. James
(Source: Schwager 2008a)

Yvonne then gave birth to their second daughter, Ishama. Deeply moved by the Nyabinghi's *ital livity*, the family of four lived a simple life in the Jamaican *bush*³⁸ with like-minded persons:

Wi start to find likeminds weh did interested inna no meat. Less is more, more is less, enuh. So, wi kinda shed a whole heap a tings. Wi up inna the hills and wi a see true tings, and wi a reason 'bout

³⁷ Rastafarians use this neologism to describe their vital or/and natural lifestyle. (cf. Interview 1: 4)

³⁸ In Jamaican Patois the word *bush* refers to nature and countryside, as opposed to the city life. (cf. Image 6)

tings. [...] Wi build up a likkle house up inna the hills, way up inna some bush like dis [referring to his present residence; author's note], but less modern. Wi never modern, wi never have pipe and light, electricity. Wi never have so called modern facilities up deh. But wi have spring. Wi plant some food. Wi a live Rasta life how wi a view it inna that consciousness as Nyabinghi! Ital livity, enuh! Wi stop cook, wi a eat weh now people call raw food. Wi never know 'bout vegan. Wi just a nah use leader. Wi nah wear leader cloth, wi nah do dis. [...] And outta that, wi decide seh, a so wi ago do it now! Wi decide seh dis is how wi waan to view Rasta. Wi waan to view Rasta from weh wi call the ital perspective. Natural! (Interview 1: 4)

Since Muta had always been interested in books, he used his free time at his house in the hills for reading. Amongst others, he found a source of inspiration in authors such as Lobsang Rampa who mainly published religious Tibetan tales, or the Chinese philosophers Laozi and Confucius. He also expanded his knowledge in Japanese literature and Buddhism. (cf. *ibid.*: 5) Until today, Muta is strongly influenced by Asian philosophies. Furthermore, he got inspired by other Rastafarians, who were illiterate:

And wi ago amongst certain Rasta who never read Bible. Some a dem cyaan even read. But wi see dem have the same attitude towards life, like the people dem who wi a read 'bout who is Buddhist weh live inna some Himalayan mountains. Dem nah wear shoes, dem nah use dis, dem nah use dat. Dem not even waan kill a worm, and dem just live. Dem just a live. And wi a say, "but dis to mi a Rasta"! It a carry yuh pon another perspective becaw yuh nah shed the Africanness. Becaw yuh now even see yourself as an African, even much more than wi did a say Rasta Christian business and a read Bible. Becaw yuh read Bible and see yourself as African, but it wasn't like African. It was like, "yeah mi is a African, but, enuh, mi is a Twelve Tribes". Now yuh a say "Africa wi a work wid, Marcus Garvey, Haile Selassie". So wi start to shed a whole heap a different tinkin and meditation! (Interview 1: 5)³⁹

Apparently, the young Rastaman had observed a certain way of living. Due to his keen interest in Asian religions and philosophies as well as due to the living exemplification of other Nyabinghi Rastas, he reached a consensus on his conception of life. He incorporated a Rastafarian way of life on the countryside, far different from the way he used to pursue Rasta during his days at the Twelve Tribes of Israel collective.

At the same time, since the responsible family man had always been aware of the need of monetary matters (e.g. for building a house or for agricultural purposes), he and his wife used to knit *Rasta tams*, cloths and shirts "like the likkle old ooman weh yuh see knit when dem get old" (*ibid.*: 4) and sell their products in the course of their regular visits to the tourist domicile of Negril, primarily at a hotel named Negril Beach Village.⁴⁰ The contact to

³⁹ The book *What Is Africanness?* by Charles Ngwena (cf. Ngwena 2018) evolves an epistemology for constructing the hermeneutics of Africanness within a wide-ranging view.

⁴⁰ Nowadays the same hotel is known as the Hedonism II All Inclusive Resort.

the hotel owners, the well-known Jamaican Issa family, also offered Muta the contingency and a first stage to showcase himself: “The owner say dem waan to expose the tourist dem to Rasta. That was from dem time deh, inna the 70s, very far seen people. So, dem aks mi to come dung deh. So wi come dung deh and spend ‘bout three years inna Negril Beach Village.” (ibid.) Not knowing that he would later on be regularly invited as an intellectual lecturer at universities or would work as an accomplished radio host, it seems as if Mutabaruka demonstrated his lecturing ability for the first time at said hotel in Negril when he introduced tourists to his reception of the Rastafarian way of life.

3.1.4. **Zinc Fence days: the rise of an international Reggae artist**

In spite of lack of acceptance, as he had once been the number one topic of conversation amongst his family and friends, the Rastafarian thinker never stopped to continue his way (cf. Interview 1: 5). He remembers that even his mother, who meanwhile was a domestic worker in New York, needed time to accustom herself to her son’s new lifestyle. She was mostly wondering about his changed eating habits:

When she come back to Jamaica now, I go visit her house. When she left Jamaica, I was eating outta fi her pot. When she come back, I nah eat outta her pot. Iyah cook my own food round a the back a the yard pon woodfire and dem ting deh. She a wonder if it’s just pure vegetable mi a eat. Becaw she cyaan understand why him woulda waan eat pure vegetables. She aks mi if mi ago turn rabbit! (Interview 1: 5)

After an initial period of non-writing up in the hills, Muta started to write poems again as he “couldn’t escape the poetry ting” (ibid.). Before he moved to Johns Hall, he handed over all his poems to his friend Stafford Harrison. Some of these poems were published in a book entitled *Sun and Moon* in 1976 (cf. Mutabaruka/Miranda 1976), which is a collection of poems by Muta and his Panamanian friend Faybiene Miranda. He explains, “I am the sun, sista Faybiene is the moon.” (ibid.) With regard to his printed books, he also alludes to his first one from 1972, the so-called *Twenty-Four Poems* (cf. Mutabaruka 1972), which he had only sold from “hand to hand, [as] wi used to walk up and down and sell dem.” (Interview 1: 5) Another publication that he would not only sell on the streets, but that put him even more into the spotlight was *The First Poems* from 1980 (cf. Mutabaruka 1980), a collection showcasing the poems he had written between 1970 and 1979. Issued through the initiative of Paul Issa, whom Muta knew from the Negril Beach Village, this book supported

his career as a world-famous poet and was even rereleased in 2005 in a double volume extended with a collection of newer poems called *The Next Poems* (cf. Mutabaruka 2005). Encouraged via Issa's and Harrison's publications, the Jamaican poet continued to write poems. (cf. Interview 1: 5f.)

Whenever he returned to Kingston, he would take the challenge to present his poems, most notably at a place called *Zinc Fence*:

Anywhe the poetry deh, wi find weself deh and read the poems and the poetry deh, man. One place named Zinc Fence. Zinc Fence is a place weh Third World [the famous Reggae group; author's note] used to own and dem used to have performances in there. And one day they had a concert in deh and I was performing a poem. The poem was Every Time A Ear De Soun. And Mortimo Planno [...], him hear dis poem. Him say, "look yah, I wanna tell the Jimmy Cliff musicians to put yuh on the concert that Jimmy Cliff keeping in weh him come from". So I say "okay". (Interview 1: 6)

Subsequently, as it was contrived by Mortimo Planno⁴¹, Muta came to Jimmy Cliff's house in Somerton, which was near by his own house in St. James, and they rehearsed the song. Referring to his first steps as a performing artist still sparks pure joy and amazement in Muta: "Mi go dung a Jimmy Cliff house go rehearse. And the concert keep and wi did the Every Time A Ear De Soun. And the place was like thousands of people and I never know seh people coulda react that way to poetry. [...] That was the beginning now of Mutabaruka as a Reggae artist!" (ibid.) As a result of this concert and through encouragement from famous Reggae-guitarist Earl Chinna Smith, Jimmy Cliff's *Oneness* band leader back then, Muta's first record was released in 1980. He recorded the poem *Every Time A Ear De Soun* (cf. Mutabaruka 1980)⁴², which, according to Muta, was the first Dub poem that entered the Pop charts in Jamaica (cf. Interview 1: 6).⁴³ Three years later, his first studio album *Check It* (cf. Mutabaruka 1983), which was released on the American blues label *Alligator Records*, emerged from the success of his first single. Shortly after his performance at Zinc Fence, a concert trip to Cuba with Jimmy Cliff and a performance at the legendary *Reggae Sunsplash* festival in Montego Bay in August of 1981 followed:

⁴¹ Mortimo Planno was a well-established and influential Jamaican Rastafarian and known as an advisor of Bob Marley. He even wrote some of Marley's songs, e.g. *Haile Selassie is the Chapel* (cf. URL 8). Furthermore, he left a hand-written report on Rastafari's oral traditions (cf. Planno 1969).

⁴² For the recording he revisited, adjusted and rephrased his poem (cf. URL 9), but, originally – as one can find it in his poetry collection (cf. Mutabaruka 1980: 6f.) – it was entitled *White Sound*, serving sharp and provocative verses against white slave drivers (see appendix A: 8.1.).

⁴³ Since I was not able to find any source that showed the Jamaican Pop charts from that time, I refer to Reggae charts lists that were compiled by several Reggae record shops from UK in 1981 (cf. URL 10). Indeed, between May and September 1981, one could find Mutabaruka's *Every Time A Ear De Soun* in the top ten for seven times, next to other Reggae hits from that era, e.g. Eek-A-Mouse's *Wa Do Dem* and Jahman Levi's *Jah Heavy Load*. (cf. ibid.)

And the same band [meaning Cliff's Oneness band; author's note] now, dem aks if I can do two poem pon the Sunsplash. The Sunsplash used to keep in a place called Jarrett Park in Montego Bay. And I did Every Time A Ear De Soun. What was frightening and scared to a whole heap a people is that here is a guy, I never have on a tam, mi locks was just coming, and I have a likkle streak inna mi hair. So, no shoes, enuh, no shut. Short pants, never looking like a Reggae artist. Raw, raw, raw, coming out of the bush. And come pon the stage and say, "it noo good fi stay inna white man country too long". That was sup'm else inna the place. (Interview 1: 6)

Muta's first Sunsplash performance was not only qualified for the Reggae memorials due to controversy in terms of his stage outfit, but also because of the presentation of his sarcastic and critical song *Whiteman Country* (cf. Mutabaruka 1983), which became one of his biggest hits in the years to come. As a result from his stunning appearance in Montego Bay, the young performer was booked for a live concert in California, which eventually led to him being an established and well-booked Reggae artist. His first concert in the USA helped him pop up on the international Reggae agenda, although it was an ambivalent experience, as he reminisces:

So, I went to California now and coming on the stage I had a white chain round mi hand. No shoes, no shut, mi locks out, and mi come pon stage, "it no good fi stay inna white man country too long". I don't know, but nuff white people get up and walk out. But that never stop mi, becaw wi a do it, wi a do it. Anytime mi come off pon the stage now, yuh woulda never know that Third World, Dennis Brown, all a these artists was on the show. All a the reporters was in the changing room trying to figure out who the hell is dis bredda! 'Caw dem never hear 'bout mi yet. [...] Who is dis guy come a America go say, "it no good fi stay inna white man country too long, every time a ear de soun"? Is like a new ting to the Reggae scene. [...] Coming back to Jamaica, a tour was planned. And wi went wid the band High Times Players, and wi tour 'bout 4 weeks inna America. Every show sold out! Every show! And I come back wid not one cent! Never come back wid nuttn at all more than the newspaper praise! (Interview 1: 7)⁴⁴

Even though he can laugh about the non-lucrative North American tour now, he is aware that those first steps within the music business bestowed a life outside of Jamaica upon him as plenty of concerts and tours and the release of several albums came about. (cf. *ibid.*)

⁴⁴ The *High Times Players* was a Reggae studio and backing band, founded by bandleader and High Times label owner Earl Chinna Smith. (cf. URL 11)

3.1.5. Blakk Muzik days: the rise of a radio host and philosopher

The emerging lifestyle as an internationally acclaimed performer and renowned artist gave Mutabaruka the opportunity to travel the world, especially during the 1980s. At the same time, whenever he was home from touring, he used his time for meditation in his *retreat* on the Jamaican countryside in order to write more poems and articulate his Rastafarian way of life:

Wi start to tour all ova the place. Wi deh all ova the world. I mean, everywhere yuh can tink off fi go. Inna the 80s wi was touring like wi deh yah a Europe all three time fi the year, two weeks inna Germany alone. [...] Five day a week wi just a do shows, enuh. All ova Europe, and when wi go out deh in all these big cities and ting, wi end up back inna wi bush [referring to his residence in St. James back then; author's note] same way. [...] And wi start to write more, read more, articulate more. That now lead us to be just more than a Reggae artist! Wi started to articulate wi livity. [...] Wi start to articulate why wi do dis, why wi don't do dat. What is our reason fi dis, our reason fi dat, and all these tings. So people start to find it very interesting, too. (Interview 1: 7)

Paving the way for himself as an acknowledged philosopher to-be, Muta, versatile as he is, started a sound system by the name of *Blakk Muzik*, “the first sound system inna Jamaica that play CD” (ibid.).⁴⁵ He became an ambassador of World Music – “at that time they used to call it Worldbeat” (ibid.) – and Black music “from all ova the world” (ibid.), primarily collecting and *selecting* African music from Africa, i.a. the likes of Salif Keita, Fela Kuti, and Muta’s label mates at *Shanachie Records* Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Lucky Dube. His collection had always been enlarged through receiving of CD’s from the label or individual shopping at his concert tours. Again, it was at Zinc Fence where he had the



Image 7: Sound system Montego Bay
(Source: Schwager 2008b)

⁴⁵ When Mutabaruka gets booked as a selecta, he uses that name for his sound system until this day.

opportunity to introduce his Black music compilation to people. He interspersed it with selective Reggae music from Jamaican artists such as Black Uhuru and Burning Spear, and he constantly played with his sound system at the socializing Zinc Fence sessions. (cf. *ibid.*: 7f.)

After he had moved in with his second and current wife Jackie Cohen and had made a name for himself as a music collector and selecta, in 1992 the relatively new founded Jamaican radio station *Irie FM* suggested an idea to Muta:

About two years into the radio station, one of the programme manager dem come to mi and say dem waan mi do a programme pon di radio, to play Reggae from around the world. Because they realise that I have the music dem. So I say, “yeah, wi do it, Reggae from around the world”. Wi ago pon di station and wi ago play Reggae from around the world. But, unfortunately or fortunately, I couldn't just play pure music for four hours, I have to say sup'm! I have to say sumting, I can't just a play music like the ordinary DJ dem. I have a tinkling, a Rasta tinkling and a Black Power tinkling. Marcus Garvey inspired mi, so I haffi expound that inna di programme. Well, I started to do it inna di programme and apparently the people dem start to love it and start to hate it. So, I become the man they love to hate. (Interview 1: 8)

In this quote, Muta addresses his provocative way of hosting the broadcast; he had quickly realised that his first weekly radio programme *Cutting Edge* caused divided opinions. As the programme became “more talk than music, [...], and more philosophical” (*ibid.*), people were constantly riveted by his social comments and discourses. In retrospect, the radio host now realises that right from the beginning many listeners have maintained a love-hate relationship with him and his broadcast:

Apparently more people did hate weh mi a say, but dem almost like masochistically listening to the programme like it hurt dem, but dem still a feel the pain and dem come back fi more pain every week. [...] They really waan stop listen to mi, but dem say, “alright him can't get worse”, and when dem listen to mi I get worse and dem say, “no, dis guy is a mad guy” and dem still a listen, ‘caw dem a say, “I really waan hear weh him a tell dis week”. And dem keep listening, listening, listening. So, the programme become a phenomenon inna Jamaica. The Cutting Edge is deh deh and it deh deh. (Interview 1: 8)

As Muta looks back at the programme's beginning, he recalls stories from listeners who reported that they were beaten by their parents for listening to his programme (cf. *ibid.*). Essentially, the Cutting Edge show was an innovation in Jamaican Radio and, despite its controversy, became a huge success. Since Muta still hosts the show today, his decision to join the radio crew and launch Cutting Edge in March 1992 had a lasting effect. In 2013, he started his second programme named *Steppin Razor – The Art of War*. Since then, he has

been the host of two shows: Cutting Edge on Wednesday nights and Steppin Razor on Thursday afternoons (cf. URL 12).

3.1.6. Nowadays: the pinnacle of a great edutainer's career

Despite him being an uncomfortable voice to many people, Mutabaruka has steadily continued to articulate his perceptions and philosophies live on air. He speaks in favour of the poor and oppressed and has become the “voice of a nation” (URL 13), an attribution *KingdomNubia Radio* gave him on its website.⁴⁶ Yet, Muta regards himself as being the spy for the people rather than the voice of a nation, as he elucidates:

I talk fi the people becaw they don't have the radio, they don't have the means to project demself. So, I listen to what the people dem say and go back on the radio and say it. Is like I am a spy for the people. Enuh, I am moving in different circles, so I am listening to what these guys did saying about the people. And I am listening to what the people is saying that dem really require. So, I go pon the radio and say it. Of course, it sound like a voice of the nation. A is not sumting that I walk wid. [...] But, one would say it, because of what I say. Enuh, people say “the Great Mutabaruka”. That's what dem say. I say I am going start believe that now, enuh, like Great is mi first name. [...] Becaw everywhere I go, politicians, preacher, beggar man, thief, dem say, “whappen, the Great Mutabaruka, man” [...]. (Interview 1: 20)

Over the years, the outspoken Rastafarian has become an *institution* in the Jamaican media and entertainment scene, not only hosting his two radio programmes, but also presenting a TV show named *Simply Muta* and moderating many music and poetry festivals in Jamaica and other countries; all of that made him a role model for upcoming entertainers (cf. URL 2).⁴⁷ Beyond that, he has never stopped touring as a poet, Dub/Reggae artist or philosopher who *edutains* – a portmanteau derived from the words education and entertaining – people from near and far. He unapologetically voices his notions on multifaceted matters and particularly creates space for Black issues. Above all, he played the rebellious slave Shango in the drama movie *Sankofa* (cf. Gerima 1993) and was the protagonist in the documentary film *Mutabaruka: The Return to the Motherland* (cf. Zips 2011). There are seemingly endless indications for the validity of his social attribution of the *Great Mutabaruka*. Whilst I suggest to listen to his radio shows or watch a live performance

⁴⁶ KingdomNubia Radio (KNR) is an online radio station and information provider of Black topics. Amongst various programmes, KNR broadcasts Muta's radio shows, too. For access, please visit: kingdomnubia.com.

⁴⁷ In November 2009 the Jamaican TV station CVM launched *Simply Muta*. However, Muta's own TV show only lasted for two seasons. (cf. Interview 1: 23)

to really understand his *greatness*, others may refer to achievements for which he officially was honoured. Some of his awards are listed below:

- *Best Dub Poet* in the course of the Jamaican Music Awards, repeatedly awarded (cf. Habekost 1993: 26)
- award for *over 30 years of outstanding work in the field of the arts* by the National Centre for Youth Development (NCYD) and the Rotaract Club of Mandeville (Jamaica) in 2010 (cf. URL 14)
- *Pan-Afrikan Grand-Master* award by the Alkebu-Lan Revivalist Movement along with Best Kept Secret Spoken Word Collective in London (cf. URL 15)
- *Order Of Distinction (Commander Class)* from the Jamaican government in 2016 (cf. page 11)
- *Lifetime Achievement Award* at the Black Royalty African Heritage Expo in Connecticut (USA) in 2018 (cf. URL 16)
- *Lifetime Achievement Award* by Irie FM in March 2019 (cf. URL 17).

3.2. Steppin Razor – The art of war

*“I’m like a stepping razor
Don’t you watch my size
I’m dangerous, dangerous”
Peter Tosh 1977*

“Dis is the Steppin Razor, the art of war! Wi deh yah wid yuh another Thursday!” (SR 44: 1) These are the opening words every Thursday afternoon at two o’clock with which the charismatic voice of radio host Mutabaruka starts the Steppin Razor programme and, hence, finds its way into many radio sets, pimped-up car speakers, and people’s headphones on the Caribbean island of Jamaica. Since Irie FM provides a live stream on its website, Muta’s voice gets a transnational dimension as there are many international listeners, too.⁴⁸ Whenever he speaks his introductory words, one knows once again, Mutabaruka will take his time to reason, listen, and entertain for the next four hours.

In the following, I give a detailed insight into, and in some way a *thick description* (cf. Geertz 1997) of, Irie FM’s popular weekly broadcast. In doing so, I rely on my research

⁴⁸ On its homepage Irie FM states: “Listeners from Australia to Switzerland, from Seattle to Denmark are tuning in to IRIE FM. Thousands of people log on to www.iriefm.net as part of their daily routine. The website has clearly paved the way to become a reggae portal of great substance.” (URL 18)

and field notes, given that I transliterated and analysed 50 Steppin Razor shows and attended one live broadcast of the radio show in the course of my fieldwork in Jamaica.

3.2.1. Words, sounds, and power: the art of war

“Music go wid radio, yuh nah understand? So, wi cyaan just a do the talking and nuh play no music. And wi cyaan just a play pure music and nah talk. Becaw there is so much tings socially, that confront us, that it is necessary for us to give our opinion! And not only give our opinion, but find a way how wi can get the people dem involve inna dem own community and develop a certain pride! Pride wi a work wid now!”

Mutabaruka (SR 20: 8)

The Steppin Razor programme offers, in principle, a casual and unorthodox procedure in form and content. The four hour long broadcast mixes talk show and music, as was disclosed by Mutabaruka in the previous quotation. Since Muta is the host, he primarily chooses the topics he wants to talk about: “Most a the time is I put the programme how it waan put. I don’t have nobody a tell mi wah fi do.” (Interview 1: 25) The same applies to the songs he plays, which for the most part come from his own repertoire of *conscious* Reggae and African music. “Sweet, sweet Reggae music, man! Mi a tell yuh, man! Cyaan stock!” (SR 17: 4), as he promotes his selection. In his playlist one comes across artists such as Abdel Wright, Asantewaa, Black Uhuru, Bob Andy, Brimstone, Bugle, Bunny Rugs, Burning Spear, Busy Signal, Dennis Alcapone, Fabine, I Saba Tooth, Iba Mahr, J Boog, Jah9, Justin Hinds, Kabaka Pyramid, Konshens, Lavaska, Lee Scratch Perry, Macka B, Michael Fabulous, Queen Ifrica, Ras Penco, Ras Takura, Ray Darwin, Santa Davis, Serano Walker, Sizzla, Stewart Nelson, Tarrus Riley, Third World, Xana Romeo and Xylophone. Once in a while he also plays tunes requested by listeners. (cf. SR 1-50)

Although the programme’s formal procedure may be easy-going, its topics and Muta’s narratives and social commentaries are anything but comfortable. As the broadcast’s name reveals, the radio host operates like a *steppin razor*⁴⁹ when he philosophises according to his razor-sharp views, unashfully reprehending politicians, church leaders, other radio DJs, Dancehall artists, oppressors, white supremacists, and scammers (cf. SR 1-50). Usually,

⁴⁹ According to *urban dictionary*, „a steppin‘ razor is a dangerous person that is not to be messed with, referring to the fact that they are quick to fight“ (URL 19). The term was made popular by Peter Tosh’s recording (cf. Tosh 1977) of the homonymous song – although it was originally written by Joe Higgs (cf. Higgs 1967) – as well as by a Peter Tosh documentary film of the same title (cf. Campbell 1992).

within the first half of the show Muta delivers off-the-cuff speeches, as he discloses during the interview: “A whole heap a people believe seh I have a script in front a mi doing programme. I have no script, I just say it!” (Interview 1: 25) His speeches thematise recent national issues and/or international news, ranging from Jamaica’s crime situation (cf. SR 32: 4f.; SR 39: 1; SR 43: 7ff.) to Donald Trump’s latest coup (cf. SR 41: 8ff.). In the face of a certain issue, he tries to include the sociocultural, (geo)political and historical background. Through his critical analyses, which reach from the analysis of a certain political system’s state (cf. *ibid.*) to the discourse of people’s happiness (SR 4: 1; SR 5: 1f.), he makes his position clear using the Jamaican vernacular as his means of expression.⁵⁰ In the second half of the broadcast, there is usually a call-in component as Irie FM provides a direct telephone line to the Rastafarian presenter. Sometimes, the callers pick up Muta’s preceding considerations or come up with a new subject to discuss with him. Many callers also ask the radio presenter for advice concerning personal matters, e.g. to find a lost person (cf. SR 29: 2), or they call in need of a shoulder to cry on. Moreover, some of them use the radio as a public stage to rectify certain issues, such as Rohan Marley, one of Bob Marley’s sons, who called in order to rectify the dispute with Bunny Wailer (cf. SR 14: 10). At times, Muta creates space for callers to present their poems (cf. SR 8: 1; SR 26: 1). Amongst his most prominent call-in candidates in the Steppin Razor show were Catherine Howell, the daughter of the well-known *first* Rastafarian Leonard Howell (cf. SR 40: 7) as well as Reggae artist Chronixx (cf. SR 7: 9f.) and *Dancehall Queen* Lady Saw, who merely called Muta to praise him for his educating programme (cf. SR 14: 7). There are also frequent callers from the USA and the United Kingdom (which shows the international dispersion of the Steppin Razor broadcast) and periodic callers from Jamaica who call regularly. Amongst the latter are gossip talker Mister Universe, female Rasta elder Fyah Mumma, Reggae artist I Saba Tooth and medical herb doctor King Yahshua (cf. SR 1-50).

Steppin Razor is an interactive talkback radio in which everyone is free to *talk*. Thus, whilst providing a forum for his callers, Mutabaruka takes the time to speak, too. Sometimes his introductory reasoning takes 30 minutes nonstop or he talks to someone on the phone up to 25 minutes. In a radio show from March 2016, he points out the elemental power of *talking*:

⁵⁰ Muta is said to be one of the authenticators of using Jamaican Patois on the radio. In cooperation with the English and Linguistics Department of the UWI he even produced the newscasts in Patois for a short period of time. (cf. Mockyen 2003: 336)

Wi nah stop talk. [...] Talking is good! I don't have nuttn against a man who a talk nuff, enuh! Even the dumb and ignorant have story, enuh! So when a man a talk 'bout "bwoy, so yuh a talk now, weh yuh ago do?" Talking! That is what I am doing! I am talking! And people listen! Most a the people dem who start war inna the world, dem never go first shoot nobody, enuh! Dem talk and sign paper and mek people go kill one anedda. So, I have nuttn against sitting down and talk! Becaw outta that talking, yuh will be best able to construct your way forward! Evriting that is done was started from speaking! And wi don't have nuttn against that! Wi have a microphone in front a mi. Mi speak! (SR 21: 5-6)

Muta supposes that the practice speaking with someone about something is the fundament for further actions, namely people's actions. To avoid any misconception, one must consider that his reference to war is merely an example for the dimension that oral proceedings could reach and it doesn't advertise the use of violence. Besides, the programme's epithet (or subtitle) *The Art of War* discloses Muta's perception of war, as he explains the choice of the show's mission statement while referring to Sun Tzu's book *The Art of War* (cf. Sunzi/Giles 2008):

The message inna The Art of War is very revealing. [...] It's a Chinese philosophy 'bout how yuh go to war, how yuh defeat the enemy sometime widout even firing bullets, enuh. So, wi just say The Art of War. A whole heap a people say why I don't say The Art of Peace? But Iyah say, "yeah, wi coulda say that, but wi go offa a philosophy, a Chinese philosophy that say The Art of War, which leads to peace". (Interview 1: 18)

Indeed, Sun Tzu's ancient book suggests various strategies for "breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting" (Sunzi/Gilles 2008: 10). One of the quintessences of the Chinese author is to outthink enemies rather than fight them (cf. *ibid.*). Whereas the 2,500 year old book is considered a directive for generals and commanders of armies, it may also be useful as a philosophical guidebook in other domains such as politics, business, and sports. I can see a connection between Mutabaruka and this Chinese philosophy because he always tries to break the resistance of his antagonists and, in a figurative sense, conquer them with a critical mindset and *outtalk* them with his harsh words in the space of the radio broadcast. However, his enemies are corrupt and oppressive politicians rather than armed forces and guerrilla troops. According to Sun Tzu's principle "attack him [the opponent; author's note] where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected" (*ibid.*: 5), Muta takes advantage of his weekly show on the radio as he is able to address conscious music and challenging thoughts to people. Within such a public area one hardly faces a Rastafarian speaking up against injustice and reprimanding various people. He isn't eager to outsmart his opponents but he confronts them with rebellious music and counteractive reports, statistics, stories, and

realities about society's status quo. In the end, his programme – similar to Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* – serves as a medium that brings up certain strategies in order to defeat the considered enemy without fighting. Steppin Razor delivers guidelines for actions to help suppressed people reclaim their self-esteem, self-respect and *pride* as cited at the outset. In so doing Muta can help to outthink the enemies of (Jamaica's) deprived people. "Very serious way! Steppin!" (SR 28: 1)

3.2.2. A public platform and weekly stage

Between talks, music, and incoming calls, the host frequently plays audio tapes of speeches, for example from Jamaican politicians (cf. SR 7: 7; SR 20: 1; SR 39: 3, 4, 7; SR 40: 2), pan-Africanists such as Umar Johnson (cf. SR 25: 3f.) or inspiring speakers such as Hollywood actor Denzel Washington (cf. SR 39: 7). He also plays audio clips of reports with an educating parameter that deal with topics such as the discrimination against Black people in the Dominican Republic (cf. SR 48: 9) or Robert Mugabe's rebellion against white supremacy (cf. SR 45: 8-12). Those tapes and clips serve as a basis for reasoning and, additionally, as an underpinning and support for Muta's views as he explains to a caller during the broadcast (cf. SR 9: 2). Sometimes the Rastafarian anchorman dedicates a broadcast to a deceased personality, whom he considers as influential. For instance, one comes across reports and debates on the life and achievements of American boxer Muhammad Ali, who (according to Muta) was not only the greatest boxer, but also "a beacon fi Black people right round the world" (SR 24: 3).⁵¹

In addition, Muta undertakes extensive telephone interviews or studio interviews in the Irie FM studio with characters such as crime victims, police officers, lawyers, local politicians, politics analysts, activists, representatives of organisations, actors in the realm of civil society, Black Power leaders, professors, festival organisers, clerics, farmers, midwives, Reggae and Dancehall artists, Rastafarians, and even anthropologists (cf. SR 1-50). The interviews are predominantly connected with recent national/global events, issues, or gossip. Well-known personalities were interviewed in Muta's broadcast, i.a. Jamaican scholars Michael Barnett (cf. SR 15: 7), Carolyn Cooper (cf. SR 29: 1), Herbert Gayle (cf. SR 39: 3) and Verene Shepherd (cf. SR 13: 2; SR 43: 7); Reggae artists Dean Fraser (cf. SR 33: 1), Brigadier Jerry (cf. SR 38: 4f.), Beenie Man (cf. SR 6: 2) and Tony Rebel (SR 19: 2);

⁵¹ Zips provides a brilliant demonstration of Muhammad Ali's socio-political accomplishments in the book *Nation X* (cf. Zips/Kämpfer 2001: 9-19).

Haile Selassie's grandson Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie (cf. SR 22: 5); pan-Africanists James Small (cf. SR 27: 2-8) and Malik Zulu Shabazz (cf. SR 42: 1); Clive Muhammad, who is the Jamaican representative of the *Nation of Islam* (cf. SR 29: 1); and Peter Tosh's common-law wife Andrea Brown (cf. SR 30: 2). Evidently, the spectrum of interviewees is very broad. Muta tries to give voice to miscellaneous groups of people, including crime victims (cf. SR 2: 5; SR 7: 5; SR 44: 4) and ghetto citizens (cf. SR 31: 2f.) as well as spokespersons and superintendents of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (cf. SR 25: 3; SR 41: 1; SR 44: 4f.). Therefore, through the presentation of oppositional voices, his listeners get a holistic and multifaceted picture of certain cases and are encouraged to see issues from different perspectives.

The programme's content constitutes the nucleus of the radio show, which is indeed flexible. Mutabaruka's broadcast doesn't stick to any protocol and he often improvises. In fact, the Rastaman tries to maintain an interactive and unbound presentation as he is a supporter of a lively, inclusive, and evolving debate rather than rules and norms, excluding certain segments of society. He experienced such exclusion when he visited the Parliament of Jamaica at Gordon House, where he realised that politics follow an obverse principle of conversation:

Mi go to the House di other day, and dem tell mi seh mi cyaan talk from the gallery. All when the man call mi name down deh, mi well waan talk, enuh. Sleepy [meaning minister Robert Montague; author's note] deh yah a talk 'bout mi, how mi a get rid of him, enuh, Rasta. And mi well waan answer. Di man say, "nobody can speak from the gallery or wi will aks him to leave". Mi a deh deh, mi a hold mi bottom, mi a hold mi mout', evriting just tight up pon mi. Dis bredda down yah a talk 'bout mi and mi cyaan answer the bredda. Yuh nah see it? It just a terrible ting when a man talk 'bout yuh and yuh just wanna answer and yuh cyaan answer, because of protocol and all these ting deh. (SR 47: 4)

Another characteristic that constitutes the broadcast is its unpredictability. Since there are always unforeseeable and amusing incidents, the broadcast doesn't become routine. To my surprise, in November 2015 four participants of the 13th season of the German talent show *Deutschland sucht den Superstar* were invited to an interview with Mutabaruka during Steppin Razor. Accompanied by the German show's juror H.P. Baxxter, who is best known as the lead vocalist and frontman of the legendary German Techno band Scooter, the young singers could introduce and promote themselves on Irie FM. During this particular broadcast, Muta surprisingly revealed his love for Techno music, as he explained to Scooter's frontman:

“I mean, I love the Techno ting, believe yuh mi. I love Techno! I have been to a lot of Techno festivals, performing a lot of Techno festivals in Europe.” (SR 16: 4)⁵²

To sum up, Steppin Razor serves as a public platform for manifold interests: cry out against injustices, liberate people’s minds from the fetters of suppressive systems, rectify news and issues, report on societal incidents and events, discourse about relevant sociocultural, political, religious, economical and even music associated concerns, provide information about Black Power and a Black consciousness, reason about the Rastafari movement and Haile Selassie, and give a voice to people in underprivileged positions. The show supplies its listeners with a space for critical examination and reflection on particular national and global developments and is Muta’s weekly stage to entertain, rectify, rebuke, educate, and help people in various contexts. The issues and stories he deals with are often not even mentioned in the mainstream media, which Muta’s son-in-law alludes to in our interview with him (cf. Interview 5: 3).

Mutabaruka provides a panel for open discussions and serious debates on social solutions. He partly challenges the callers and interviewees by asking them for strategies or actions to avert certain negative trends, for instance the sexually explicit development of the Jamaican Dancehall culture (cf. SR 24: 6). In this spirit, he helps people to help themselves. From time to time he offers certain callers his personal mobile number in order to get detailed information about their problems and to help them, or he and his radio team investigate a certain case (cf. SR 24: 6; SR 44). This demonstrates that his programme is not only connective but also solution-oriented, as he is aware of:

Wi nuh really leggo tings! Mi hold on pon tings until tings rectify. Yuh understand?! Becaw wi need fi rectify certain. Wi cyaan just keep bringing up tings pon radio and then after wi let it go and gone pon a next sup’m and then gone pon a next sup’m, and the sup’m weh wi did talk ‘bout first time nah rectify! So wi haffi keep it inna dem consciousness and dem minds a the people dem! (SR 3: 1)

Without doubt, the Rastaman acts as a mediator when he unrelentingly presents his ideas. However, as he complains, his proposals are hardly ever or never taken up by decision-makers: “I am saying, it is time for dem [the authorities; author’s note] to listen! ‘Caw even though it sounds like wi are always aggressive, but wi represented ideas. If uno did a listen to the idea dem, maybe it coulda help inna certain way!” (SR 14: 9)

⁵² Muta’s love for Techno is also demonstrated by his recorded Minimal Techno song *Wata*, which resulted from the collaboration with South African producer Beat Pharmacy (cf. Beat Pharmacy/Mutabaruka 2006).

3.2.3. A dinosaur and his mosquitoes

“Mi waan give thanks fi Shamara, who deh yah wid wi right tru, and Neil, who deh yah wid wi [...]. Young Young deh, enuh. [...] I wanna give thanks. Because yuh have done a great service to dis programme yah. Mi waan hail up Kabu. [...] It has been an honour and a pleasure to work under yuh for so much years. It is wonderfill. I hope your basket is never empty wid fruits and your fridge is never empty wid juices. Orange juice is a wonderful juice. So, Kabu, give thanks! All the operator dem outside deh, cyaan remember whole heap a dem name, that mi haffi give dem dem own name. Yuh know seh mi give every operator out deh dem own name. Yeah, Black princess, Jermain, Fluffy Diva and Petite. All a dem mi have dem own name fi dem, enuh. Wi give thanks fi dem.”

Mutabaruka (SR 50: 7)

This subsection introduces the people who work behind the scenes of Muta’s show. As of December 2018, the Steppin Razor team consists of engineers Young Young and Neil, programme manager Shamara, Irie FM’s programme director Ka’Bu Ma’at Kheru (Kabu), and several other people from the Irie FM staff, e.g. the telephone operators. During a broadcast, Mutabaruka usually sits in front of a studio microphone and his personal laptop from which he selects the music (cf. Image 8). One of the engineers, either Young Young or Neil, sits next to him and offers support with technical issues. In case there is a guest live in the studio, the interviewee sits opposite Muta in a vitreous compartment (at least this was our experience during the studio visit in November 2018) (cf. Image 9).⁵³ Contrary to the Cutting Edge show, which the radio host runs unescorted, he is always accompanied by his associates when Steppin Razor is broadcast. Given that he receives input from his coworkers on certain subjects, a daytime show implicates different dynamics. When we participated in the broadcast, it was primarily programme manager Shamara who consistently entered the studio to debate the course of the show.⁵⁴ Muta tends to lose himself in certain serious reasonings and at times his colleagues tell him what happens next according to the schedule, for example when it is time for the advertisements or receiving calls. Nevertheless, the

⁵³ To re-listen to the Steppin Razor broadcast with our interview, please cf. URL 20.

⁵⁴ In general, one must imagine the Irie FM broadcasting centre in Ocho Rios as an open-door facility, since diverse people (other employees, local Reggae artists or simply enthusiasts) gather inside the rather small building and, if permitted, enter the studio to watch the operation and perhaps chip in with some comment. Therefore, it is a continual coming and going. For instance, together with two local artists, I easily entered the studio to watch legendary DJ Wayne while he ran his programme.

experienced radio presenter mostly acts in a balanced manner and, if necessary, uses his charm and sense of humour to compensate for possible disorganisation (cf. SR 1-50).

Whereas the Rastafarian host calls himself a *dinosaur* and sometimes even a *fossil* (cf. SR 30: 2), he prefers to call his colleagues *mosquitoes* (cf. SR 39: 6) since almost all are considerably younger than him. In fact, he appreciates the young environment as he benefits from their views:

Yuh see mi glad seh mi work wid uno, 'caw mi kinda know exactly how uno young people tink, enuh. Mi know how uno tink, believe yuh mi. Sometimes mi siddung a mi yard and mi a say, "enuh, seh mi glad seh mi a work wid a pure likkle mosquito a deh inna the studio wid mi". 'Caw mi is a dinosaur! Mi a dinosaur, and dem a mosquito. Believe yuh mi. (SR 27: 9)

Notably, Muta has a close relationship with all of his colleagues. He is on familiar terms with them and they obviously maintain a non-hierarchic structure. The easy-going studio atmosphere I experienced underpins my statement. Not only could I recognise a *positive vibe* during broadcasting, but also during my participant observation when I watched the whole team inside the Irie FM studio on the spot. Even on air Muta loves to banter with his workmates, especially with Neil: "Because nobody feel seh dem getting enuff pay, all when dem nah do nuttn like Neil. Him nah feel seh him a get enuff pay, but him nah do nuttn really. Him siddung here so pon him phone." (SR 14: 5) He also jokes with them in the course of a serious debate, for example in the context of the American deportation policies: "Most a Neil fambily is in America illegal. So Neil, yuh betta call dem and tell dem, enuh. Tell dem seh tonight they must come to dem bed, bun some white candle, call Jamaica and get some black candle and bun it that Trump nah win." (SR 25: 1f.) Such jokes and comments are essential and make one smile in the otherwise quite serious programme (relating to its topics).

The Rastafarian really appreciates that Irie FM grants him widely artistic freedom. In an interview during his *Lifetime Achievement Award* ceremony, he mentions that Irie FM's programme director Kabu has never ever stopped him from any content he brought up during the two radio shows (cf. URL 21). This displays the trust that is placed in him. At the same time a grateful Muta pays homage to Kabu, describing her as the "driving force in Irie FM" (SR 35: 5) and claiming that he is proud to work under her supervision (cf. *ibid.*). It should be noted at this point that Kabu is responsible for the positive image Irie FM has achieved for the last 30 years as well as for it becoming Jamaica's leading radio station with a circadian focus on Reggae music and African-centred programmes. Besides her position

as the station's programme director, she has run her own regular broadcast titled *Running African* every Sunday morning since 1990. Kabu is a pan-Africanist and, similar to her friend Muta, a lead figure in Jamaica's campaign of unmasking colonial indoctrination and liberating the Black mind. (cf. Sweet/Olaniyan 2010: 286; URL 22)

Last but not least, Jackie, Muta's wife, should be mentioned. According to him, she is a fundamental contributor and conducive to the programme's content offstage:

Wi haffi hail up Jackie! Because is like she a operate the programme from behind the scenes. Wi haffi tell people that. So wi waan big up Jackie fi really intercheck certain tings inna the programme. Yuh understand! Wi soon haffi go talk to Kabu fi mek she get some money. Because she have enhanced the programme. Hear wah dem say: "Behind every good man is a good ooman". Well, is beside. Anyting weh a gwaan yah so now, is beside mi she deh. A trust mi! Whole heap a the tings weh wi do pon the programme, wi done sieve it out already from yard. Yuh understand? And when it reach yah so now, it well sieve out. So, wi give thanks fi that input! (SR 40: 10)

This quotation discloses that the Rastafarian mastermind plans parts of the show's layout together with his wife. By referring to an old wisdom, Muta openly appreciates Jackie and her input.



Image 8: Irie FM studio mixer (Source: Schwager 2018e)



Image 9: Irie FM studio room (Source: Schwager 2018f)

3.2.4. The programme's range of influence

“Mi listen to some of dem advertisement, especially the one weh dem a bawl out dem throat hole. No, trust mi man! [...] Because it is pure aggressiveness suppose to be inna the show deh if the advertisement is so aggressive. Anyway, I guess a so wi do our ting in Jamaica. Wi are so aggressive that all wi a advertise a peace lovin’ sup’m, weh people can go enjoy demself, yuh haffi hear it inna aggression. Serious ting!”

Mutabaruka (SR 5: 1)

During the show, the only interruptions between talks and music are news reports, regular advertisements, and announcements of the Supreme Ventures lottery’s game results (cf. SR 1-50). Muta resents the large number of advertisements, which he believes shorten his airtime. For example, when we visited the show, he complained that the advertisements would not represent the programme properly. However, Jamaican media personality and scholar Carolyn Cooper emphasises that the level of advertising in the Steppin Razor programme offer valuable clues to the vast reach of Irie FM in general and Muta’s broadcast in particular: “It will be good to see who advertises on the programme. [...] When I was on the Steppin Razor, you had like brandname advertisers, is big big companies that are advertising. The advertising will tell you something about the importance of the show.” (Interview 2: 5) According to Cooper (who sometimes fills in for Mutabaruka during his journeys abroad), an analysis of the programme’s advertising is useful. Not only does the large number of advertisements generate high revenue for Irie FM, it also says a lot about

the show's importance (cf. *ibid.*). In fact, Irie FM receives sponsoring from a variety of companies. During Steppin Razor Muta regularly announces sponsoring notifications, for instance: "The hour between two and three is brought to yuh by Lime." (SR: 1-50) Or: "The hour between four and five is sponsored by Kirk Distributors." (*ibid.*) Other corporations that advertise in Steppin Razor are Epican, ABC Electrical Sales, and LUX. Whereas Epican, a medical marijuana store in Kingston, and ABC Electrical Sales, a service provider in electrical products based in Jamaica, are local companies, Unilever's famous soap and shampoo brand LUX, the Colgate-Palmolive portfolio distributor Kirk Distributors Limited, and the Caribbean communication provider Lime (renamed as Flow in 2016) are enterprises with a multinational scope. Considering this, it seems as if Irie FM is of prime importance for companies and their marketing/advertising schemes. As it occupies the leading position in Jamaica's radio landscape (see statistics further below), the radio station provides a far-reaching medium and thus a potential target audience for advertising companies. Branded sponsoring in Steppin Razor gives a hint to the vast reach of the broadcast itself as well as its high reputation.

Ironically, political parties such as the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) use Irie FM (including the Steppin Razor show) as a platform for campaigning. Given that Muta demonstrates a high level of criticism towards many ministers of the JLP, this seems to be a paradox. But, according to Muta, campaigning on Irie FM rooted the findings of a JLP-funded poll (cf. SR 43: 6): This poll revealed that Irie FM is the main media used by people living in St. Mary, a parish in the northeast of Jamaica and, back then, survey site and electoral district. The pollster eventually advised the JLP to advertise on Irie FM. In this context Muta eliminates any political affiliation of Irie FM:

So, the JLP bombard the station wid advertisement, mek mi programme get short! Yes, every time I come here pon Thursday, I can hardly talk. It's pure JLP advertisement. [...] St. Mary people love Irie FM! Mi waan to hail up St. Mary people dem, not because uno vote! But because uno tell the pollster seh is Irie FM uno listen to! And a nuh Irie FM pay fi that, a JLP pay fi it! Irie FM is not working wid JLP, and JLP is not working wid Irie FM. It just so happen that the people say the media that best serve your advertisement vibes is Irie FM. (SR 43: 6)

A last and fundamental source for the proof of Irie FM's popularity is the *All Media Survey 2016 Executive Report* undertaken by Market Research Services Limited, a Jamaican marketing research organisation.⁵⁵ The report features a study on "media consumption

⁵⁵ Irie FM's programme director Kabu referred us to the online version of this report (cf. URL 23).

patterns among Jamaicans aged 10 years and older” (MRSL 2017: 8).⁵⁶ Its findings should be used “by the media and advertising fraternity to help make strategic decisions about programming and advertising” (ibid.). The study, whose estimates hold a 95 % level of confidence, was conducted from November 2015 until January 2016 by 65 interviewers who undertook 2017 interviews with Jamaicans across the country via structured questionnaires in order to track the respondent’s listenership and viewership patterns from the past 24 hours (cf. ibid.: 8ff.). By means of charts, the report provides a complementary demonstration of Irie FM’s leading ranking position. Irie FM held 20.27 % of the overall Jamaican radio listenership (including radio via Internet) and was positioned at number one amongst 27 stations (cf. ibid.: 21). RJR 94 FM received second (13.32 %) and Mello FM third place (9.22 %) (cf. ibid.). In spite of a decline compared to 2007 when Irie FM held around 34 % of listenership (cf. ibid.: 23), it was still by far the most popular station. During the time the study was conducted, Irie FM reached at least 230.000 people, which represents the average number on a Thursday, and a maximum 389.000 people, which is average number on a typical Tuesday (cf. ibid.: 30). Whereas Jamaica’s *upper & upper middle* socio-economic group preferred to listen to radios stations such as Fyah (15.84 %), Nationwide (13.80 %) and RJR 94 FM (11.07 %), the majority of the *middle income* (17.43 %) and especially the *low middle & low income* group (25.77 %) listened to Irie FM (cf. ibid.: 38f.).⁵⁷ In both gender segments – *females* (15.50 %) and *males* (24.88 %) – Irie FM was the leading station (cf. ibid.). Apart from the group of *tweens & teens* (10- to 19-year-olds) which primarily listened to Fyah (27.11 %) and Zip 103 FM (12.35 %), the three remaining age groups – *young adults* (19.62 %), *adults between 35 and 49 years of age* (22.96 %) and *adults over 50 years of age* (21.78 %) – mainly listened to Irie FM (cf. ibid.). What is more, Irie FM had the largest listenership in the *rural* (29.67 %) and *urban* regions (22.12 %) while RJR 94 FM attracted the majority of listeners in the city areas of *Kingston & St. Andrew, Portmore and Spanish Town* (14.93 %) (cf. ibid.: 40). The latter result mirrors Muta’s assumption about the listenership of his programme since he mostly receives callers from the countryside:

It look like Kingston people don’t listen da programme yah doh, enuh. Kingston people look like dem nah listen da programme yah. A mostly country people listen to that programme yah. Waan hail up all the country people dem who tune in to Steppin Razor every Thursday and nuh left dem likkle radio outta dem ears! (SR 12: 4f.)

⁵⁶ I regard this report as a snapshot from 2016. Therefore, results could be different at present.

⁵⁷ I adopted the market segment divisions (upper, middle, low income, etc.) as mentioned in the report.

Among Jamaica's Thursday afternoon radio programmes (between 2:00 and 6:00 pm), which held an average listenership of 335,000 persons (cf. MRSL 2017: 28), Irie FM's Steppin Razor had the fourth largest listenership (58,630 listeners on average) and is placed behind the programmes of RJR 94 FM (90,250 listeners), Mello FM (71,880 listeners) and Love 101 FM (64,880 listeners) (cf. *ibid.*: 120f.). However, the number of international online listeners are not reflected in these statistics. Irie FM and Steppin Razor would most probably obtain a higher ranking in such statistics if those numbers were included.⁵⁸ According to the report, the listenership of Muta's programme reaches its peak between 4:30 and 6:00 pm with a maximum listener reach of 90,000 people (cf. *ibid.*: 120). This is when Muta usually answers incoming telephone calls. It therefore seems as if Steppin Razor's interactive element is highly appreciated by people.

In summary, it can be said that although Irie FM spearheads Jamaica's radio landscape, the nation's adolescents and city dwellers primarily listen to other stations. This shows a potential target group of the Steppin Razor broadcast, which now mostly consists of adults from rural and urban regions.⁵⁹ On average, almost 60,000 people – mostly from the middle and low income socio-economic groups – listen to Steppin Razor. Furthermore, the media survey points out that Muta's show is not the most popular programme on Thursday afternoon amongst the general radio listenership. Thursday in general represents the least popular day of the week for Irie FM. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the international dimension (unfortunately not included in the media report) and particular forms of advertising are signs of the importance of Muta's programme. Apart from that, the Rastafarian presenter told me in our interview that the decision to launch a second radio show apart from Cutting Edge was made due to Irie FM's declining ratings at that time: "The ratings by the station was falling at the time. [...] The motivation was really fi jump the ratings a the station, enuh! And it did that!" (Interview 1: 17) Accordingly, Irie FM recruited Mutabaruka to reclaim the station's high ratings. In fact, the station was able to gain almost 1 % (which represents around 11,000 listeners out of the total potential audience of

⁵⁸ On the basis of Duke Baysee's YouTube channel (with 47,200 subscribers and 18.8 million views as of October 11th 2019) one can recognise the outreach the Steppin Razor broadcast (as well as the Cutting Edge) yields. An uploaded show reaches around 15,000 to 20,000 views on average (sometimes even up to 60,000 views), which means that many people (re-)listen to the programme on YouTube. Additionally, the commentaries on the YouTube uploads shed light on the broadcast's acceptance, its impact and stimulation for further debates. (cf. URL 4)

⁵⁹ Whereas the urban region represents the parishes of St. Catherine, St. James, St. Ann, Westmoreland, Manchester and Clarendon, the rural area includes St. Thomas, Portland, St. Mary, St. Elizabeth, Trelawny and Hanover. The four remaining parishes, namely Kingston, St. Andrew, Portmore and Spanish Town are considered the city region. (cf. MRSL 2017: 25)

1,146,000) compared to the survey’s results from 2014 (it increased from 19.30 % to 20.27 % of the overall Jamaican radio listenership) (cf. Image 10). This was the first time since 2009 that Irie FM had a growing instead of a decreasing rating (cf. MRSL 2017: 23). The launching of Muta’s second broadcast in 2013 may have contributed to that progression.



Image 10: MRSL radio statistics (Source: MRSL 2017)



Image 11: Irie FM driveway (Source: Schwager 2008c)

4. The man you love to hate: empirical data and analysis

„If the watchman see the danger and don't warn the people, the blood of the people will be on his shoulder.”

Mutabaruka (SR 20: 3)

“Concerned citizen talking! So, even if yuh don't like the messenger, check fi di message weh him a deal wid!”

Mutabaruka (SR 41: 7)

Based on the analysis of 50 transcribed Steppin Razor broadcasts, four topic groups (or thematic chapters) have taken shape. In my selected collection of narratives Mutabaruka predominantly debates these topics. Hence, I present them in the following four subsections. The objectives of this chapter are to answer my research question(s) and give a holistic demonstration of Muta's opinions and ideology. I present and evaluate the narratives of my protagonist, correlate them with each other, and combine them with contextual sources and empirical data received during my field research in Jamaica (interviews, observations, etc.). Bourdieu's theories and conceptual tools (cf. chapter 2.2.) are incorporated into the analysis and procure tenable results.

I want to point out quite clearly that one should not contemplate the individual Steppin Razor shows as separate entities but rather as fragments of a superordinate continuum. Instead of considering the broadcasts as self-contained units, one should recognise them as parts in a constant and vast *reasoning*. Reasoning is an integral part of and common practice in Rastafari livity. Volker Barsch provides an accurate definition of reasoning, defining it as the “Rastafarian's exchange of historical and current happenings related to the local and global level” (Barsch 2008: 119; own translation⁶⁰). Zips regards Rasta reasoning as an ongoing search for wisdom and as the opposite pole to the Western model of discussion, a term that etymologically derives from the Latin *discutio* (to smash) (cf. Zips 2006a: xii-xiii). Mutabaruka follows this tradition and *reasons* certain occurrences with his listenership in order to reach wise conclusions. Since he picks up issues from previous Steppin Razor broadcasts (sometimes also from his Cutting Edge show, which is on air the night prior to

⁶⁰ Original: „Reasonings dienen dem Austausch der Rastas über historische und aktuelle Ereignisse auf der lokalen und der globalen Ebene.“ (Barsch 2008: 119)

Steppin Razor), he deals with related themes and uses iterative arguments.⁶¹ In the following chapter I demonstrate an analysis of Steppin Razor broadcasts and, at the same time, I assemble the individual episodes and put them in an overall context. The outcome is a conglomerate of manifold narratives that coalesce into an *overarching reasoning*.

The first subsection (chapter 4.1.) deals with Muta's narratives concerning Jamaica's politics and policymakers. The second subchapter (chapter 4.2.) is devoted to the radio host's attitudes towards the island's crime situation. Whereas the ensuing part (chapter 4.3.) attends to his view on societal phenomena in the context of culture, music and religion, in the final subchapter (chapter 4.4.) Mutabaruka's conceptions of Rastafari, reparation, and decolonisation are presented.

4.1. **“Absolute power corrupts absolutely”: on Jamaica's politics**

“These politicians is reactionary! Dem so backward. [...] Why yuh haffi keep coming pon the radio and a talk these tings? And a some simple tings, enuh. Dis is foolishness. Yuh shouldn't talk 'bout dis pon radio. But they disgust yuh.”

Mutabaruka (SR 18: 6)

“JLP and PNP are the worst ting ever happen to Jamaica! Dem worse than the gunman dem! Mi a tell yuh, man!”

Mutabaruka (SR 19: 6)

“Politician, yuh tink dem easy!? Cho! Rhaatid! No, Rasta!”

Mutabaruka (SR 42: 4)

About one third of the narratives in the Steppin Razor show deals with politics. Mutabaruka knows how to supply his listeners with political analyses embedded in critical narratives relating to the mutual connection of micro- and macro-political actions. Without neglecting global structures and interrelations, the radio presenter primarily spotlights Jamaica's politics and policymakers.

⁶¹ In fact, his programmes are not detached from each other but rather epitomise a complementation. Without a thematic clash, Cutting Edge's focus is on philosophical and religious facets and Steppin Razor's on socio-political argumentation. (cf. Interview 1: 8, 17, 22f.)

4.1.1. A two-headed dragon: the JLP & PNP power games

Since the introduction of universal adult suffrage in Jamaica in 1944, Jamaica has had a democratic political system in which two parties, namely the conservative Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the social-democratic People's National Party (PNP), have taken turns in being in power. The two parties have not only fought for the nation-state's leadership but have also waged a struggle against each other. 1980 marked a bloody peak in their history, as around 800 people were killed due to political interests in the run-up to the elections. Constant battles between politically affiliated groups have the Jamaican society and divided its people up to this day. Especially in marginalised and poor communities of Kingston's, May Pen's and Spanish Town's inner city ghettos, the so-called *garrison communities*, political violence has been frequent. According to Figueroa and Sives, "a garrison, as the name suggests, is a political stronghold, a veritable fortress completely controlled by a party." (Figueroa/Sives 2003: 65) In the past, rival groups of such garrisons were armed by the respective parties (and the CIA!) in exchange for support at elections and in gaining political dominance.⁶² Although Jamaican gangs are not necessarily tied to parties any longer and have their own source of funds nowadays (cf. chapter 4.2.1.), the parties still offer political protection in exchange for votes. (cf. Edie 2011: 3, 24f.; Edmonds 2016; Figueroa/Sives 2003; Leslie 2010: 12f.)

Mutabaruka repeatedly reports on the widely known politically motivated issues and of what he calls the "two tribalist political party dem [which] really deject and reject the people dem" (SR 6: 3). In an episode from November 2017, he addresses the genesis of garrison communities and unveils his own experience with the ghetto structures:

Mi hear dis prime minister [Andrew Holness; author's note] seh him waan get rid a di garrison, and mi see him a mek more garrison! Becaw Mount Salem to mi is how garrisons are made. Nobody nah waan tek no promises so inna Mount Salem. It is a political party mek garrison. That mean seh years down the line, everybody vote fi dat deh party deh, who did come in deh, come do weh dem ago say to do. Is so it go! Nobody cyaan tell mi no difference! Garrison Tivoli Gardens is a good example of so it mek. So, now dem ago mash down zinc fence and dem ting deh and fix road and mek people pay light bill and all dem sup'm deh. And then, what other choice yuh have apart from vote fi dem? When the next election come, dem gone a Denham Town. Tivoli Gardens ova da side deh, Denham Town ova da side deh. Wi know seh dem place deh don gone straight up already. Round a Payneland and all dem place deh. Wi used to do some community work round deh. One side deh ova the bottom part a the road, no one walk a the top part. And then the man pon top a the road cyaan go walk on the bottom a the road, and same road, enuh. A pure war between the two a dem! When dem go a dance,

⁶² The background that eventually led to the CIA's interference is clarified in chapter 4.1.4.

dem look out fi one anedda and shoot one anedda. Is only the ooman can go up the road and the ooman dem can go dung the road. (SR 43: 5)

When Muta elaborates on the socio-political structure of Jamaican ghetto communities, he cautions against police interventions such as the so-called *ZOSO (Zone of Special Operation)*, which was considered a necessity by the Jamaican government in order to curb criminal activities in Montego Bay's community of Mount Salem in 2017 (cf. URL 24). Muta thinks that such interventions are first steps towards establishing a highly politicised community. In this context he draws on negative examples from the past; for example, he mentions the garrisons of Tivoli Gardens and Denham Town, two neighbourhoods in Western Kingston that were formed through government-sponsored housing schemes and where a proxy civil war has been fought by gangs from the respective areas for decades (cf. Arias 2017: 87-89; Edmonds 2016: 59f.).

In general, the host condemns Jamaica's existing political culture and landscape. He broaches the reciprocity of violence and partisan politics and of monies and clientelism, which would eventually amount to an absolute (forced) loyalty of the electors to one major political party. Muta makes his listeners aware of this corruption (cf. SR 14: 7). Calling it a *one campaign election* and *one box voting*, he wonders about the rigid structures: "How dem cyaan lose? That's why a one campaign election and a one box vote. One box count and dem just declare the winner. [...] One get 6000 [meaning votes; author's note], and one get like a 100. Dem deh don know seh dem ago win deh so, because garrison!"⁶³ (SR 43: 5) Muta is enraged about the dubious election results from the St. Andrew South Western constituency in 2017 where Angela Brown-Burke (PNP) received 6.324 from 6.659 votes counted (cf. URL 25). Such occurrences clearly show the political structure in Jamaica and the country's ongoing incidents of corruption at a macro stage. In the Steppin Razor broadcasts, Muta illuminates the political racketeering and appeals to people from the affected constituencies to become aware of the dazzled conditions (cf. SR 17: 1f.; SR 43: 4f.). In fact, he wants them to assume responsibility and self-empowerment: "If the people lead, the leaders will follow! And so it must go. Is the people must lead that the leaders follow." (SR 42: 3)

Muta states that politicians only care for the citizens during election campaign period in order to gain voters and also wants his listeners to get rid of their own ignorance:

The time when yuh know seh Jamaican people ignorant, is the time when election a come round. When election a come round, politician rent coaster [meaning Toyota Coaster bus; author's note], put

⁶³ In the garrison communities, a gang leader is called *don*. (cf. Edmonds 2016: 60)

the poor people pon it and give dem t-shut fi put on and Kentucky [meaning the *Kentucky Fried Chicken* fast food chain; author's note] and 5000 dollar bill and dem pack up the arena, dem pack up the square dem. And when the politician gwaan like him a entertainer too, enuh. Believe yuh mi, dem coulda go pon Sting! When dem lick dem face and dem say certain tings, and the people dem jump up. And then the soundman play the right tune and dem getting a frenzy, is like a church! Is like a church and Sting inna one! And then, look yah now, election done, dem same people deh come pon the TV and say from dem voting Mister dis and dat, dem nah see him come in the area. Dem nah waan him back round yah. Dem waan Mister other man now. Yuh nah see seh is a two-headed dragon a gwaan inna Jamaica! Yuh cut off one a the head dem, one head left but a the same body. The two head dem a work from the same body! The PNP and the JLP dem a defend the same ting. Is like yuh a do the same ting the same way all the while and expect to get a different result. (SR 17: 1f.)

Here, Mutabaruka addresses a common political practice during Jamaica's election campaigns: Parties provide bus tours for their supporters and attract citizens with food and give-away articles such as shirts and money.⁶⁴ In this context, he sarcastically advises politicians to take part in the (erstwhile) legendary Dancehall-festival *Sting* since politicians behave like entertainers or church preachers when they hold their open air rallies. In order to illustrate the political model of the Caribbean state, he alludes to a *two-headed dragon* analogy that emblematises the country's two-party system and the insignificance of the incumbent's party affiliation since there would always be the same corrupt and nonsatisfying outcomes. Omar Hawthorne, a Jamaican corruption and global security researcher, speaks of "the view that party comes before country" (Hawthorne 2018: 109), a mentality commonly shared by Jamaica's politicians that has unfortunately led to bipartisanship instead of a sense of responsibility for the citizens. To make it worse, this principle has become entrenched in the mind of the general public as part of a group habitus.

"Promises are comfort to a fool" (SR 49: 8), Muta broaches the empty promises of corrupt politicians. He doesn't only blame the political entity for villainous conditions, but also the citizens as they continuously fall for the authorities and their promising agenda like a "lamb to di slaughter, [...] and dem waan shepherd to lead dem" (SR 42: 3). Most notably, the opposition party in Jamaica vehemently pretends to be better and more caring than the incumbent party. In July 2017, reports about then-finance minister Audley Shaw's (JLP) high cell phone bill became much-debated in the media (cf. URL 27). Shaw's bill amounted to 8.34 million Jamaican dollars (approx. 56,000 Euros) from March 2016 to February 2017 and a 4.2-million-dollar bill in October 2016 alone. According to the ministry, the bill was so high due to Shaw's overseas travels. (cf. *ibid.*) Muta pays attention to such political scandals, signifying them as "scamming at its highest level" (SR 40: 4). Furthermore, he

⁶⁴ In this connection, cf. Edie 2011: 13-21 and URL 26.

includes other interesting facets of such stories in his argumentation, for instance he reminds his listeners of a newspaper article from October 2014, when reports were published about PNP minister Arnaldo Brown and a 1.09-million-dollar phone bill:

Hey! Watch yah! Jamaican people, I don't waan uno tek dis ting yah lightly, enuh! Yuh understand?! The former government under the PNP chuck up a hefty phone bill from one of his junior ministers, and the JLP opposition criticise dem terribly! And three years after the next government under the next JLP people dem come and chuck up a hefty phone bill. [...] Dem get away wid too much tings! Wi haffi have dis pon every news, every paper and it cyaan come off a the headline so. [...] Enuh seh cock mout' kill cock. Cock mout' kill cock! (SR 40: 1f.)

The Rastafarian philosopher deepens the debate as he reminds of the former PNP minister's bill and the subsequent critique by the JLP opposition in 2014, which he describes with the Jamaican proverb *Cock mout' kill cock*.⁶⁵ This phrase conveys the meaning to be more careful with one's own words as they may be harmful: "Cock mout' kill cock! The cock never know seh him mout' woulda reach deh so. Becaw him a look vote, it is all about getting vote!" (ibid.: 3) Through this proverb Mutabaruka tries to foreground that the two parties speak ill of each other but defeat themselves with their own arguments, an example being the saga about high cell phone bills. This reminds of Muta's analogy of the two-headed dragon: When the respective candidates run the country, they act similarly to (if not even worse than) their opponent predecessors. Muta argues that such incidents badly affect the government's integrity and wonders why politicians don't follow their usual reference, namely former *colonial motherland* England⁶⁶:

Inna England that couldn't happen! And a England wi a try follow! These likkle house slave a try follow the colonial master. Now have become neo-colonialist. In the house slave mentality, the house slave become like the master! And when the master leave the plantation, the house slave is there to help to sustain the plantation, and him oppress the field slave! 'Caw the field slave come like dem a idiot, dem a stupid people. But the field slave is the one weh just bun dung the plantation and a nuh feel no way 'bout it, becaw him nah loose nuttn anyway. The house slave sitdung inna the house and gwaan like seh him is like the master. (SR 40: 6)

At this point, Muta communicates a critical stance and uses the distinctive house-and-field slave mentality as a metonymic reference to Jamaica's political system. Whereas the field slave represents the suppressed citizen who just waits for rebellion, the house slave embodies the privileged and (seemingly) superordinate politician who in reality merely

⁶⁵ English translation: *Cock's mouth kills the cock*. (cf. URL 28)

⁶⁶ In fact, the British monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as head of state is part of the Parliament of Jamaica, represented by the Governor-General of Jamaica. (cf. URL 29)

serves as a henchman for the former colonial power. Over and over again, the host accentuates structures attributed to the colonial aftermath. By means of suchlike analogies, his listeners receive a clear picture of common social structures from the past and they may recognise the continuity of such practices and structures in the present. During a broadcast from December 2017, he uses a similar image of slavery:

It is summer, yuh don't need to wear coat and tie in Jamaica. Coat and tie is for colder climates. Yuh must be free, mek your body breath. These boasy slave, who gwaan like worse than the slave master, worse than the white man who used to slave wi dung yah so, dem nah know what clock a tick. (SR 47: 3f.)

Since Mutabaruka's habitus doesn't feature formal attire, he consistently devalues the dress code of Jamaica's politicians. He prefers to wear long smocks of many colours and made of African fabrics (or, at least, with African looks) and a head cloth in which he usually covers his dreadlocks. Furthermore, since he likes to walk barefoot, he (almost) never wears shoes.⁶⁷ His early socialisation amidst Rastafarians from the House of Nyabinghi and the Buddhist readings (cf. chapter 3.1.3.) give a clue regarding the reasons for his outward appearance. The radio presenter disputes with his audience about the *boasy* appearance and behaviour of political representatives, via which he means a boastful demeanour. Whilst devaluing politician's Italian ties and shoes (cf. SR 14: 4), he continuously makes his listenership aware of the enslaving system the politicians still perpetuate, even *worse than the white man who used to slave wi dung yah so*. Such a rhetoric reminds of revolutionary philosopher Frantz Fanon, who also wrote about "Blacks who are whiter than the Whites" (Fanon 1963: 144).

Muta finds the reference to national heroes made during speeches of current Jamaican politicians such as Peter Murcott Bunting (PNP) and Robert Montague (JLP) rather contradictory (cf. SR 6: 4f.; SR 44: 9f.). With his uncompromising stance and sharp tongue, the dissident Rastaman destroys the ministers' predications and presents an intellectual pastime reflecting on the status of the national heroes:

Why are these politicians get up and talk about Paul Bogle and Sam Sharpe as national heroes, when it is a known fact that Bogle and Sharpe rose up against the elected government of the time and broke the law by killing people and upsetting the equilibrium of the Jamaican society? Burning down plantations, chopping off people finger and all these tings! How is it that Mister Bunting woulda stand up now and say these men are really legitimate national heroes when in fact they were really outlaws

⁶⁷ During an on air conversation with a caller, Muta says that he will wear shoes for the concert tour in the USA as he is old and „cyaan walk naked inna the cold yah now.“ (SR 6: 5)

of the state? They were enemies of the state because they were fighting against a system that they thought is unjust! So they rose up physically against the system! And they were charged and was hanged! [...] If "a" Paul Bogle was to rise up today, or if "a" Sam Sharpe was to rise up today, would Mister Bunting recognise the Paul Bogle in dem or the Sam Sharpe in dem? Or would they just be common criminals that is fighting against the legitimate order of the society? Or would they say that the Paul Bogle and Sam Sharpe spirit in dis time is a illegal, unlawful spirit and must be crushed at any cause?! Becaw yuh know seh inna dis time yah, the system that gave rise to Bogle and Sharpe still maintain itself! Even though the face and the colour of the oppressor has changed, but the oppression still exists! [...] The same people who mek Bogle and Sharpe a national hero, knowing that Bogle and Sharpe was enemy against the state, will fight against the spirit of Bogle and Sharpe today! Dem would call parliament, the police commissioner and the police dis to organise against criminal activities put on by some people in the spirit of Bogle and Sharpe that is looking justice! Justice fi the Jamaican people against the present oppressive system that is now confronting Jamaican people inna Jamaica! So, these people are hypocrites! And dem worse than the British! (SR 6: 4f.)

As already pointed out in chapter 3.2., Mutabaruka is proficient in analysing political structures and practices within a historical and socio-political context. He tries to highlight the discrepancy of politicians' reference to Paul Bogle and Samuel Sharpe, two of Jamaica's national heroes who actually fought against the same political system that the present-day leaders now try to maintain.⁶⁸



Image 12: Sam Sharpe Square, Montego Bay (Source: Schwager 2008d)

⁶⁸ Being largely modelled on the British honours system, the well-established Jamaican honours system has been in place since 1969 as a result of the *National Honours and Awards Act*. It allots six different orders, reaching from the *Order of Distinction* to the *Order of National Hero* (cf. National Honours and Awards Act 2002). Hitherto, only a small group of seven people have fulfilled the conditions to receive the order, who are: the Maroons leader Nanny, the rebellious insurrectionist Samuel Sharpe, the instigator of the Morant Bay rebellion Paul Bogle, the anti-colonial politician George William Gordon, the legendary pan-Africanist Marcus Mosiah Garvey, the JLP founder Sir Alexander Bustamante, and the PNP co-founder Norman Washington Manley (cf. *ibid.*).

4.1.2. Out of many, one people suffers

In Jamaica, politics has been entangled with clientelist structures, crime, party-tribalism, and -paternalism for more than six decades. It is therefore difficult to tackle sustainable development and political progress. Furthermore, Jamaican policy-making is deeply embedded in the society's colour-class stratification that has shaped the country for a long time. Based on the interweavement of class and skin colour, the policy design becomes visible not only because "the political evolution of the black middle class in Jamaican politics [...] has been determined by a history of black subordination to light-skinned players" (Lewis 2001: 136f.) but also because *whiteness* (and/or *brownness*) is in general regarded superior and more privileged in the social hierarchy of Jamaica. Thus, the biological categories of *black* and *white* become categories of, in the most literal sense, social complexions. (cf. Hope 2006: 38f.; Paul 2009; Robinson-Walcott 2009: 107-112)

Being white- or lighter-skinned (brown-skinned) usually leads to a better job, a more convenient living condition, better access to education and, above all, to a smaller chance of being a target for political power games. By using the rich community Cherry Gardens in the parish of St. Andrew as an example, the forthright radio presenter harshly argues against such segregating socio-political conditions and publicly debates the subject of colourism, usually a taboo:

The politician dem know seh dem go inna certain area! Yah a certain people have a less education. Hey! Dem cyaan go up a Cherry Gardens weh keep mean like how dem so a gwaan deh. Yuh see any whole heap a brown people a jump up and down wid dem? Unless the brown people dem play pon the stage. Yuh see any whole heap a Chiney people who dem say out of many one? Out of many one only mean when yuh have certain tings, like heritage week, enuh. But when it come on to politics, mi a tell yuh, Rasta! Yuh see any coaster load a Indian a drive? And hold up dem green and orange [flags; author's note]! But is out of many one. But is one people being in the street, one people a eat outta garbage heap. One people a walk inna rain, a one people a cut the sugar cane. [...] So is like dem mesmerise the people dem! Is like some white magic put dem under one spell! Because that is the only ting mi coulda say. Is like the people dem under a spell fi dem two political party! And the politician dem deh deh, enuh! Dem know seh dem a play pon the ignorance a the people dem, and dem continue! Becaw dem know seh if the people dem was educated, trust mi man, the whole a dem woulda haffi go a hospital! Believe yuh mi. (SR 17: 2)

Most of the time, politician's campaigning takes place in the garrison communities where one hardly encounters people regarded as brown or of Asian descent, as Muta points out. He refers to the large group of people of Indian and Chinese descent living in Jamaica. That is the reason why he interposes the Jamaican national motto *Out of Many, One People* to this debate: Given that it is rather the African-Jamaican (or: Black) population that suffers

the most and is manipulated by the *spell* of the politicians, the slogan (which should actually pay tribute to the unity of all the different ethnic groups in the nation) doesn't match Jamaica's social reality. Muta clarifies that it is, out of many, *one people that suffers*. This discrimination is a vestige of the century-long colonial politics and can be traced back to the social structures during the times of slavery and forced plantation work in the Caribbean (cf. Smith 1988). The following common saying from the days of colonialism and segregation is still incorporated in Jamaican society's thinking and practices: "If you're white, you're all right. If you're brown, stick around. If you're black, get back." (Robinson-Walcott 2009: 107) The acceptance of such ideas of inherent inferiority (which comes along with a belief in a Eurocentric beauty ideal, including i.a. length and texture of a woman's hair or the shape of nose) is widespread in Jamaica. Especially amongst the lower socio-economic part of the population (which is also the largest), this mindset caused skin bleaching to be a trend: People with darker skin colour use certain substances and techniques (e.g. applying *cake soap* to their skin) in order to bleach highly pigmented parts of their body or face and gain a fair complexion.⁶⁹ (cf. Hope 2006: 36-45; Hope 2011: 167, 183)

With all these circumstances in mind, Muta presents stories from the deprived part of society as an antithesis of the gruelling power games played by political parties. He highlights the non-progressive and biased character of the political landscape and accuses the government of only attending to what he calls the *likkle part a the pyramid*:

Dem nah deh pon no ground! 'Caw mi ago tell dis government the same ting weh mi tell the previous government. Why do uno say tings a move forward? Uno really see the people dem conditions, Rasta?! Uno really realise seh uno just a talk to a top end a ting, and not the level, the big part a the pyramid!? A the likkle part a the pyramid is uno a talk to! Becaw, really and truly, all who deh deh a say, when wi look pon the situation inna Jamaica, since the past PNP inna power, right now the ting nah get no different in terms of people look more prosperous! (SR 39: 5f.)

What Muta tags as the little part includes business leaders, financial institutions, and rich people in general, whereas the ordinary and indigent people represent the big part of the pyramid, as he explains in another broadcast (cf. SR 9: 1). This categorisation also correlates with the politics of skin colour and class. In contemporary postcolonial Jamaica, the majority of the Black or dark-skinned individuals (who are of African origin and make up more than 90 percent of the population) is poor and un(der)employed, whereas the small percentage of lighter-skinned people (consisting of whites, Jews, Lebanese, Syrians, Chinese, and light-

⁶⁹ According to the *Jamaica Health and Lifestyle Survey III (2016-2017)*, approximately 11 % of Jamaicans bleach(ed) their skin, that is about 300.000 people. (cf. Ministry of Health and Wellness 2018: 3)

coloured Jamaicans) is predominantly at the top of the socio-economic hierarchy (cf. Hope 2006: 7, 9; Nettleford 1979: 9f.). It is not surprising that lighter-skinned Jamaicans are represented above average amongst the nation's cabinet members. Alongside socio-economic structures, the political hierarchy is heavily affected by the conceptualisation of colour. The implications of colourism obviously create an imbalance and social tensions when it comes to the negotiations of identity, especially when such unequal structures are consolidated by the policymakers.

Since Mutabaruka experienced an unprivileged childhood and adolescence in Jamaica's ghetto communities himself (cf. chapter 3.1.1.), he knows how it is to belong to the lower class of society. Thus, it seems as if occupying a position for this particular societal segment comes straight from his heart. Bourdieu speaks of an at least minimally shared habitus that is shaped by a similar upbringing and conveys between a prophet (in this case represented through Muta) and his/her audience:

The habitus is precisely this immanent law, *lex insita*, laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing, which is the precondition not only for the co-ordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordination, since the corrections and adjustments the agents themselves consciously carry out presuppose their mastery of a common code and since undertakings of collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the habitus of the mobilizing agents (e.g. prophet, party leader, etc.) and the dispositions of those whose aspirations and world-view they express. (Bourdieu 2013: 81)

However, Muta's own position in the colour-class structure is extraordinary: He reverses the conceptualisation by taking a higher-ranked position in the socio-economic hierarchy even though he has always acknowledged his African heritage and a Black identity. His cultural capital (not institutionalised in form of academic titles but highly accumulated over the years through an Afrocentric self-education and *experience* (cf. Mutabaruka 2006a)) has generated social and economic capital and has subsequently been transformed into symbolic capital. A (relatively) high standard of living, the affiliation with the intellectual community, and, according to Muta's friend and broadcast substitute Tony Rebel, his attributed status as a "superstar" (cf. Interview 6: 2) definitely doesn't place him in a lower class any longer. He is indeed classified as a part of the high society, a perception that was widely spread among my informal interviewees. In Muta's case, the supposed inferior African-centred perspective has been his fundamental source of justification in life. Effectively, he has carried out a conversion as the well-known Jamaican cultural scholar Rex Nettleford demanded and described it:

The paradox of Caribbean life is that the more things change the more they have remained the same. The vault-like ascent by the society from slavery into freedom and then from colonialism into constitutional independence is yet to be matched within the society by a corresponding progress from cultural inferiority of the vast majority to cultural self-confidence. (Nettleford 1979: 3)

Mutabaruka's lifeworld is a prime example of cultural self-confidence. Such a confidence complies with the Rastaman's stance on pridefully representing and endorsing *Blackness*. Although this thesis doesn't intend to draw sharp contrasts between Black and white, I want to emphasise that such a juxtaposition only reflects the Jamaican reality, helps to call attention to its complex postcolonial and hierarchical societal structure, and explores the ambiguity in the process. For this reason, it is necessary to emphasise this particular dichotomy, as it is also comprehensible that Muta, being a voice for the marginalised, stresses the same.⁷⁰ However, as suggested by British scholar Paul Gilroy, the distinguished identities (Black, white, brown, etc.) shouldn't be regarded as essentialist, reductionist and homogenous terms (cf. Gilroy 1993: 1-15).

4.1.3. Effective politics instead of *politricks*

Muta doesn't only give voice to the suffering of the socially disadvantaged, he also offers radical suggestions for effective politics. Given that the political elite merely creates a "devastation lifestyle fi the people dem" (SR 2: 4), he calls for a hedge against political inactivity and serious consequences for ministers who are not prepared to work conscientiously:

I would suggest, even radical it may be, that when a party win power in Jamaica, all a dem ministers dem and the counselors dem shoulda write a memorandum of understanding to the people, that dis is what they are going to achieve in the next five years before the next election. Write it dung pon paper, mek law, mek it stick to dem. Legislate it inna the house seh yuh are going to do dis! If dem don't do it, dem must get lock up! Becaw yuh see if dem know seh dem ago go a jail, dem nah go mek some highfalutin statement before dem win. [...] So, Marcus Garvey suggesting that yuh must give dem big money, mek dem feel good, mek dem and him wife and fambily go out and dis and dat, and they must do the duty! And if dem refuse to do the duty or is not able to do the duty, yuh should call dem and stone dem to death! [...] They must write down weh dem ago do fi the community, and if dem don't do it dem should held accountable by jail house or imprisonment! (SR 40: 3f.)

⁷⁰ One of my informants had indeed quite a negative opinion about Mutabaruka due to his skin colour-related distinctions. The elderly Jamaican, himself married to a white American woman, demanded that Muta shouldn't divide that strong between Black and white, but establish a foundation to help deprived people.

In this statement, Marcus Garvey's influence on Muta becomes evident when the radio host refers to his suggestions for measures against the maladministration of a state. In the essay *Governing the Ideal State*, Garvey argues that the reformation of a corrupt and unsatisfying government must happen through the introduction of a president with absolute authority and an approval of "a salary and other accommodations so large and sufficient as to make it reasonably impossible for him, or those dependent upon him, to desire more during his administration." (Garvey 1987: 30) In turn, so Garvey, this would provide the foundation for a dutiful, honest policy-making. If the president and the administrators, however, misused their power and were held responsible for acts of injustice and favouritism, they and their families should be publicly disgraced and stoned to death. (cf. *ibid.*: 30f.) Muta doesn't favour Garvey's stance on stoning as he regards such an action as "archaic and primitive" (SR 40: 4). Nevertheless, Muta draws upon Garvey's approach as he calls for serious consequences for politicians who don't serve the people's interest and instead merely renege on their promises. The Rastaman regards this as a precautionary principle in order to avoid chaos and crime in society, given that these components are intertwined with politician's misdemeanour: "When yuh tek poor people and promise dem sup'm and dem don't see it happen, dem get vicious and tun against one anedda!" (SR 40: 4) Muta passionately debates solutions for ongoing political hassles in Jamaica and considers strict consequences as one of the less remaining options to improve the political landscape and remind the members of parliament of their responsibility to be role models for the citizens. Even when ministers curse at each other in the House of Representatives, he requests more than reports covering such stories and suggests monetary penalty (cf. SR 20: 1).⁷¹ Once again, the parallel to Garvey's penalizing approach is visible.

In the broadcast, Muta provides certain recommendations for policies, for example funding road works as there are many pothole-ridden roads that call for repaving. Whereas the road to the prime minister's house is "smoother than a baby bottom" (SR 1: 4), solving the pothole issue doesn't appear on the government's main agenda. The host regularly chafes at the conditions of the roads and their miserable maintenance (cf. SR 1-50). Besides, he requests an infrastructure to reuse rain water (cf. SR 46: 6), speaks about the need for an

⁷¹ Sometimes Jamaican politicians even use murder-imagery, as it was the case with Joylan Silvera (PNP) and his statement about associate Lisa Hanna (PNP). In order to defend his female comrade, he announced that anyone who would troubled Lisa Hanna would die. Muta analyses the situation as follows: "Murder inna Jamaica get so prevalent now. When a politician a get up and him say, 'a anybody touch the queen ago dead', that suppose to bring outrage to the people dem. But so much other tings a gwaan that people just mek that pass dem!" (SR 12: 2)

appropriate support of the Jamaican craft markets (cf. SR 32: 2), and advocates the legalisation of marijuana.⁷² Although he has never smoked it, he regards “the herbs as very important to the whole cultural aspect of Rastafari” (SR 15: 1) and sees their legalisation as a potential source of economical revenue for the government (cf. SR 30: 3). Another major concern of Muta is the construction of an “official hall to represent music in all its blunder and glory, [since] music has done so much tings for Jamaica.” (SR 14: 9)

Even though he was specifically asked by some of his radio listeners to run for a political position, this is not an option for Muta. He names his age as inhibiting reason and instead humorously encourages his younger radio colleagues, since it is up to the younger generation to accomplish change in a country (cf. SR 17: 2). In the broadcast, the poet proudly proclaims that he has never voted for any of the Jamaican parties (cf. SR 43: 3). His unwillingness to be considered for political functions and his refusal to vote clearly represent his Rastafarian habitus. The majority of Rastafarians regard politics as *politricks* and hence don’t vote at elections.⁷³ The term *politricks*, as many Rasta Houses label traditional political practice, derives from the Rastafarian supposition that politicians play tricks on the citizens in order to maintain a privileged position (cf. Edmonds 2003: 49f.). Michael Barnett also describes the concept of *Babylon* (Barnett 2018: 77f.), a term that is oftentimes used by Rastas to denominate political institutions. Against this backdrop, Muta debates politicians’ hypocrisy in his broadcast and refers to a famous remark by Lord Acton (cf. SR 49: 3), a 19th century English historian and politician who once stated: “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” (Dalberg-Acton 1887: 9) Acton’s popular dictum implies that the more powerful a ruler is, the more corruption there will be. This applies to countries such as Jamaica, where many politicians misuse their position in order to obtain power, and where corrupt actions are taken by corrupt policymakers. The striving for power apparently corrupts. For years, numerous dubious and immoral malpractices of Jamaican parliamentarians have been exposed.

Whereas Muta doesn’t necessarily regard all politicians as black-hearted people (cf. SR 39: 3), he brings forward arguments that “the political landscape of Jamaica bring out the worse in good people and it mek good people do bad tings” (SR 20: 2). In this regard he warns young and promising politicians to not get caught in a numb system of decision-

⁷² Since 2015, marijuana has already been decriminalised in Jamaica. (cf. URL 30)

⁷³ Rastafarians had not always turned away from political engagement or withheld their votes at elections. General scepticism toward politics arose in the 1940s after they felt betrayed by the politicians. (cf. Barnett 2012: 29f.; Chevannes 1994: 146-151)

makers where certain thought patterns are hegemonic and thus hard to overbear. Muta introduces the proverb “yuh cyaan teach old dawg new trick” (SR 32: 6), meaning that it is not easy to convince long-established statesmen to rethink their political practices since their habitus is difficult to alter. I see the habitus’ persistence as the general barrier to surmounting old-established political practices and profound structures in Jamaica. Bourdieu describes such deep-rooted schemes of the habitus as follows:

[...] the habitus tends to ensure its own constancy and its defence against change through the selection it makes within new information by rejecting information capable of calling into question its accumulated information, if exposed to it accidentally or by force, and especially by avoiding exposure to such information. (Bourdieu 1990: 60f.)

Mutabaruka detects this persistence, too, and therefore draws hope from the young generation of politicians who he expects to be responsive to the people’s pleas (cf. SR 36: 2). It must be easier for the next generation since, according to the radio host, it will be hard to fight them in any case:

No ugly parliament here a nuh there again! The ooman dem pretty like diamond! I mean, when mi a youth and mi hear ‘bout parliament, and when mi look pon all the ooman mi a say, “wait, the ooman dem look like mi granny.” And now mi grow big yah so now mi a say, “but wait, dem ooman deh dem look sweet, yuh cyaan even fight against dem!” Yuh don’t waan to fight against dem pretty ooman deh! Dem cyaan so wicked! Trust mi! (SR 26: 2f.)

He reaches out to the female fraction in Jamaica’s parliament. However, one must see through the facade: The women in government represent a trend in Jamaica, namely placing a large female contingent in high positions, especially in company management. According to a study by the UN-affiliated *International Labor Organization* in 2015, Jamaica had a 59.3 % female managers and thus a higher proportion than any other country in the world (cf. URL 31). In academics, more women than men enrol at universities, with an approximate 70:30 ratio (cf. University Office Of Planning 2018: 6). My own visits at the University of West Indies’ campus support these statistics. In politics, there was a record number of women in the House of Representatives in April 2019 (cf. URL 32). These numbers reflect a development of Jamaican society at large. In 2018 and during my field trips in 2008 and 2012 I observed social microstructures that gave a similar impression of the educational and work-related gap between Jamaica’s women and men. Although Jamaica is an androcentric society in which a patriarchic ideology is (un)consciously embodied in males and females (cf. Hope 2006: 37), it seems as if nowadays women try to break down

old systems and shape new gender roles and structures of economic independence and of political and educational power.

To conclude this chapter, I want to refer to Muta's quotation above once more. The statement in which he banters about the good looking parliament indicates his ability to entertain, which is one of the essences of his programme. Whenever he deals with serious matters, he never loses his sense of (dry) humour. Scholar Carolyn Cooper calls him "an organic media practitioner with native wit, [who is] able to get across his ideas loosely" (Interview 2: 3). Although he never received training in the field of media, his early experiences in performing poems at school (cf. chapter 3.1.1.) and his lecturing activities at Negril Beach Village (cf. chapter 3.1.3.) – where he was encouraged to speak in front of people – mark instances in which his entertaining qualities were formed. Tony Rebel explains that the combination of Muta's humourous nature and comprehensive knowledge is what makes him special: "Muta always gives the impression as if you are a weak heart, you can't come near. [...] But if you get a chance to talk to him, he can be fun. He is a man who cracks some serious jokes and he is somebody who you could see do a lot of research. He has a lot of knowledge." (Interview 6: 2) By embedding a number of quotations, I aim at showing Steppin Razor's entertaining and fun value in the further course of the text.

4.1.4. Selling out Jamaica to foreigners: about imperceptible funds and Chinese investments

The first three subchapters examined political power games by the JLP and the PNP and showed that Jamaican *politricks* is indeed interwoven with a corrupt, garrison-related, colour-class-associated, and neo-colonial field. Now the focus turns towards another hotly debated topic in politics, namely Jamaica's use of resources and grants from foreign financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or investing states such as China.⁷⁴

The structural dependence on monetary inflows from abroad has a long history in Jamaica (cf. Girvan 1971: 99-161) and is a frequent point of attack in Muta's narratives. He doesn't see a notable and positive transformation of the living conditions of "the normal Jamaican citizen" (SR 31: 2ff.) and isn't impressed by the government's proclamations that

⁷⁴ Jamaica also receives funds from the European Union's European Development Fund (EDF) (cf. URL 33) and the World Bank (cf. URL 34). However, those are only mentioned in passing in Muta's programme.

IMF tests were done successfully and that money is received.⁷⁵ Muta's impression rather correlates with Gallup-Healthways' *Global Well-Being report* of 2014, which ranked Jamaica a position of 115 (out of 145 countries) in the subcategory *Financial Well-Being* and thus placed the island the lowest in the Caribbean region (even behind Haiti) and just between the African countries Ethiopia and Gabon (cf. Gallup-Healthways 2015: 5-7). The Rastaman is appalled that Haiti is at a higher ranked position than Jamaica and alerts Jamaica's politicians: "I don't know if the politician dem tek those reports serious!? [...] Taking into consideration our perception of Haiti, one would never believe seh the financial perception of Jamaican people is lower than Haitian perception of financial security." (SR 11: 2)

Although international financial institutions declare that "Jamaica has shown a macroeconomic turnaround that is quite extraordinary" (URL 36), according to Muta the IMF's monetary support has been invisible and has not changed Jamaica's precarious situation when one looks at the high crime rate, the abysmal road conditions or the influx of unhealthy food (cf. SR 11: 2f.). Generally, the Rastafarian poet doesn't appreciate IMF's financial support as it seems to only cater to the private sector and people favoured by nepotism (cf. SR 9, SR 20, SR 31). He encourages his listeners to rebel against this corrupt system (cf. SR 31: 2) and insists on improvement for indigent people and a noticeable benefit from the IMF for all Jamaican people:

Wi nah talk 'bout jacket and tie people weh own place, own business or dis and dat. Wi a talk 'bout the people! The normal man pon the road weh nobody nah aks no question weh him tink! A dem people deh uno fi look out for! [...] And the IMF still a soak up the people dem, and our government a tell yuh seh, "look yah, don't worry man, tings ago get betta, yuh see it?! Yuh see seh wi deh pon the right track." Show mi a country that borrow from the IMF and now because of the IMF borrowing dem all these tings raised to a level now weh it can see the people dem a live comofortable?! (SR 9: 1f.)

The radio presenter recurrently uses his platform to call for a perceptible implementation of the inflow of foreign funds. In this context, he questions the country that has achieved prosperity and stabilisation via the resources and remittances provided by the IMF. To answer Muta's question, one must recognise that in reality there are numerous countries in which the implementation of IMF-guided adjustment schemes failed (or merely showed marginal achievements), for instance in Argentina (cf. Mussa 2002), Greece (cf. Mohashin 2017), and many African countries (cf. URL 37). IMF advocates, by contrast, may

⁷⁵ For a detailed explanation of the IMF testing and its procedure, please cf. URL 35.

mention the funding of Turkey, Brazil, Poland, and Tanzania as successful examples as presented in *Successes of the International Monetary Fund* (cf. Brau/MacDonald 2009), a publication edited by former IMF staff members in order to counter the negative and controversial image of the IMF and its funding schemes. In general, it is always debatable how long positive effects will remain in contrast to the inflicted austerity measures that are demanded from the countries in return. It is a complex endeavour to lift a country out of economic recession and there is not one single formula a country simply can copy and paste due to different geopolitical, economical, and ecological circumstances. Nevertheless, as Mutabaruka tries to examine, it often seems as if the IMF-guided structural adjustment programmes in form of (new) policy adaptations, which include the reduction of public welfare expenditures, in reality create financial instability, more unemployment, and social tensions due to a rise in poverty and inequality as opposed to the original goal, which is to induce economic recovery. Due to a “faith in market fundamentalism rather than programme outcomes” (Mohashin 2017: 678), the IMF usually demands labour market liberalisation and privatisation. Critics argue that such policy implementations and adaptations – which are not only demanded by the IMF but also by other international institutions such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organization – mainly serve Western corporations, which then gain free access to precious natural resources (or raw materials) and regional markets (cf. URL 38). Political scientist Jeffrey Harrod names other stakeholders (e.g. trade unions) that also play a crucial role in this often one-sided benefit plan once international corporations are involved:

Multi-national corporations provide some of the most powerful bonds within the world market economy, but as these expand their operations in less developed countries, trade unions in the advanced countries where corporations have their headquarters follow the corporations abroad to try, through alliances with local groups, to influence the foreign environment. These emerging transnational structures take decisions of great consequence for the less developed countries in which they operate. (Harrod 1972: xvii)

As they most probably serve imperialist and neo-colonial interests of rich and powerful countries such as the USA (although the interests are usually whitewashed as neoliberal actions), organisations such as the IMF appear to rather contribute to the economical and geopolitical devastation of borrowing (and *developing*) countries than to aid them, and thus force those countries into a long lasting bond that is nearly impossible to escape from. In his song *Life And Debt*, Mutabaruka voices his concerns about financial aid:

Too much importin' debt increase
Country deh pon lease
Politicians a fraud
De people draw bad card
T'ings nuh cool
Dem tek wi fi fool
Gun shot in de street
Blood pon sheet
Sour nuh sweet
Is life and debt all a wi a fret
Life and debt freedom not yet
(Mutabaruka 2002)

In Jamaica, the IMF issue already begun in the late 1970s and has been a predicament for the Caribbean nation ever since (cf. Edmonds 2016; Henke 2000). The country's former popular prime minister Michael Manley was an advocate of self-reliance and an openly critic of the deeply-rooted hierarchical economic world order. In 1977, due to certain economic circumstances, he unwillingly agreed to a short-term IMF loan. The loan's austere agreements (reduction in public expenditure, removal of tariffs on imports, privatisation) badly affected Jamaica and primarily its working class. In the aftermath of Manley's support for Cuba in the course of Angola's struggle for independence in 1975, the USA-affiliated IMF wasn't willing to follow any long-term solutions for Jamaica, according to socialist voices (cf. URL 39; URL 40).⁷⁶ Muta reminds his listenership of these incidents and of the power abuse by not only the IMF but also influential US-American policymakers:

Mi see dem dweet inna Jamaica in the 1970s, when everybody did a talk 'bout Michael Manley did a run go to Cuba now and socialism and communism a tek ova. Wi see America come in wid dem tings and wi see poison flour deh pon the place, wi see coconut start dead up, wi see dem old food a supermarket, and everybody a run go five flights a day to Miami and America just do dem tings and then mek Jamaica come back to how dem wanted to. (SR 45: 4)

In the geopolitical Cold War antagonism, Manley's pro-Castro stance and his openness towards democratic socialism was not welcomed by the Western world, especially the USA. This was also why the foreign intelligence service CIA (as mentioned in chapter 4.1.1.) supported Manley's opposing candidate Edward Seaga and the pro-US Jamaica Labour Party by means of financial support and covert shipment of arms in order to

⁷⁶ A first-hand insight of Jamaica's financial crisis at that time is provided by Michael Manley's book *Up the Down Escalator* (cf. Manley 1987) and the documentary film *Life and Debt* (cf. Black 2001). The latter also features Mutabaruka, who performs the film's title song.

destabilise Manley's social policies and have (US-American-operated) control of Jamaica again. (cf. Edmonds 2016: 61-67)

Apart from the implications of this "system of global destabilisation" (SR 31: 5), as one caller in Muta's broadcast depicts Jamaica's situation concerning the IMF, the government obviously lacked discipline in managing its economic and finance system during the loan periods. This could be another contributing factor to a failed implementation of the funding, as Muta points out:

If yuh do some mathematics wid the ratio weh certain people get per week, in relationship to how much the government get in loans and in grants and all dem ting deh, yuh realise seh, "but wait, these people dem a PhD, but dem lack intelligence, man!" But dem nah say dem nah have no intelligence, 'caw dem ago tell yuh say, "bwoy, right now the people dem nuh understand economics." Nobody nah understand economics like a ooman who a sell scallion and thyme and ice. Mi know a ooman weh her ice send her pickney go a university. Ice! Can yuh believe that? (SR 1: 2)

Muta deconstructs the government's agency pertaining to mismanagement and misappropriation. Since he is always pragmatic, he recommends decision-makers to seek advice from Jamaica's market vendors who comprehend economic activity. Most notably, he mentions a female ice cream seller who enabled her children to attend university by selling her ice cream. For years, Jamaica has moved in a cycle of repayments. Hence, current loans go to the IMF as refundments for previous debts.⁷⁷ As a matter of fact, ongoing debts complicate a country's situation as institutions such as the IMF have the upper hand on the country's monetary status and, consequently, its domestic affairs. Mutabaruka addresses this foreign takeover and embeds Jamaica's financial and economic situation in a broader social discourse:

Yuh have sacrifice weh a gwaan inna Jamaica wid Jamaican ooman, weh give demself as a sacrifice fi dem pickney. 'Caw when dem go home every time and see dem pickney a bawl, is like when dem see that money crying dem deep, that dem say, "bwoy, right now anyting fi mek the pickney dem survive!" And dem end up inna some very serious precarious position weh dem foot hang out all ova the place. And sometime yuh hear a man say "dutty gyal dis, dutty dat". But the dirtiness deh sometime a help a likkle youth and wi nah tell no ooman 'bout prostitution or whoredome, enuh. Is not because dem degrade demself and a downplay demself, but because dem tek di interest of a next life at heart! She know seh her likkle pickney weh nah have no faada fi go a school and nah fi get food and nah fi get cloth. And she a the only one weh a fi do that! So, mi just a say, the government help fi perpetrate dem tings yah! The government help fi mek these tings continue! And then siddung deh like pimp! Yes! Mi say it. Who nah like it, buss! [...] Dem mek Jamaican people prostitute demself and dem sell

⁷⁷ As of 30th September 2019, Jamaica had an outstanding loan in the amount of 470.17 million SDR (equivalent to about 581 million Euros). (cf. URL 41)

out the country to foreigners! And the people dem don't have nothing fi get outta it! Nothing! [...] Dem soon waan come sell the people dem too! (SR 1: 2f.)

Here, the outspoken radio host debates the sad but common situation in which many Jamaican women (mostly single mothers) find themselves in. It is not unusual that – out of desperation and as a last option to earn money – many women start to work as prostitutes (cf. URL 42). Muta regards Jamaica's leaders as the real procurers since they seemingly consign the country to foreign financial institutions and thus to powerful stakeholders in bilateral arrangements.

The situation becomes even more serious because Jamaica doesn't only depend on financial backing from the IMF but also on investments from various foreign investors, especially from China. This country is already the biggest source of foreign direct investments for Jamaica. In fact, there is an ongoing trend of Chinese investments in the Caribbean.⁷⁸ One of “the most striking sign[s] that the Chinese treasure ship has arrived in the Caribbean” (URL 43) was the financing of constructing Jamaica's new highway, with hundreds of Chinese workers involved. In return, the Jamaican government handed over 1,200 acres of land to China (cf. *ibid.*). Mutabaruka sarcastically comments on the road investment as follows:

Mi feel seh wi shoulda just mek the Chinese dem just build all a di road dem and just give dem a portion of the land dem. Just give dem most a Jamaica, like Portland and St. Ann. All a di land dem, just give dem it. Because it is inevitable. Uno done sell out all a di beach land dem already to the Spania dem and some other people. Eneh, it is like there is a need fi sell out Jamaica to foreigners. Is like dis government a follow the government before dem. That wi see a gwaan, enuh. (SR 50: 9)

Although Muta considers construction as “a symbol of progress” (SR 50: 6), he is sceptical of the large number of road constructions and buildings sponsored by the Chinese government. During the field research in Jamaica, I noticed these developments. In conversation with my informant Errol Hamilton, I agreed that Jamaica has developed since my prior field trip in 2012. I remember that at that moment I thought about the road constructions and road-rehabilitation projects all over the island. Since Jamaica is a *pothole country*, street improvements are not a bad development. The question, however, is: At what cost is such seemingly positive progress made? Similar to the IMF issue, foreign financing provides Jamaica with little other than large debt and dependency. In April 2019, Jamaica

⁷⁸ For further information and detailed figures of Chinese investments in Jamaica and the Caribbean, please cf. Bernal 2016.

signed a memorandum of understanding on the so-called *Belt and Road Initiative* (BRI) with China, enabling the Asian investor to strengthen its economic and geopolitical power even more (cf. URL 44). Whereas some of my informants, such as Errol (cf. Interview 3: 5f.), countenanced the Chinese investments, others didn't support Jamaica's actions. Given that the Jamaican government already forces vendors to move from their market stalls due to road constructions (cf. URL 45), Muta advises his fellow citizens to investigate their situation:

Yes, whole heap a development. And in deposit of developing, it inconvenience the normal Jamaican people. [...] Tivoli Gardens people! Muta tell uno dis, enuh. Dem ago rejuvenate and reestablish Kingston as the center. And dem cyaan afford fi certain places stay like how it stay now and operate like it a operate now. So, yuh might just see some very strange activity a going on. Yuh really haffi open your eye wide and wonder what is taking place. Mi a say it. Dem nah know which part fi sell. Constant Spring market. [...] And wi a talk 'bout movement of people outside a dem environment weh dem did deh fi years! From before mi born. So wi ago watch that gwaan. Mi nuh see development nuh fi take place, enuh. But when development a take place, and yuh mek the masses of the people feel uncomfortable 'bout those development because of dem owe no land. And if yuh don't own no land, yuh have no power. Land is the basis of power. [...] And most Jamaican people do have no land. So the government can come in and move yuh and tell yuh, "right now yuh deh yah so fi how much years, but wi now have the authority fi build road deh so. So, no matter if yuh own it or not, wi can just give yuh a money and mash it down and just do weh wi waan do." It is a weird situation. So wi a watch it. (SR 50: 6f.)

Muta addresses a common circumstance in worldwide politics: People are forced to move from their land in order to let decision-makers trace certain (geo)political interests. Forced resettlement is the political activity of displacement that puts people into hardship, as was the case in Jamaica during the 1960s when thousands of Rastafarians had been forcibly moved from the Rastafarian community formerly known as Back-O-Wall (cf. Edmonds 2003: 84). Nowadays, smiliar developments are looming and thus Muta emphasises the importance of land ownership, as it stands for power.⁷⁹ Above all, he views the Chinese' actions as a new form of colonisation and expresses his anger:

Wi a get colonised slowly but surely, but yuh see how dem leaders yah now dem nah understand colonialism and how colonialism creep in pon. Becaw a man nah have fi whip yuh and lash yuh and put yuh inna slavery fi colonise your place, enuh. Dem have different means and methods to colonise countries. Yes! And these leaders, boasy slave dem, dem see evriting as development, dem see evriting as investment. (SR 32: 2)

⁷⁹ In chapter 4.4.3., I present a deeper view on Muta's notion on the ownership of land.

In the course of the Steppin Razor broadcast, Muta regularly expresses his belief that Jamaica's politicians still perpetuate the unjust system of slavery, particularly when they accept bilateral deals with nations such as USA and China. This section has considered Mutabaruka's narratives about Jamaica's long-standing foreign financial dependency and its disregard of the normal citizen. It has become clear that he is very sceptical towards foreign grants and instead pleads for policies more relevant to the people and to social justice in Jamaica, such as a fair implementation of the IMF funds and discipline in managing the country's finances. A dramatic side effect of the mismanagement is a miserable and unequal situation for Jamaica's class-characterised society. In this context, a strongly politicised environment contributes even more to social tensions and, subsequently, a high crime rate, as demonstrated in the next chapter.

4.2. **"Like wi are inna civil war": on Jamaica's crime situation**

"Jamaica people haffi recognise how serious it is! When yuh live inna a country and 1000 odd people get murdered inna one year, and wi nah inna civil war! Rhaatid! Suppose it was a civil war inna Jamaica. [...] Dis is how Jamaica stay now, yuh haffi paranoid. Yuh haffi get dizzy! Yuh cyaan walk and just keep your head straight. Yuh haffi a turn your head 360 degrees, like inna The Exorcist the gyal tek a spin."

Mutabaruka (SR 18: 1f.)

"It hard fi a talk 'bout death so much pon the radio doh, but is sumting weh yuh haffi report becaw is sup'm weh wi need fi be concerned wid."

Mutabaruka (SR 39: 1)

"Wi waan to really recognise that the government seem not to know what to do as it relates to the crime. Wi see dem calling meeting, and meanwhile dem a call meeting dung a Montego Bay, the police dem decide seh dem a go pon some sick leave, enuh. I mean it's weird. The violence keep going on and on. I don't know if dem know, but tek mi serious, enuh! The whole country is traumatised! Yes, literally traumatised wid wah a gwaan!"

Mutabaruka (SR 49: 9)

Besides politics, Mutabaruka's second most debated topic in the Steppin Razor programme is Jamaica's crime situation. The country was once called the "murder capital of the world" (URL 46). Apart from having had one of the highest murder rates worldwide for many years

(cf. Amnesty International 2016: 9; UNODC 2019) and having been a significant whistle-stop for North and South American drug trafficking (cf. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs 2019: 195ff.), Jamaica currently faces the issue of *lottery scamming*. The prevalent scamming practice does not only attempt to use “phone solicitation to deceive Americans into wiring large sums of money to Jamaica” (Lewis 2018: 1030) but is embedded in a long interwoven chain of criminality. Especially in the Western part of Jamaica, scams have financed gang warfare and have thus placed the most murderous area of Jamaica all around Montego Bay in recent years (cf. URL 47). Concerning “the latest chapter in a long history of crime and violence that Jamaica has struggled to control” (ibid.), the Rastafarian radio presenter frequently zooms in on the scamming dilemma and sheds light on the complexity of Jamaica’s present crime issue. This chapter therefore examines the emergence of the con game that allures many (underprivileged) Jamaicans and contextualises the topic with references to Muta’s narratives (among other sources). It also debates the reputation of the police and Jamaica’s anti-informer practice, and lastly presents Muta’s ideas about crime prevention measures.

4.2.1. **“If yuh cyaan ketch Quaco, yuh ketch him shut”⁸⁰: about scamming and its implications**

A widespread assumption about the origin of scamming as a financial fraud scheme in Jamaica is that it was introduced by call centre operators. Since the 1990s, due to North American and European companies outsourcing business, many international call centres have been established in Jamaica, with its main base in Montego Bay and the surrounding parish of St. James. In those call centres employees were not only trained in customer service skills, but also in dealing with enquiries for international (mostly US-American) corporations and hence had access to lists of potential targets’ telephone numbers, the so-called *lead lists*. Although meanwhile such lists are sold by *brokers* who work between Jamaica and the USA, it is assumed that call centre employees passed on the first lists and thus the telephone scam started to boom. Accordingly, a Jamaican *scammer*, who perhaps worked as an operator or at least appropriated customer service attributes and call centre procedures, undertakes telephone calls with people from the lead lists and (wrongly)

⁸⁰ English translation: *If you can’t catch Quaco, you catch his shirt*. It is said that Quaco was a rebellious slave in Jamaica and the British soldiers tried to shoot him after he had managed to escape to the Cunha Cunha Pass. However, they only found the remains of his shirt hanging from the plants. (cf. SR 27: 2; URL 51)

communicates that they have won cash prizes, vehicles or vacation getaways in a lottery. Sometimes, they are told that the credit commission owes them some money. In order to receive the prize or money, the victims – mostly senior citizens or gamblers from the USA – are asked to pay fees and taxes and are therefore told to transfer money via financial services such as MoneyGram and Western Union or to provide their credit card information. (cf. Lewis 2018: 1029-1040; URL 47)⁸¹

During the writing process I picked up the news about a large-scale Jamaican lottery scam in which 31 defendants – who “bilked more than 100 mostly elderly Americans out of more than \$6 million” (URL 48) – were involved. This helps to envision the large sums of money that scammers deal with. It is estimated that lottery scams generate 120 million to one billion US dollars revenue a year. In comparison, Jamaica’s tourism industry takes in two billion US dollars per year (cf. URL 49). What Mutabaruka calls the “scamming industry” (SR 7: 1) has become a huge affair in the USA, ending in lengthy investigations by the FBI (cf. URL 49).

Although they have been booming since 2007 (cf. Lewis 2018: 1031), in the last few years the lottery scam ventures have entered another dimension and initiated a chain of criminality in Jamaica that has led to several *State of Public Emergency* (SOE) declarations and an unusually high murder rate in rural Western parishes.⁸² In fact, during my stay in Jamaica in 2018, SOE’s were declared in several areas and parishes all over the island. Whilst driving my rental car, I passed through some of the checkpoints implemented in the SOE in the parish of St. James, where security forces set up roadblocks and inspected drivers and vehicles coming along to find alleged criminals. The starting point for many homicides in the Western parishes (St. James, Westmoreland and Hanover) is a relentless pursuit of people who own the previously mentioned lead lists. The motif for murder in Jamaica has been political hegemony or control of drug trafficking for years and is now replaced by possessing lead lists and related issues. In the course of a report from VICE magazine in 2017, Kevin Watson, an investigator in Jamaica’s anti-organized crime agency, speaks of a deadly cycle:

[...] gangs that once fought for control of the drug trade now kill each other for access to lead lists, which include names and phone numbers for would-be victims. People who handle scam money are

⁸¹ In the course of a Steppin Razor show, Muta plays an audio tape of a recorded telephone fraud (cf. SR 8: 1). Thus, his listeners get an inside perspective and a basis for further observation.

⁸² In 2017, there were 341 homicides in the parish of St. James, the highest number amongst all parishes. The murder rate revealed that there were 183 murders per 100,000 people in St. James. (cf. URL 50)

shot for taking more than their allotted cut. Friends and family members seek revenge. Money from the scam pays for more guns and perpetuates the cycle. (URL 49)

Muta, who in fact regards the government as “the biggest scammer inna Jamaica” (SR 1: 4; SR 28: 4) and thinks that Jamaican people have simply learned from the government “fi go above bone” (SR 28: 4), debates the ongoing reprisal killings and connects the issue with a Jamaican proverb:

‘Caw yuh know wah dem man dem do now? If dem cyaan ketch Quaco, dem ketch him shut, enuh. When dem cyaan find the gangster dem, dem kill the ooman dem, and when dem kill the ooman, the gangster dem retaliate. And dem a hope seh when the gangster have retaliate now dem can end up a kill the gangs. But the gang kill some a dem. So it is a vicious ting a gwaan inna Montego Bay. (SR 47: 6)

If yuh cyaan ketch Quaco, yuh ketch him shut means that in case a wanted person escapes, the chaser retaliates by hurting the wanted person’s relatives and friends (cf. URL 51). Such vengeful actions in form of reprisal killings are common in violent rivalries between opposing lottery scam rings. Engendered by the quest to find telephone numbers and the greed for money and control over territory, scamming-related homicides are currently a major issue in Jamaica and there is a heavy demand for solutions.

Before it turned into a lethal threat, the lottery scam had many supporters as it is said to have helped upgrade impoverished communities by funding housing and businesses (cf. URL 49). One should consider that a major part of Jamaican society regarded (and most likely still regards) the telephone scam rather as a legit source of income than as criminal or illegal activity. Many view it as rearrangement of global capital and a form of reparation for postcolonial exploitation.⁸³ Economic anthropologist Jovan Scott Lewis reports on a group of Jamaican scammers who justified their scam by stating it would rectify the discrepancy between the hardship of Black Jamaicans and the material well-being of white Americans. He deduces:

There is a recognized genealogy of this exploitation’s custodianship, which has changed hands over the decades with the postcolonial reorientation of British-Jamaican trade and political relations to that of Jamaica and the US. The US has become a site of engagement which not only produces notions of mobility and aspiration, but also transgression. Through the transference of that transgression’s proprietorship, scammers pliantly reason that the US has acquired Great Britain’s moral debts, a view which conflates race with a shift in geopolitical power and labor relations. [...] In this conflation, race

⁸³ Many Dancehall artists, most notably the incarcerated Vybz Kartel, have thematised scamming and promoted it as reparation in their lyrics (cf. Vybz Kartel/Gaza Slim 2012).

– and whiteness, in particular – serves as a mode of power through inequality, and thus offers a steady marker of blame across its permutations and exchanges. (Lewis 2018: 1033)

Lewis alludes to Jamaica's complex social and geopolitical situation. In fact, my field research's participant observation in Jamaica yielded similar results. Through interviews and informal conversations, I detected that many Jamaicans maintain a habitus still shaped by the aftermath of historical occurrences during the Black enslavement in the Caribbean and thus it determines their lives. My impression is that underneath the fraudulent thinking (of scammers) lies an imagination of victimhood, which is based upon the historical narrative of Black subordination and white supremacy. The inequality, however, is transformed into a position of power and demand. Of course, the still existent economic disparities (resulting from slavery, colonialism, neoliberal tendencies, and a failed local development) encourage the vindication of illegal and "race"-affiliated wrongdoings.

In a country where one permanently faces a corrupt government that is burdened by debt (cf. chapter 4.1.) and a seemingly never-ending growth-restricted economy with high unemployment, many people consider illegal activities such as scamming as a last resort to feed their families, break economic and social boundaries, and become independent (cf. Lewis 1033f., 1045f.). In Bourdieu's terminology, the practice (telephone scamming) is embedded in the field and its accumulated history (shown through Jamaica's precarious economic situation). Driven by the desire for economic capital, many scammers invest in their cultural capital (in form of (self-)education in customer service matters, call centre operations, or IT skills) and eventually, through the readjustment of economic capital in a postcolonial scope, convert it into symbolic capital, since wealth and influence bring prestige and power (from below). Mutabaruka illustrates this with an example close to reality:

Yuh have a youth and yuh send him go a school, and yuh pay money fi send the youth go a school that him can get a good education. And then when him lef the school, him waan to go university. And the parents try dem best fi get money fi carry him go a university. Because the system tell yuh seh, if yuh get a good education and yuh go to university, when yuh come out yuh going get a good job. Yuh earn more money, that yuh can buy the necessary ting to mek your life comfortable inna Jamaica. So the parents buying in to dis argument, find any means necessary fi send dem pickney go a university. And the pickney up deh spend how much years up a university and when the pickney come outta school, the pickney cyaan get no job! Dem don't tell the pickney seh, "look yah, self-reliance is the greatest science. Yuh must not waan a education fi go look no job. Yuh must waan a education to be a betta person! And if yuh go to the university, it must may be to be a betta person! That when yuh leave the university, yuh don't fraid fi go get a job, but yuh try to create a job fi yourself!" [...] So, the youth who left school, who hoped to get a job, not knowing that the system don't have no job to give him, dem haffi go start get creative inna dem tinkin! A most a the creativity is weh dem call unlawful! Yuh tink seh the youth dem dung a MoBay, who a do the scam, a some idiot youth dem? The youth dem know weh dem a do! And knowing seh it illegal, but guess wah?! Dem see a way out!

[...] So the youth cyaan get no work and the youth go so, “Bam!”. And try sup’m unlawful. Very unlawful, too! And him get tru. [...] So the youth dem just use dem intelligence and put weh dem get a university to an unlawful way! And wi recognise seh the law does not deal wid justice! Wi see that inna America, wi see that yah so! The law is there to protect the system, the law don’t protect justice! (SR 1: 3f.)

This reveals that Muta neither clearly supports the *unlawful* scamming practices nor demeans the people involved. He rather assails the legislative system, which, according to him, doesn’t focus on justice for the people but on the maintenance of the status quo. Furthermore, one can identify yet again his Rastafarian stance in the sense of Leonard Howell (cf. chapter 4.4.1.), as he mentions that *self-reliance is the greatest science*. In this respect he views scamming as a way out of a financial crisis leading to autonomy.

In Jamaica, activities that are essential for survival are subsumed under the commonly used term *hustling*, either of legal or illegal and formal or informal nature. Muta depicts Jamaica’s situation in the following way: “And everybody a try hustle a ting. A pure hustling a gwaan inna Jamaica. No constructive work place. Whole heap a people a hustle and a mek money.” (SR 50: 6) The Rastaman hints at the absence of formal (or what he calls: *constructive*) jobs, which may represent a major reason for people’s immersion in hustling, especially illegal hustling. Dennis Chung, one of Jamaica’s leading commentators on financial and economic matters, speaks about Jamaica’s *culture of hustling* on his blog *DC Jottings*:

[...] most Jamaicans are “doing a business” and are not “in business”. What this basically means is that many of us are really just trying to earn money through “hustling”. This is not only restricted to business startups, but it seems as if Jamaica has a culture of “hustling”. So the youngsters who start off selling or wiping the car glass, is doing it for a hustle. Or the politician, or public sector worker, who engages in corrupt practices thinks it is ok because they are just doing a “hustle”. Or the university student who applies for a job and when yuh ask them what their career goal is they say they don’t know yet but just want the job as something to do and make a money. What is even more frightening, is the Jamaican culture, and our governance, supports the “hustler mentality”. [...] Those in authority also refuse to do anything about the situation, and wi even have formal government programmes that promise job creation through mass employment. These are nothing more than programmes that give people a fish rather than teach them to fish. That is nothing more than an election promise of a “hustle”. [...] Because of this hustler mentality wi have created today a huge problem of a large informal economy, numerous informal settlements, and a set of persons who are unable to create any value for themselves, because they have for example grown up learning how to sell on the streets or wipe car glasses. (URL 52)

Apart from providing a deep societal and political analysis, Chung argues that spin-offs of a hustle mentality are a lack of law and order, a high crime rate, and regressive productivity and compensation, which in turn leads to the overtaxing of productive fields or

(as already presented in chapter 4.1.4.) the dependency on IMF loans (cf. *ibid.*). Muta sums up the challenges of Jamaica for a long time in a similar manner:

I mean, really and truly! When wi see the carnage weh a gwaan pon the road, wi nah blame government, enuh! But mi just a say, really and truly, if the laws of the country was putting to effect and then yuh have some law and order, yuh woulda have less tings to worry about! And the tings dem that yuh worry about, yuh could elevate those worries! But now wi have problems that wi cyaan solve and wi have problems that wi wiself create! Becaw wi cyaan solve the problems dem weh the politicians dem mek wi have! [...] And some a dem don't waan to listen! Yuh have police weh say that dem nah go certain place, "mek the bwoy dem kill off one anedda!" If a man a kill off him one aneddass, how yuh ago have a stable country? (SR 31: 4f.)

As Muta wants the government to feel guilty, he addresses the importance of law-abiding politicians and authorities in order to sustain solidarity amongst society. Jamaica's unstable situation triggers a (criminal) chain reaction. For many Jamaicans, scamming is just another form of hustling and merely a characteristic trait of Jamaica's defective law and order status. Besides, the telephone scam flourished because it had almost been impossible to convict lottery scammers until 2013. After Jamaica's anti-lottery scamming law (cf. Law Reform (Fraudulent Transactions) (Special Provisions) 2014) was finally passed in March 2013, many fraudsters have been arrested (cf. URL 53). It seems that the bill serves its purpose, yet the scamming *business* has already been rooted and unfortunately still thrives.



Image 13: Jamaican newspaper (Source: Schwager 2008e)



Image 14: Ghetto in Montego Bay (Source: Schwager 2008f)

4.2.2. **Out of control: the police in Jamaica**

For decades, Jamaica's police called Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) has faced tragic statistics regarding the large number of police-involved murders on the one side and the high (yet considerably smaller) homicide rate of officers on the other side.⁸⁴ The first aspect is linked to corruption prevalent in Jamaica's state security apparatus and coheres with the corrupt political system in Jamaica, as revealed by the *Waiting in Vain*-report by Amnesty International in 2016. This report unveiled a strong likelihood that police officers in Jamaica carry out extrajudicial executions on state authorities' orders or with their complicity. Furthermore, the report stated that between 2005 and 2015, more than 2,350 people were killed during police operations (cf. Amnesty International 2016). Although a decline of these killings has been registered in recent years through the efforts of the Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM), a police watchdog mechanism established in 2010, there are hardly any convictions of police officers for murder nor any prosecutions of

⁸⁴ For comparative statistics concerning the year 2015, please cf. UNODC 2019: 73-74.

corruption due to Jamaica's slow and ineffective justice system. (cf. Amnesty International 2016: 11, 40-43; Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs 2019: 197)

The high corruption rate is an entrenched attribute of Jamaica's political and juridical (and, accordingly, social and economical) structures.⁸⁵ Due to the profoundness of the matter, it is hard to undermine corruption and its institutionalisation. Once again, it is crucial to realise that the current situation is deeply linked to the island's colonial past. The police structure, once established by the colonial masters, still maintains itself and is authorised by the state, as political sociologist Anthony Harriott reasons: "The primary universal value associated with the police role in ex-colonial societies is that of order (not justice), which is interpreted in its concreteness as defence of the existing order and thus of the special interests dominant in that order." (Harriott 2000: xxii)

In a postcolonial field like Jamaica, the role of the police is mainly shaped by a colonial habitus, which is to uphold a system of domination and to serve Jamaica's political order (as pointed out in the previous chapter). Thus, it is symbolical that police officers are highly involved in crime. There is broad consensus among Jamaicans that all state-run institutions are affected by corruption – a perception that contributes to distrust of the state and to a reduction of collective action (cf. Waller et al. 2007: 25). Mutabaruka frequently mentions that collective agency is necessary and demands cooperation between police and civil society in order to fight crime and accelerate investigations (cf. SR 17: 5; SR 18: 1f.). However, he knows about the problems with the so-called *informer fi dead*-culture⁸⁶, which is a widespread anti-informer mindset in Jamaican society that hinders the exposure and elucidation of many criminal cases:

Yuh have a whole heap a maddas, a whole heap a sweetheart, a whole heap a wife and a whole heap a gyalfriend out deh, who know seh dem man or dem son a kill and a murder people out deh, and come home to dem and hug dem up tight inna bed, and all wash the blood stain out of dem shut. Terrible ting! And wi understand one a the reasons why the people dem don't waan to work wid the police because the police dem has been so devious in the past in relationship to yuh go report all a man inna the community. The same police man go inna the community go tell the don seh, "sista Jane come dung deh come tell mi seh yuh do dis and yuh do dat". And the same ooman now she haffi lef

⁸⁵ In the course of the *Corruption Perceptions Index 2018*, which measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption, Jamaica scored 44 on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). (cf. Transparency International 2019: 1f.)

⁸⁶ In *Crime and Punishment Around the World*, the authors provide the following definition of that term: „[...] Jamaica has a cultural idea of 'informer fi dead,' which means that any person known to give information to the authorities with respect to a crime should die. This phenomenon is prevalent in urban Jamaica and has been reinforced by instances in which witnesses have been killed before being able to offer testimony in a case." (Lemard 2010: 208)

the area because dem say, “she a informer”. Is not a easy ting fi do! [...] When yuh see a man kill and rape a likkle gyal inna your community and because of fear yuh nah go do nuttn ‘bout it, yuh guilty, too! ‘Caw if yuh watch that a happen and do nuttn about it, yuh are as guilty as the man who rape the likkle gyal and kill her! (SR 18: 1f.)

Whereas Muta alludes to the venal, crime-linked element of the police force (which is the reason that many people suspect authorities collude with criminals or dons of the affected communities)⁸⁷, he nevertheless regards people who are unwilling to cooperate with the police as witnesses as equally terrible as murderers themselves. He names Dancehall music as a main reason for the Jamaican informer fi dead-mentality:

Wi a say, all dem music weh the uneducated and illiterate artist dem mek, weh a tell yuh ‘bout informer fi dead and informer fi dis and informer fi dat, is because fi dem pickney never get killed or raped by none a these mad people! [...] Becaw one a the reason why yuh see so much a dem ting weh a happen, is not only the incompetence of the police force, but the cultural expression of a whole heap a people put pon music a influence a whole heap a the craziness weh a gwaan inna Jamaica! (SR 18: 3)⁸⁸

In fact, one can find many Dancehall songs about the anti-informer idea, for example Buju Banton’s *Informer Fi Dead* (cf. Buju Banton 1991), Bounty Killer’s *Spy Fi Die* (cf. Bounty Killer 1993), I-Octane’s *Informer A Work* (cf. I-Octane 2012) or the *Informer*-collaboration of controversial artists Vybz Kartel and Tommy Lee Sparta (cf. Vybz Kartel/Tommy Lee 2012). In order to provide insights, some lyrics of the latter tune are introduced here:

Wah Judas do to Jesus, everybody see
Sammy di bull [Salvatore Gravano] inform pon Gotti [John Gotti]
So nuttn weh di bwoy do neva surprise mi
Listen di rest a di story
Bwoy, yuh neva was a bad man
Yuh always was a informer
Yuh try fi sell out Mr. Palmer [Vybz Kartel]
And yuh try fi sell out all di Gaza [a group of artists affiliated with Kartel]⁸⁹
(Vybz Kartel/Tommy Lee 2012)

The song’s lyrics tell the story of an informant whom Kartel and Lee compare to famous historical informers such as the disciple Judas and American gangster Salvatore

⁸⁷ A prime example of such an underground cooperation between state and non-state actors was the JLP-affiliated relationship between Tivoli-based don Dudus Coke and former prime minister Bruce Golding (cf. Hawthorne 2018: 109-114).

⁸⁸ Mutabaruka’s pungent comment on the illiteracy of certain artists must be understood allegorically as it merely indicates his negative stance toward certain Dancehall artists.

⁸⁹ All words in brackets are notes of the author and provide explanations of the particular lyrics.

Gravano. In a field such as Jamaica, where music (especially Dancehall) is the perceived hub of sociocultural expression and the catalyst of morality and behavioural matters (cf. Cooper 2004; Hope 2006), such lyrics have a lasting impact on listeners. However, taking this attributed mindset seriously may create a fearful environment in which many crimes are not reported or even more felonies (reprisal attacks) are committed. In addition, systematic challenges need to be faced by many Jamaicans, especially from marginalised and poor communities. Jaevion Nelson, a Jamaican human rights activist and development director, speaks of a complex issue. Apart from the informer *fi* dead-habitus, he regards the officer's discourtesy, their unequal treatment, and the limited guarantee of protection under the Witness Protection Programme (aspects by which mostly marginalised people are affected) as other structural issues impeding an efficient security and justice system (cf. URL 54).

Other reasons for the police's inability to fight crimes in Jamaica could be the party-affiliated agency of some security forces, as Muta argues with a caller from Tivoli Gardens (cf. SR 31: 2), or the lack of funding by the Ministry of National Security. The radio host humorously addresses the formerly responsible minister:

Mister Minister of National Security Bobby Montague aka Sleepy, I been getting some complain by the police that yuh giving dem cars weh don't have Irie FM in there. Yuh cannot give the police dem car weh don't have Irie FM in deh! Dem complain it to mi. Mi a speed up di other day and a policeman stop mi. Before the man give mi a ticket him did a say, "Muta, mi don't know the kind of car dem a give mi, but the radio station nah pick up Irie FM". The police dem is aksing fi Irie FM inna dem car! The police dem nah do dem work properly is because dem nah have Irie FM in dem car. Yuh cannot send police out there widout Irie FM. That is worse than sending dem out widout a gun. (SR 47: 7f.)

Whereas Muta stresses the importance of Irie FM, he also campaigns for new radio sets in police cars and therefore implies that the police is not well-equipped. In another broadcast from December 2017, he voices his frustration about the police:

What the police dem have control ova in Jamaica? It must be sumting that dem control. The traffic ting, dem do nuh have no control ova it. The crime ting, dem do not have any control ova it. What the hell dem have control ova? [...] People a cross road and mek the traffic block up. Taxi man around the corner mek the road a block up. And the police dem nah deh 'bout. If dem deh 'bout, dem just a watch the ting and a look for the gyal weh dem a pass by, turn gyal watcher. (SR 49: 6f.)

Indeed, they do not only turn *gyal watchers* but become part of political instrumentalisation. Harriott, who provides a detailed dismantling of the corruption in the JCF, debates the pervasive corruption in the police and Jamaica's elite and argues that most anti-corruption efforts have merely derived from politically corrupt motives and were

bureaucratic instruments to get rid of opposition party-affiliated JCF members. Seeming attempts to control the corruption are mostly ineffective and sustain a system of corruption tolerated and utilised by Jamaica's political elite. Similar to Muta, Harriott suggests a structural reform which turns away from the colonially inherited state-political management of control and state security towards a more interactive police-citizen and social management of crime control. (cf. Harriott 2000: xviii; 47-71, 69f.)

This subchapter has briefly pointed to the complexity of police corruption and social norms such as the anti-informer mindset, which both facilitated building networks that ensure crimes in Jamaica. Unfortunately, the crimes are also largely committed by those who should actually prevent or at least alleviate them.

4.2.3. Crime prevention: proposals for solution

Over and over again, Mutabaruka plays a part in crime prevention campaigns or crime curbing initiatives. In his Steppin Razor broadcast, he proposes pertinent ideas to policymakers in order to tackle the island's crime issues. Nevertheless, he demands from the authorities exactly the same things that he sees as his own responsibility:

Wi haffi do betta than that! And when mi say wi now, wi a talk 'bout wi! And mi include myself. Mi a include myself seh mi have the power a the microphone in front a mi! And yuh try your best continuously. But yuh haffi have some back-up, and the back-up is the people dem who yuh pay fi look 'bout certain tings inna the country. [...] And yuh a try yuh best fi show dem certain tings, like all mi yah now, dem say, "bwoy Muta, fi him tings too radical, Rasta!" And dem know mi a say it can work, too, or it can be a part of the working. 'Caw there is no one way fi deal wid dis crime situation, but there are many different aspects yuh can tek it at! And wi show dem that ova the many many times. (SR 39: 2)

Let's contemplate some of the *different aspects* that Muta talks about. In order to achieve a lower crime rate and establish a more secure environment, the Rastaman proposes concrete measures as he demands that the government provides jobs and builds large businesses (cf. SR 1: 2), provides financial aid to buy out all guns in circulations (cf. *ibid.*), and bans violent movies from TV and rates them as *parental guidance suggested* (cf. SR 28: 6). He vehemently calls for counselling by authorities of formerly crime- and violence-affected nations and cities: "Uno need fi go to some country weh did a have some terrible civil war and find out how the people dem rectify. [...] Whole heap a country inna Africa did inna situation worse than Jamaica when it come on to bloodshed!" (SR 32: 5) In this context, he regularly refers to Rwanda (cf. SR 24: 1; SR 46: 2), the East African country that

has ascended from its civil war between the Hutu and Tutsi in 1994 and is considered one of Africa's most advanced nations now. In the course of the latest *Index Report* for the 2018 *Ibrahim Index of African Governance*⁹⁰ Rwanda was ranked eighth (out of 54) in the overall statistics of good governance (cf. Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2018: 16) and ranked first in the subcategories *Transparency & Accountability*, *Gender*, *Business Environment* and *Rural Sector* (cf. *ibid.*: 110). Furthermore, in the section *Protection against Ethnic & Religious Discrimination* the small nation-state ranked 17th (cf. *ibid.*). With Rwanda's history involving ethnical genocide 24 years prior, these results are tremendously positive and support Muta's requests for political advice from such countries. Of course, the Rastafarian is aware of the different historical and political framework of other nation-states. Nevertheless, he suggests that "yuh can use part a weh dem do to stem crime" (SR 43: 9) and "there must be sumting in the formula that yuh can use anywhere" (SR 24: 1). Apart from Rwanda, he sometimes refers to Columbia and its drugs and crime containment (cf. SR 9: 2) and the city of New York and the rapid reduction of its crime rate under former mayor Rudolph Giuliani (cf. SR 3: 1; SR 24: 1). "Why is it that these minister dem don't go to New York, talk to the people dem and find out what formula did they use to mek the crime rate go down so drastically?!" (SR 9: 2), an enraged Muta wonders. His apparently favourite role model is Norway with its alternative penal and rehabilitation measures that include incarceration in minimum-security and open prisons such as the Bastoy Island prison (cf. SR 24: 1f.; SR 32: 5).⁹¹

Apart from discussing possible solutions with his listeners, Muta steadily requests responsibility from the political protagonists in order to take successful crime prevention measures. He wants politicians to stop "tink inna di box" (SR 32: 5) which means that the responsible ministers should learn from their mistakes as they have taken the wrong steps over and over again, for example implementing ineffective police initiatives or operations that were established under names such as *Operation Kingfish* (cf. Leslie 2010: 49f.). Muta starts questioning the individual expertise of certain politicians and wonders to what extent

⁹⁰ "The Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) is an annually published index that provides a statistical measure of governance performance in 54 African countries. Governance is defined by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation as the provision of the political, social and economic public goods and services that every citizen has the right to expect from their state, and that a state has the responsibility to deliver to its citizens. This definition is focused on outputs and outcomes of policy. The IIAG governance framework comprises four categories: *Safety & Rule of Law*, *Participation & Human Rights*, *Sustainable Economic Opportunity* and *Human Development*. These categories are made up of 14 subcategories, consisting of 102 indicators. The 2018 IIAG is calculated using data from 35 independent African and global institutions." (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2018: 137)

⁹¹ For more information on *Prison Island*: cf. Shammass 2015.

a banker like Peter Bunting is fit to be the Minister of National Security and Justice (cf. SR 43: 9). In fact, Jamaica's parliament encounters politicians changing functions oftentimes (cf. URL 55), a course of action Muta describes as "a joke business" (SR 43: 10) and confronts with the following words: "Because yuh change the man, yuh not change the tinkin'. Yuh nah get the solution by changing the man. Dem haffi have a strategy!" (ibid.)

A strategy is indeed needed to tackle the situation as it relates to the gun shipment. The Rastafarian presenter pleads for a transnational solution to the import and distribution of guns in the Caribbean region. Given that neither guns nor ammunitions are produced in Jamaica, he also suspects that the shipment of guns is planned by the elite. Although Muta usually doesn't follow conspiracy theories (cf. SR 41: 5) and regards them rather sceptically⁹², he brings up a conspiracy theory about American gun shipments to Jamaica. He speaks of a shady triangle agency between the USA as the shipper, Haiti as the branch, and Jamaica as the receiver (cf. SR 23: 6). Muta condemns these power games played by the USA against Caribbean countries:

Sumting not taste good. Trinidad! Biggest crime problem: gun. Likkle St. Kitts, enuh! Dem haffi call out the soldier dem inna the street becaw the crime rate jump up. Barbados, weh is the most colonial looking tinkin' country that the Caribbean has as it relate to holding on pon England, dem have a big crime rate! [...] Mi really waan to figure out how is it that so much country in the Caribbean have a escalation of gun activity!? [...] Dem station FBI dung yah, becaw dem know seh dem betta do sup'm 'bout the scamming, because it affecting dem citizens. They are looking out for their citizens! But the proliferation of guns, weh dem scammer dem a use and buy, a come from America. Dem no interested inna that! Dem interested inna fi dem own fambily! Wi must interested inna our own fambily, too, yuh understand!? (SR 41: 4f.)

In this context, he angrily appeals to the Jamaican politicians as well as the Caribbean Community CARICOM, an organisation of fifteen Caribbean nation-states equivalent to the EU (cf. ibid.: 4), and demands a political conversation with the responsible ministers from the USA in order to prevent its gun exports (cf. SR 41: 3). However, Jamaica's (as well as CARICOM's) decision-makers seemingly try to please the USA and don't dare address the gun trade issue with the government of the USA, which, in turn, apparently denies its participation in the triangle agency and puts the responsibility on others.⁹³ For Muta, this

⁹² In a broadcast from January 2016, he debates with a call-in candidate: „Yuh see the conspiracy ting, it look like Black people more concerned conspiracies than really solving dem own situation. Mi nah say conspiracy cyaan true, enuh, but the amount a conspiracy weh mi see Black people hold on pon ova the years, is like mi a say, 'but wait, why wi keep developing conspiracy?' Every time sup'm a happen, wi say it is a conspiracy against Black people. When, really and truly, some a the ting dem a wi all cause it fi wiself, too!" (SR 18: 9)

⁹³ Although the USA are the major gun and ammunition importers for the two Caribbean countries, the US Department of State speaks of a *guns for marijuana trade* that, allegedly, only happens between Haiti and Jamaica (cf. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs 2019: 196f.).

clearly typifies a hegemony of (considered) first world countries over so-called third world countries⁹⁴ (cf. SR 18: 3). Within the asymmetrical relationship, he claims that “David woulda still kill Goliath” (SR 23: 7).

As opposed to merely hold outside forces liable for the extensive crime rate (such as corrupt politics or poor economic development), the radio host challenges the Jamaican mindset and takes people’s mindsets into consideration as well. He considers rehabilitation as a form of mental transformation, an act that he interrelates to the notion of ghetto:

Yuh have certain ghetto weh can be transformed even though is still ghetto. Mi remember Black Rose Corner, the place weh look and is ghetto! So, is not like seh yuh haffi move outta a ghetto fi mek the ting don’t look like a ghetto. Most people weh live inna ghetto weh dem claim seh a ghetto, a dem mind a inna the ghetto! [...] People mind live inna ghetto so much, so that dem environment round dem transform! But yet yuh waan to clean up round your environment! Becaw it work both ways that if your environment look a certain way, then it affect your mind, too! (SR 24: 2)

According to Muta, the ghetto mentality constitutes the paradigm of handling one’s environment. “If dem people mind is not intact, then viciousness and criminality will precede” (SR 23: 5), he discloses in an episode from May 2016. Therefore, he puts the blame not only on poverty and structural suppression but also on the lack of discipline and morality in the ghetto. Whilst reflecting on the reasons for Jamaica’s criminal environment, he touches upon the paradox that although Jamaica is economically more advanced, its crime rate is much higher than Cuba’s and Haiti’s, the two neighbouring islands (cf. SR 32: 2f.). He names these countries to show that crime doesn’t necessarily coincide with a country’s rate of poverty.

He also debates crime factors and appropriate prevention measures live on air with call-in interviewees such as Jamaican anthropologist Herbert Gayle or gender researcher Natasha Mortley. Gayle, who believes there is a direct connection between the poorest people’s level of education and a country’s degree of violence, calls for more leadership figures in the communities to build up small enterprises (cf. SR 39: 3). Even Muta constantly advocates entrepreneurship, quotes business ideas for small enterprises and tries to motivate his listenership to find a “loop hole” (SR 1: 5) for constructive job development. Natasha Mortley discusses the findings of the pilot study *Males, Crime and Community in Jamaica*, which was conducted by the University of the West Indies (cf. URL 56). According to her,

⁹⁴ Although these contrasting designations may not be up to date anymore, they help to describe the gulf between rich/powerful and poor/powerless countries (cf. Kreff/Knoll/Gingrich 2011: 131). Mutabaruka emphasises this fact by using them in his narratives.

the study revealed that Jamaican men satisfy their need for respect in line with three factors, namely guns, money and politics; apart from these three, other expressions of masculinity are protecting, providing and boasting (cf. SR 45: 6f.). Muta partially agrees with Mortley and the study's results, as he sarcastically weighs in on the notion of Jamaica's (young) men and their masculine identity:

When yuh have a gun and money now, is like yuh have power. [...] So, the youth dem don't waan no job! Dem have a job already, dem have a big gun! A weh dem penis cyaan do, dem gun will do it. Because that is the power now dem have. The gun is like a phallic symbol. It compensate fi dem powers weh dem lose out wid gyals. (SR 49: 10)

As the host reaches the climax of his demonstration, he makes it clear that the gun induces symbolic value for many men in order to counterbalance their lack of social acceptance and respect. In other words, they put effort into the accumulation of symbolic capital, which eventually generates prestige. Especially in a crime-ridden field as Jamaica, where it is hard to agglomerate economic capital and where many male teenagers lack cultural and social capital (many are early school leavers who belong to the deprived segment of society), the choice of a criminal path of life seems to be rewarding. Muta also sees a nexus between the common Jamaican notion of masculinity and the influence of Dancehall music. He addresses the negative influence of the gun- and violence-glorifying lyrics many Dancehall artists present, such as by currently successful artists Alkaline and Popcaan: "Alkaline and Popcaan! Dem man deh feed dem the more madness inna dem head!" (ibid.) Recently, criticism from a Jamaican sociologist emerged about Popcaan's explicit lyrics in his song *El Chapo* (cf. URL 57). In the song, whose title alludes to the infamous Mexican drug lord, Popcaan sings the following verse:

Empty di MAK 90 inna your face and gone
So real badman kill dem
Police come find dem dead pon the street like dawg
M1 rifle a sting dem (a sting dem)
Bare one stepper bwoy gi' yuh one (gi' yuh one)
Pussy, man a bad from day one (day one)
Buss out dem head, mi no spare man
When mi rifle a spray like Baygon, dawg
Gunshot connect like three way
Slap out dem head pon the freeway
Bwoy body drop inna mikkle day
When Grabba Dawg squeeze up the mini 'K
Pussy dem tink dem evil yet
Empty the Intratec inna your pee pee breath

Killy 'tep up inna dem place
Bullet inna dem face
When dem a watch stage show pon the Internet
(Popcaan 2017)

Popcaan recognises himself as a “badman” (cf. Hope 2006: 90f.) in an homage to El Chapo, who it is said has killed more than 2.000 people (cf. URL 58). Popcaan glorifies him shooting guns, which he mentions are MAK 90, M1, rifle, mini ‘K and Intratec. In the chorus, he praises himself as El Chapo, an *evil head*, and *killy killy* (cf. Popcaan 2017), the Jamaican Patois paraphrase for murderer. Whereas so-called *gun lyrics* (in accordance with the image of a badman) were already well-liked in Jamaica’s musical scenery at end of the 1980s (cf. Doumerc 2003: 86), they obviously have become even more popular since the mid-2000s.⁹⁵ In his broadcast, Muta critically reflects on the idealisation and legitimisation of violence in Dancehall music and on the gun-associated socialisation of the genre’s listeners as it seems to contribute to a violent and *gun is power*-habitus and thus to Jamaica’s crime issue.⁹⁶ In this context, he also directly appeals to the Dancehall collective since he knows personally about the responsibility and effective agency of being an artist:

Maybe is not the music create it [the crime; author’s note], but it help fi propel it! So, when a man a say right now him only a reflect the society, sometime him create weh inna the society, too. Yes! A man cyaan tell mi, becaw mi a artist, too. And mi see the effect of it internationally, when mi go out deh. Mi go a certain country inna Africa now, and some a the ministers dem inna government a say, dem used to listen to mi when dem deh a Europe and study. That is why dem come back a Africa! Becaw dem hear mi a say, “it not good fi stay inna whiteman country too long!” The music infiltrate your mind and your soul and mek yuh react to it! (SR 35: 1)⁹⁷

Mutabaruka proposes several ideas about crime prevention. He pleads for political advice from abroad and asks Jamaica’s political elite to establish effective police operations and interventions, to employ competent ministers for particular assignments, and to immediately discontinue America’s gun shipments. In his interactive broadcast, he furthermore talks about Jamaica’s ghetto mentality and masculine (gun-associated) identity,

⁹⁵ For instance, in December 2009 the lyrical feud between Dancehall protégés Vybz Kartel and Mavado (also known as the *Gully vs. Gaza*-conflict) led the leading politicians at that time to summon an official meeting with both artists appearing in public in order to eliminate their hostility and lyrical warfare, which had resulted in innumerable conflicts and even killings between particular (mostly young male) fans in the months prior. Interestingly, it is said that the conflict was presumably political due to Gaza’s association with the PNP (representing Portmore) and Gully’s association with the JLP (representing Cassava Piece). (cf. URL 59)

⁹⁶ Mutabaruka’s views on Dancehall are presented at large in chapter 4.3.2.

⁹⁷ Here, Muta responds to Vybz Kartel’s statement featured in his song *Mr. Broadcast Comission*: “My music is a reflection of the broader society. Without a violent society, we wouldnt have violent music. Art is an expression of life.” (Vybz Kartel 2013)

two social aspects that contribute to the crime issue and should inevitable be transformed. That's what makes the Steppin Razor programme unique. When Muta challenges Jamaican social norms and widespread beliefs or doubts ominous events (e.g. the gun shipments from the US), he encourages (Black) people to look behind the façade and ask critical questions. In my interview during field research, he acknowledged his strategy: "Mi tink fi miself! Critical tinkin is the business of understanding sumting that yuh did doubt. When yuh understand sumting weh yuh doubt, yuh start to examine it more. Becaw doubt is the first step towards knowing, is through doubt now yuh going to examine the ting." (Interview 1: 16) Especially for Jamaican society, which is very impulsive and undisciplined (cf. chapter 4.3.1.), and even more so for the lower class audience, Muta's radio show functions as a public awareness campaign that encourages its listeners to scrutinise the apparent reality. In this way, the Rastafarian encourages people to help themselves and embrace a different world consciousness, quite similar to Marcus Garvey's goals outlined in every issue of his weekly newspaper *Negro World* (cf. Phillips Fein 1964: 448).

4.3. **"Evriting wi do, don't reflect wi as a people": on Jamaica's society**

"The only ting weh can keep the people dem comfortable is the likkle music weh a play 'bout di place. The likkle music a keep the people dem sane! Whether is nasty music or not. But yuh can see how the people dem react to dis music!"

Mutabaruka (SR 2: 4)

"When Europeans go to Africa, weh have the land, dem haffi come wid dem Bible and dem come wid dem gun and teach yuh fi pray. And the story goes that when wi close wi eye and pray, when wi open it dem have our land and wi have the Bible."

Mutabaruka (SR 45: 5f.)

In this chapter I expound Mutabaruka's perception of Jamaican society and its manifold identities presented through his narratives in the Steppin Razor programme. Using his keen awareness advanced by an Afrocentric pedagogy, he lays out subversive and acrimonious verbal exchanges to address the bias and narrow-mindedness of versatile actors in the field. Whilst listening to his broadcast, from time to time one probably assumes that Muta likes to turn (almost) everything upside down with regard to social order or cultural and religious

norms in Jamaica. Integrated in a dialogic discourse with his listeners, he airs his positions and negotiates them. Let's zoom in on some of his viewpoints along the following subchapters.

4.3.1. A class habitus: the Jamaican (social) logic

For the last centuries Jamaica has been a “melting pot of cultures and ethnicities” (Henriques 2011: x), especially shaped by the influx of enslaved labour from Africa and indentured labour from countries such as Scotland, Germany, India, and China (cf. *ibid.*). Although Muta agrees that European and Asian influences have been part of Jamaica's demographic history and have contributed to a Jamaican identity in some way, he considers the Jamaican culture predominantly African-Caribbean or rather Black. In this context the radio presenter regularly outlines a class habitus that he associates with the deprived section of Jamaica's Black population. In order to avoid any form of essentialistic impression, it should be emphasised again that I stick to Muta's narratives concerning Jamaica's intrinsic colour-class stratification and social segmentation from which such a differentiation seems comprehensible. Besides, for the sake of clarity and comprehension, it makes sense to consider Pierre Bourdieu's notion of class and group habitus:

Since the history of the individual is never anything other than a certain specification of the collective history of his group or class, *each individual system of dispositions* may be seen as a *structural variant* of all the other group or class habitus, expressing the difference between trajectories and positions inside or outside the class. (Bourdieu 2013: 86)

According to Bourdieu, all coexisting variations of group or class habitus are shaped by the same historic experience. A specific class/group habitus – in this case the habitus of Jamaica's Black lower class – is the expression of a different variation of this experience by individuals who belong to the respective collectivity. In the Steppin Razor broadcast, Mutabaruka pays attention to this particular class habitus and offers constructive criticism when appropriate in order to contribute to a transformation of the habitus into one characterised by an African-centred consciousness. So far, the habitus of many Jamaicans has strongly been shaped by postcolonial and other detrimental determinants, which are avidly addressed by Muta. This reminds of Paul Gilroy's description of the idea “that there are limits to what we can blame on the leviathan of white supremacy [...] [and] that we must pay attention to both inside and outside aspects of our experiences of subordination if we are

to comprehend it properly.” (Gilroy 1993: 10f.) Especially in the broadcasts shortly before Christmas, Muta brings up crucial issues, for example when he discusses consumerism that eventually causes pain for a certain part of Jamaica’s society whose identity is shaped by a group habitus:

Some people don’t have the money fi spend, but dem spend it anyway. [...] A so Black people a run dem ting. Dem buy weh dem waan, and beg weh dem need. It cyaan work da way deh. Because when January and February come, your needs not going to be fulfilled. And then yuh going to cuss and gwaan bad and yuh lick your pickney like it is your pickney fault, and cuss your man, because him never do dis and never do dat. If yuh don’t send him the money fi buy sup’m fi the pickney and yuh tek it buy finger nail ‘caw yuh go a party and yuh haffi look toppa. (SR 48: 5)

A common habitus amongst deprived Jamaicans is to spend the little money they have on their appearance, which for females includes among others artificial fingernails, hair extensions or wigs, and chic dresses: “Black people have no money, but when Christmas come yuh see the false eyelash, the false bottom, the false breast, the false dis, the false dat. All the tings weh dem never need, dem buy it a dis time a the year. And the tings weh dem a need, next year dem cyaan get it.” (SR 47: 12) In that respect, the radio host cites Martin Luther King Jr.: “Black people buy wah dem waan and beg weh dem need.” (SR 47: 11; SR 48: 5) King, who was a Baptist minister and the leader of the nonviolent section of the American civil-rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, once declared the following far-sighted statement analysing the financial situation of Black people:

[...] Negroes too often buy what they want and beg for what they need. Negroes must learn to practice systematic saving. They must also pool their economic resources through various cooperative enterprises. Such agencies as credit unions, savings and loan associations, and finance companies are needed in every Negro community. All of these are things that would serve to lift the economic level of the Negro which would in turn give him greater purchasing power. (Carson et al. 2000: 374)

Muta regularly takes up Martin Luther King and contextualises this attitude as he uncovers certain practices of Jamaican people (cf. SR 47: 11; SR 50: 3). Similar to the renowned American civil-rights activist, for Muta the sense of financial responsibility, prudent investment, and economical self-reliance is of paramount importance in order to undermine the economic inertia and plight of many Jamaicans. Unlike many of his fellow citizens, the Rastafarian presenter has always been aware of the importance of pecuniary resources and has used his own creativity as a source of economic capital, from his poems to his talk show and his tours as entertainer or speaker (cf. Interview 1: 2, 4, 25f.). For this reason, he tries to teach his listeners not to squander money but to focus on self-reliant and

conscientious concepts. In fact, the host's educational streak is identified by a *Black salvation*-impetus, which prompts him to be a self-help advocate for Black people and their financial well-being.

Muta prefers to speak about what he regards as *Black people mentality*. In the course of an internal discussion with the radio team in which his young colleagues favoured living in concrete houses over board houses, he sets out the following:

Jamaican people feel seh if dem live inna board house and dem mek concrete house, dem move up. Is foolishness! Mi have a house dung a Treasure Beach and a board mek it. And dis is like a landmark inna Jamaica! The most unique houses weh mi see when mi a travel is the board house dem. Is wi inna Jamaica feel seh board house mean seh yuh are suffering or yuh are poor people. That's why whole heap a Jamaican people a concrete up demself. Mi coulda never live inna a concrete house weh when mi turn round a just pure concrete! [...] A Black people have a mentality deh 'bout wood! Dem feel seh wooded house a sufferation. (SR 27: 9)

The philosopher is puzzled about the common attitude of Black people towards board houses and reports his own experiences. In the critical discourse about the class habitus, Muta touches upon a wide range of subjects. One should recognise that even food and the habit of eating are frequent topics in his radio show. For instance, it is his heartfelt wish to introduce his listeners to alternative ideas on food consumption and production, as he promotes his vegan (or ital) lifestyle (cf. SR 16: 6; SR 18: 14; SR 32: 2), duns the government to protect Jamaica from imports of plastic rice and curious onions (cf. SR 31: 1), and rails against American fast-food chains such as Kentucky Fried Chicken (cf. *ibid.*). He also addresses Jamaica's young people who he thinks have departed from agricultural productivity, as "dem nuh waan dutty dem hand [and] dem prefer type or press cellphone rather than tek up all a machete or a plough fi go plough some tings" (SR 30: 1). The lack of interest in farming may illustrate not only a Jamaican phenomenon but a global one. Muta's standpoint, however, correlates with the Rastafarian idea of self-reliance: "Wi are the 99 percent and dem [meaning the government; author's note] are the one percent and a dem rule evriting. Is really a country weh the minority a feed yuh. The majority suppose to feed demself!" (SR 30: 1) Muta experienced agricultural work when he lived in Johns Hall, St. James (cf. chapter 3.1.3.). Given that this was part of his socialisation and thus shaped his habitus, it definitely has contributed to his call for self-reliant agricultural work and food.

"Wi a gwaan like wi have a first world mind and a third world look, or wi coulda say, a first world look and a third world mind" (SR 17: 4), the poet often describes certain practices of Jamaicans that are either contradictory, imprudent, or merely display the deeply

rooted indiscipline amongst society. The common anti law and order mentality is what he associates with a *third world mind*. In fact, the elite's corruption and criminality contribute to spreading such mindset amongst the lower class as well. For instance, Muta alludes to the driving behaviour of aggressive motorists and the street hawkers who occupy Jamaica's sidewalks with their products so that people need to walk on the street (cf. SR 49: 2). These may seem to be banal topics, but Muta warns: "Wi have a conditioning weh wi need fi come outta it, enuh. Becaw yuh cyaan have good governance, [and] yuh cyaan have a stable society wid people who don't respect order." (SR 21: 1) Nevertheless, Jamaican society is not only shaped by what Muta considers a third world mind, but peer-group pressure tendencies constitute the causality for certain practices as well:

Mi never know seh so much people inna Jamaica bleach until the other day mi walk tru the plaza and see the fireworks people dem [women who sell fireworks; author's note]. And a pure bleach out! Right now, a nuh because dem fraid a dem Black so a dem bleach. Just tru dem live inna likkle cave deh so, weh everybody a do it, so dem do it so. Is like everybody a wear tear up jeans now, so everybody a put tear up jeans. Nobody waan be unique, nobody waan say dem different. Is like a army, dem inna uniform. Because sup'm 'bout a tinkin. [...] (SR 50: 3f.)

The value of fashion and appearance addressed here correlates with what I consider a Dancehall habitus. Since this habitus is deeply embedded in Jamaica's society, it is obvious that within the Dancehall field a certain peer pressure exists. The Dancehall habitus, in turn, shows blatant parallels with the habitus of Jamaica's Black lower class. Cultural anthropologist Norman Stolzoff writes: "Styles of clothing, haircuts, and jewelry worn to dancehall sessions have now become daily garb. These fashion statements are a source of ongoing controversy, and they have come to signify a subordinate and oppositional position within Jamaica's race-class hierarchy." (Stolzoff 2000: 2) What Stolzoff sketches here is strongly mooted by other authors who have written about Jamaica's Dancehall culture. It is thus useful to consider the views of Jamaican academic Donna Hope and her influential book *Inna Di Dancehall*. She emphasises the convergent analogy of the Dancehall and (Black) lower class habitus:

Dancehall music and culture, as the most contemporary manifestation of what is deemed Jamaican "low culture", actively creates and re-creates symbolic manifestations of the tensions that operate in society. The play across the field of popular culture, where the dancehall, as inner-city and lower-working-class culture, works to both produce and reproduce varied and competing forms of personhood in Jamaica. [...], the male-dominated dancehall landscape represented a development in the petty commodity sector aggressively created by poor blacks. The dancehall encompassed the thrust for economic sustenance on behalf of many dispossessed Jamaicans; the creation of a voice for the

voiceless; and a bid for survival and escape from the poverty-stricken lifestyles of the inner cities of Kingston and St Andrew. (Hope 2006: 9f.)

Being the antipole to *high culture* and the articulation for people from *downtown* (cf. *ibid.*: 19), Dancehall culture and its implications cohere with anti-order attitudes and thus have great potential for subversion.⁹⁸ Given that Dancehall is such a dominant cultural and social phenomenon in Jamaica and has created a *Black space*, Muta's narratives concerning the class habitus have to be considered within this particular field as well. Interestingly, as illustrated in the next subchapter, the radio host deprecates the popular Dancehall habitus. Although he is usually an advocate of the Black lower class and a dissident, he cannot accept certain manifestations of Dancehall and criticises certain aspects. Strongly shaped by a Rastafarian and intellectual mindspace, Muta critically reflects upon and gives attention to the Dancehall culture, which in reality transcends his notion of a Black consciousness-habitus.

4.3.2. The music of the people: Reggae vs. Dancehall?

Most Jamaican people are obsessed with music, primarily with the dominant native genres of Dancehall and Reggae⁹⁹, but also with (foreign) genres such as Gospel, Hip-Hop, Soul and Reggaeton. I am a musician myself and have been a Reggae-lover for some time, so I always sensed an indescribable energy during my field research in Jamaica relating to music in all its forms. It felt like everything is about music, not only on the audio-visual level during *stage shows*, street and club parties (so-called *dances*) or Sunday's holy mass at church but also on the habitualised level of the people's cultural expression. Dancehall and Reggae have shaped a prevalent Jamaican identity relating to fashion, dance, articulation, mindset and even food especially for the younger generation; a collective habitus is apparent. Mutabaruka regularly refers to the importance Reggae music has had for the constitution of a cultural expression in Jamaica and globally. However, it is no secret that he is not a Dancehall fan and thus is prone to harshly criticise the prevailing Dancehall culture. In this context the tone of Muta's statements is highly emotional. Whereas he regards Reggae as the "music of

⁹⁸ It is important to notice that there are also Dancehall supporters from the *uptown* area, representing Jamaica's middle and upper class. However, the majority of supporters are from the unprivileged population. (cf. Hope 2006: 19)

⁹⁹ Sometimes the two genres are subsumed under Reggae. Given that Muta differentiates between Dancehall and Reggae, I stick to his distinction as I also lean on the definitions as pictured by Moskowitz (cf. Moskowitz 2006).

liberation and music of hope” (SR 22: 3), he associates Dancehall with materialism, explicit language, gun glorification and disrespectfulness. His antipathy even leads him to suspect another conspiracy:

Is it a conspiracy? Was it planned and designed that a country that gave the world a music of liberation and music of hope, a music that connect dem Africa wid dem Africanness, to see what the music has become today? The materialism and the bling and the sexually explicit language and the gun and the disrespect and the culture that go wid it. What went wrong in Jamaica? Wi have to aks the question, enuh! (SR 22: 3)

As I already suggested in chapter 4.2.3., the Dancehall genre is characterised by gun-lyrics and gangsterdom. Furthermore, alongside a fondness for bling and materialistic values, the genre’s idiom and its inherent culture (fashion, appearance, dance styles, etc.) feature a so-called *slackness* that is inclined towards a sexual explicitness and vulgarity (cf. Stolzoff 2000: 104-106). Often considered by (mostly foreign) journalists and critics to be masculinist, homophobic and misogynist (cf. Cooper 2004: 73f.; Stolzoff 2000: xxi, 100), the slackness lyrics (together with the gun lyrics) and the general popularity of Dancehall emerged in the 1980s during a time of political and cultural shifts in Jamaican society. Stolzoff demonstrates in his critically acclaimed book *Wake the Town and Tell the People: Dancehall Culture in Jamaica* an interplay of several factors that contributed to the promotion of Dancehall music, which are listed below:

- the country’s political shift from Michael Manley’s African-Jamaican lauding democratic socialism to Edward Seaga’s neoliberal (capitalistic) U.S.-oriented agenda in 1980
- the ideological and cultural shift from an international oriented music market to a domestically oriented one triggered in the aftermath of Bob Marley’s death in 1981
- the moral shift from Afrocentric values and the *brotherly love* and *unity* as promoted by Rastafarians and socialism during the 1970s to the embracement of consumer capitalism and the celebration of the *local* reality as expressed in the Patois vernacular and through the celebration of sexuality and gangsterism in the 1980s (cf. Stolzoff 2000: 99-104)

Let’s have a look on Stolzoff’s deconstruction:

Through the idiom of dancehall music and in the social context of dancehalls, the lower classes created a response to changing political-economic realities. For instance, the lower classes were agents in

choosing to elect Seaga and to embrace consumer capitalism, and the dancehall was a primary vehicle for articulating these views. [...] Another event leading to the rise of the dancehall style was the death of Bob Marley in 1981 at the age of thirty-six. As a result, the black lower class lost its most visible and powerful voice. In the wake of Marley's passing from cancer at the prime of his career, the otherworldly millenarian message of the Rastafari was no longer as compelling as the ethic of instant gratification. [...], the dancehall itself became a symbol of the division between uptown and downtown, between a music that was increasingly oriented to an international market (roots reggae) and one that spoke to the local sensibilities of a younger generation of dancehall fans. (Stolzoff 2000: 100ff.)

Stolzoff's analysis may also respond to Muta's question cited above and provides an explanation for the musical and cultural transformation in Jamaica, from a Rastafari influenced *Roots Reggae* towards the sexually explicit and violence-glorifying Dancehall.¹⁰⁰ A conspiracy, as Mutabaruka wonders, can be neither clearly negated nor confirmed. The Rastaman's stance on the influence of powerful countries should have already become obvious. Hence, arguments for an imperialist and neo-colonial approach in the context of Reggae's devaluation back in the 1980s seem well-founded, especially considering the political background of Manley's anti-USA leanings and Seaga's take-over (cf. chapter 4.1.4.). A demoralised Muta tries to get to the bottom of the matter in order to stimulate his audience: "Is like how dem did find out seh wi a get presumptuous and a use all Reggae music fi really heal the minds of the oppressed and then all of a sudden wi just see dis ting come in weh dem call Dancehall culture. Maybe that rise of that culture is a conspiracy against the rise of militancy and really holistic temperament that the Reggae music gave us." (SR 23: 2)

It seems as if the poet's views on Jamaica's music are determined by clear-cut oppositions: On the one (positive) side there is Roots Reggae with its conscious and uplifting message about spiritual redemption and socio-political protest, on the other (negative) side there is Dancehall with its immoral and decadent gun- and slackness-lyricism. Yet it is Dancehall that represents Jamaican popular culture and mainstream (cf. Stanley Niah 2010: 16), as also the radio personality is aware of when he refers to crime and gun issues in Jamaica: "Apparently the people dem a listen to the more negative message them. It get more influence ova deh because of the dramatic experience wah wi experience inna Jamaica." (SR 49: 8) Muta doesn't treat the subject lightly and demonstrates his anger at the Dancehall culture. He criticises certain practices of actors in the field of Dancehall such as women wearing tight (or almost no) clothes at parties (cf. SR 28: 3), the animalistic (and what he

¹⁰⁰ See also Hope 2006: 1-24 and Wynands 2000: 162-174.

calls *bestial*) dancing style between man and woman (cf. SR 50: 1) or the obscene presentation of the female body in video clips: “Mi a tell yuh bwoy, if I see one more bottom pon the TV to rhaatid I go mash it up. Too much bottom, I cyaan tek it!” (SR 29: 2)



Image 15: Dancehall poster (Source: Schwager 2009a)

In the previous chapter I have already mentioned that many Jamaicans pay a lot of attention to appearance and fashion. Especially at Dancehall sessions and parties, men and women likewise try to impress; one's clothing (or one's sexiness) accumulates one's symbolic capital and claims respect from others. Stolzoff puts it in a nutshell:

The primary fashion designs for the divas are variations on the X-rated theme. [...] Most men enjoy the divas' provocative dressing and their open embodiment of sexuality, as evidenced by the hundreds of songs produced each year dedicated to these women. [...] Unlike the divas, the dons and the rude boys tend to cover their bodies from neck to ankle in dancehall-styled suits. They embody coolness, commanding respect from those they encounter. (Stolzoff 2000: 206f.)

Within what Zips calls the *arena* or *battlefield* (cf. Zips 2008c: 233) and Stanley Niaah describes as the *war zone* (cf. Stanley Niaah 2010: 3) of Dancehall, ascriptions and denominations such as *diva*, *don* and *rude boy* imply certain codes of behaviour, e.g. an

extraordinary masculine, rude appearance or a rather exquisitely feminine diva-like one. Mutabaruka doesn't hold such an impartial view on the fashion and dancing practices of Jamaica's dances. Relating to the so-called *dagging* dancing style, he scathes:

The denim shorts itch up inna dem crotches when dem a go a dance and dem waan it that way, too! Dem have on the longest fingernail and the shiniest shoe and dem false hair! And when yuh see weh dem a do. Dem a simulate sex! Yuh see the man dem jump pon the ooman and the man a gwaan like dawg! A weh wi get dem culture deh from? And as a matter of fact, too, him all turn her around backways, enuh. Mi say, "wait, a two human being that?" Becaw mi a look pon mi puppy dem a my yard. Mi just see my puppy dem a gwaan so. My puppy dem discrete. If dem a have sex and mi a come, dem just mask it. Dem people deh do it inna front a light, all the light a shine dung pon the man and the ooman's crotches point up inna the video. (SR 18: 4)¹⁰¹

He makes the dancers look foolish as he compares their way of dancing with the sexual intercourse of his dogs. Indeed, when I attended my first dance in Kingston in 2008, I had a similar impression of what happened under the labelling of dagging. Like Muta, I perceived it as an act of simulating sex with one's clothes on. Back then, the dagging style (or rather the dance performance of coitus-alike postures and pelvic grinding moves) had just become popular through much celebrated Dancehall tunes like Mr. Vegas' *Dagging* (cf. Mr. Vegas 2008), RDX's *Dagging* (cf. RDX 2008) and Aidonia's *Flying Dagger (aka 100 Stab)* (cf. Aidonia 2008). In the chorus of his song, Mr. Vegas praises dagging:

A weh the gyal dem waan – dagging!
A weh the gyal dem need – dagging!
Early inna the morning – dagging!
After wuk inna the evening – dagging!
A weh the gyal dem waan – dagging!
A weh the gyal dem need – dagging!
Tell mi weh dem come a Town fah – dagging!
(Mr. Vegas 2008)

Although music associated with dagging has been banned from Jamaican radio, the release of topic-related songs and the performance of dagging is still commonly practiced in the Dancehall arena. Muta thinks that the Dancehall culture doesn't help the healing of its traumatised patrons but rather is the expression of the traumatised: "Inna dem soul dem is perplexed. Jamaican people seem to be so traumatised and because of that dem go to certain places fi heal demself. But, really and truly, it not healing dem, becaw that terribleness follow

¹⁰¹ When Muta speaks about *inna front a light* or *inna the video* he broaches the common practice of videographers capturing the party on film and spotlighting certain dancers in the searchlight (cf. Stolzoff 2000: 206).

dem into the Dancehall and it get crazy inna the Dancehall!” (SR 18: 4) He questions the origin of such a dance culture and is averse to referring to an African heritage, a suggestion some researchers have made.¹⁰² For Muta, such explanations only give a wrong impression of the matter and a biased picture of Africa, as “there is nowhere a claim seh a dance in Africa man stand up pon backs and jump off pon ooman” (SR 24: 6).

In spite of all his critique, one must realise that Muta doesn’t oppose the Dancehall beat or *riddim* per se, but the explicit lyrics which are (mostly) used on these riddims and “the culture that identify the music itself” (SR 23: 2). In the radio show, he usually plays tunes that are classified as Dancehall (concerning the instrumental’s beat or style) but contain positive and life-affirming lyrics such as in the song *Simple Blessings* by Tarrus Riley and Konshens. Let’s have a look at its lyrics:

Yuh spent all that money on your watch
How much time yuh spend wid your son?
So much money in the club
How much yuh spend wid the ones yuh love?
The simple tings are your blessings
Simple tings dem are your blessings, your blessings
Simple tings are your blessings
Hey, yuh nuh notice your blessings?
Yuh are picky wid the shoes pon your feet
Nah pick and choose the friends weh yuh keep
Yuh nah watch wah yuh eat?
When last yuh get a good sleep?
(Tarrus Riley/Konshens 2017)

Although Mutabaruka complains about the decadence of many of today’s Reggae and Dancehall producers and singers (since they sing off-key or don’t play instruments any longer) (cf. SR 35: 1), he is anything but a nostalgic person and knows about the importance of going with the musical flow:

Yuh have some people stock inna the 1970s! Mi love 70s, enuh! But Reggae evolve and younger people now say certain tings. And yuh haffi listen what dem a say! Yuh cyaan just cross it off so. Yuh waan dem remember history, but yuh don’t waan recognise what going to be history? Because the music today will be history tomorrow! Yuh understand!?! (SR 17: 4)

On the one hand, as depicted above, the forward-thinking Rastafarian admonishes people who only listen to old school Reggae from the 1970s. On the other hand, he also

¹⁰² Sonjah Stanley Niaah covers the connection with African dance patterns and their sexually charged movements (cf. Stanley Niaah 2010: 121f.).

reprehends Jamaica's younger generation, which doesn't expand its musical scope either, only listens to "tings weh inna fi dem age" (SR 28: 2) and doesn't even know about Reggae's preceding genres such as Ska and Rocksteady. Muta directly addresses the younger disc jockeys from Irie FM:

How can yuh work pon a radio station weh a deal wid Jamaican music inna all its genres, and the only ting yuh know about is the music weh prevail inna your time! Is madness! [...] White people tek the music and a play the music to a level! The African dem tek the music inna the side of Africa and a play! The Japanese dem tek the music and a play it in level! So dem know 'bout Rocksteady, dem know 'bout Reggae, and dem still a listen to Ska. [...] How is that possible, that yuh coulda have a Reggae radio station and the youth dem who deh pon the radio station, if yuh aks dem 'bout John Holt dem open up dem eye wide!? (SR 28: 3)

He draws a global comparison and concludes that youths from Jamaica (the country of origin) lag behind the historical knowledge and appreciation of Jamaican genres such as Dub or Ska existing overseas. By reporting on Austria's *Rise & Shine Festival* (a Dub festival Muta was part of in 2016) or by mentioning the plurality of Ska bands in North America (cf. *ibid.*: 2f.), he points to the global dispersal and local adaptations (or imitations) of Jamaican music. The outcome of what Carolyn Cooper calls the *glocalisation of Reggae* (cf. Cooper 2012: 3) is a global appropriation of the Reggae genre corpus in its manifold local specifications (or, as one may argue, a local appropriation of its global specification). However, Muta is not satisfied with the current state in Jamaica, as he mourns: "It hurt mi when mi see white people a talk 'bout the music and mi a say, 'how come Jamaican youth nah know 'bout the music dem way deh'?" (SR 28: 4)¹⁰³ In this context, the Rastaman suggests developing a class in Jamaican music for new radio operators and recommends investigative research on the Internet or in books (cf. *ibid.*: 2f.). Furthermore, he promotes what he calls a *South-South connection* between Jamaica's and Africa's Reggae and Dancehall acts. Instead of an orientation towards the North American music market, he feels confident that such a connection could be fertile due to the attention African artists receive nowadays:

Wi need fi direct wi attention to a South-South ting weh wi connect wid Africa! Becaw right now the youth dem inna Africa appreciate the music, enuh! Dem love the music! And right now there is more and more festival a gwaan inna Africa! [...] A dis time wi understand how important it is fi return to weh wi call Sankofa! To our tings, our Africanness! Food, cloth and music. Wi need fi revisit it inna very serious way! (SR 28: 1)

¹⁰³ In this respect, reference can also be made to the book *Everything But The Burden*, in which different voices speak about the appropriation of the Black American Hip-Hop culture by white people. (cf. Tate 2003)

Here, the host uses the West African emblem Sankofa, an Adinkra symbol of the Akan people. Its meaning is to learn from one's past (cf. Kuwornu-Adjaottor/Appiah/Nartey 2016: 26). In another broadcast from April 2016, when he reports on his trip to *Zion Radio* in Ivory Coast¹⁰⁴, Muta unveils the meaning behind this symbolism:

When yuh leave Jamaica and come out inna the world and see the positive influence of the Reggae music and Rastafari pon the world, is not the music weh a play right now inna the popular culture of Jamaica that do that. What wi see is a reversal! And wi nah fight against Dancehall music, because the Ivorians dem tell mi seh when dem listen to the Dancehall music a come from Jamaica, all dem a do is use the riddim and put fi dem kinda lyrics to it. The bredren him say there is no way dem coulda talk certain tings pon a record like weh dem hear the Jamaicans talk pon the record fi degrade ooman inna fi dem country. [...] Zion Radio was started to promote specifically Reggae music and Rastafari culture in the Ivory coast. And Zion Radio is like a likkle child to Irie FM, using Reggae music as its main musical genre to promote the radio station. [...] Dis will help to facilitate a wider and a more appreciative expansion of what the Africans dem doing in relationship to the Reggae Music and what wi have to offa now outside of the bling and the wing and the ting. The promoters is seeking to bring the youth dem into a certain clarity. And they have the feeling that the clarity can come tru Reggae music and Rastafari. [...] Maybe if wi follow that part, wi can save some of wi children dem. (SR 22: 3f.)

Muta wants the Jamaican artists (and their supporters) to reconsider the substance of their entertainment. In order to rethink the lyrical content of current Reggae songs, he suggests that Jamaican entertainers should look back (as in the Sankofan way) to Africa, their ancestor's home, and consider the Reggae that is made there. Reggae's original lyrics that address the liberation struggle is what Muta perceives as the genre's very essence and the reason for its major global breakthrough. When he speaks about Reggae's value, not only for Jamaica but on a universal level, it becomes clear that he misses the spiritual and consciousness-expanding component in the Dancehall music and culture:

Jamaica is almost like a beacon of hope and salvation fi whole heap a Caribbean, because our music has led the way. Our music in terms of militancy and hope for African people in dis part a the world, and lots of people who are suppressed all ova the world. Our music has created that level of tinkering and consciousness. [...] Jamaica is like that candle pon top a the dark mountain. And sometimes a candle pon a dark mountain, enuh, shine brighter than thousands of candles. Yuh nah see it? [...] Wi owe struggle ova the years to songs, poetry and action fi mek Jamaica be a light out deh for the oppressed. Our voices have been heard, our voices have been known to liberate people inna dem oppression. When the Berlin wall was coming down, it is Bob Marley song dem a sing. When mi a tour a Zimbabwe and South Africa, our poetry and our songs strengthen the people dem inna dem time of depression. (SR 47: 3f.)

¹⁰⁴ From time to time Muta visited Zion Radio, a radio station in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), and broadcast his two programmes Cutting Edge and Steppin Razor from there.



Image 16: Rebel Salute Reggae show (Source: Schwager 2009b)

Before I bring up religion in the next subsection, I want to emphasise the importance of a holistic reading of Dancehall. This thesis doesn't intend to confirm any form of negative clichés about Jamaican popular culture. Dancehall has indeed largely (and successfully) contributed to the struggle over power and space and to the negotiation of socio-political conditions in a postcolonial context. In reality, the Dancehall culture is all about symbolic capital. Dancehall had already been (during slavery) and still is a space or field for the marginalised and, at the same time, mainstream part of Jamaican society and its battles over power. Scholar Sonjah Stanley Niaah reminds of this continuity:

Whether on ship decks, in school rooms or shrubs, or on the streets, the enslaved and, later, the freed Africans or peasantry settling across the island of Jamaica, and especially in Kingston, occupied marginal lanes, river banks and gully (ravine) banks, not only for housing and subsistence, but for performance as well. Articulation of the self in these spaces was, and continues to be, potent, as their marginalization is at once their power. [...] Among the antecedents of contemporary dancehall are, for instance, both the slave ship dance (or limbo) and the plantation dances [...]. (Stanley Niaah 2010: 18)

However, from a Rastafari perspective, especially from a highly intellectual one such as Mutabaruka's, the Dancehall ethos (with its sexual, violent, materialistic, and superficial elements and values) is difficult to comprehend. Muta engages in this complex field with an

oppositional demeanour, which lets him interact with and participate in the practice of investment in symbolic capital. His involvement represents a quite common practice in the well-known confrontations between Roots Reggae and Dancehall artists or the genres' advocates.

4.3.3. European remnants: Christmas, church, and state

This subchapter outlines Mutabaruka's analysis of Jamaica's religious structures and his recommendations for the resumption and conservation of African (instead of European) values. Missionary activities and the bitter circumstances during and after transatlantic slave trade were conducive to the establishment of Christianity in Jamaica. After gruesome experiences during slavery and out of hope for a conversion of "their 'ownership' to God rather than their earthly masters" (Gordon 1998: viii), many African slaves (later freed) started to engage with Christian beliefs that were brought to them by either white European or Black American missionaries (who were mostly Baptist preachers), and by appointed slave leaders since the middle of the 18th century (cf. Chevannes 1994: 18; Gordon 1998: viii). Slaves transformed Christian ideas into an anti-slavery stance and began to follow their own approach to god. Apart from the Baptist belief that has continuously grown since that time, the so-called Myal religion had numerous followers and persisted in different forms now known as Revival (cf. Chevannes 1994: 17-22). Religion thus is a remnant of the region's colonial past. It is rumoured that Jamaica currently has the most churches per square mile of any country worldwide.¹⁰⁵ This rumour (which is quite possibly rather a fact) is also supported by Mutabaruka, as he told me in the interview:

Jamaica have the most churches per square miles, than any other country! [...] If yuh walk from here [meaning his house in St. Andrew; author's note] go to Kingston, yuh woulda find more than 25 church. 'Caw yuh have people weh a keep church inna dem yard, dem put up tent. Anywhe no church deh, dem going mek a church deh deh! (Interview 1: 14)

Here, the Rastaman appeals to different formations of Jamaican churches. Whereas the small nation-state has magnificent churches which were mostly built during the colonial era, many Jamaicans celebrate their mass in simple tents or cemented houses, as the observations during my field researches supported (cf. Image 17). Thus, relating to Jamaica's

¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, I was not able to find a proof or source for this common belief.

multiplicity of churches and (primarily Protestant) Christian believers, it is quite astonishing to Muta that Jamaica is on the list of the most criminal nations (cf. SR 10: 3).



Image 17: Jamaica Bible church (Source: Schwager 2008g)

Over and over again, he reminds his listeners of the upsetting history that Christianity – which he calls a “bloody religion” (SR 17: 3) – and its propagators manifest. In particular, he refers to the enslavement of Black people “inna the name of Jesus Christ and the pope of Rome” (SR 15: 5). Since his childhood, Muta (as he pointed out to me in the interview) is shaped by European history to which his mother introduced him through books and movies. Retrospectively, he is aware of the tremendous impact his mother had on his African-centred belief:

My madda used to carry mi go movies wid her. She like to watch the old movies dem ‘bout Queen Elisabeth I., Queen Victoria and the Black Plague and all these tings. [...] And my madda love fi read. She read a lot. So I connect all of those tings and I say, “but wait, where I used today fi mek I become who I am is not weh wi learn inna school! Is what mi used to hear mi madda say and the movies weh mi madda carry mi go.” And it strike I, because I never hear my madda talk about Africa, but she more deal wid European history! [...] Since wi a Rasta and since wi a search and since wi have articulate, it mek sense how wi coulda understand European history and how wi coulda see how Europe do weh

dem do to other places including demself! And also how wi must now look tru our own spectacle fi understand ourself, like Marcus Garvey say, “white man see god tru him own spectacle, Chinese see god, wi must see god tru our own spectacle, the god of Ethiopia.” (Interview 1: 9)

Knowledge transfer in European history as an integral element of his upbringing has constituted Muta’s habitus through which he was able to scrutinise and challenge specific European endeavours and notions. “Fi understand African history yuh haffi understand European history” (Interview 1: 9), he argues and hence debunks the oppressive European efforts that were used to enforce European values and religious denomination upon African slaves in Jamaica back then (and still today). Strongly inspired by Marcus Garvey’s suppositions about a Black god, Muta’s purpose is to be evocative of the European origins of Jamaica’s prevailing Christian traditions. Especially when it comes to celebrating Christmas, the radio host literally *burns fire* upon the European remnants:

Most a the holidays dem weh wi have is European give wi the holidays. Look pon Boxing Day. Boxing Day was a day when the aristocrats inna England and Europe, after the day of Christmas, dem box of what left and give the servant dem and the helper dem. Dem call it Boxing Day. Why the hell wi have Boxing Day as a holiday? [...] Why wi have to celebrate evriting weh European give wi and legitimise inna wi consciousness. The two major holidays inna di year is Christian holidays that were given to us by Europeans. There is nowhere in the Bible that tell yuh must celebrate Easter and Christmas. Nowhere. [...] Europeans come and give wi Easter and have a rabbit and leg egg. Santa Clause, the obese white guy who just deal wid children. And when him cyaan find the children, him stay upon the North Pole with some likkle short man. Him is not to be trusted. And yuh have people walking around wid Santa Clause hat pon dem head and dress up inna red and white fi Christmas. Dem do have nuttn fi do wid Jesus! Santa Clause more important to Christians inna Christmas or to Jamaicans in general and even to the Western world. Santa Clause tek presidence ova Jesus during Christmas. Uno nah see nuttn wrong wid that? That wi not have no snow and wi a dream of white Christmas and a tek white spray pon the glass like wi wanted it frosted. And a put up tree inna di house. Why the hell wi put up tree inna di house? What the tree inna di house haffi do wid Jesus? Inna di Bible inna Jeremiah him tell yuh seh, “don’t cut down the trees inna di forest and put it inna di house and put gold and silver pon it.” A Jeremiah tell the people dem that. Fi those who believe inna Bible. (SR 50: 10f.)

The reference to Jeremiah shows that Muta really knows the Bible and that he can cite particular passages in order to show the contradiction of certain Christian views and practices (e.g. the tradition of the Christmas tree). Even Muta’s daughter Ishiwawa remembered from her childhood that her father read the Bible over and over again. She stresses that his knowledge about the Bible makes him an unpleasant discussion partner for many Christians: “Some of the common Christians they may not really fully grasp his religious ideologies, because they are not as well-read as him. So, when he is arguing a point, they cyaan really match the point because they don’t have read extensively as him.”

(Interview 5: 2) Being obsessed with reading, Muta truly epitomises his guiding principle: “the more information is the more inspiration” (SR 38: 4).

In general, Muta regards Christmas as a business that accumulates economical capital, especially for Chinese and Indian businesspeople that live in Jamaica, which he considers as trailblazers in ruining authentic Jamaican craftsmanship. With a hint of sarcasm, he attacks them for importing faked Jamaican craft: “A Taione [meaning Taiwan; author’s note], a Taitwo, and a Taithree it come from. Made in China, made in Ankara and dem ting deh.” (SR 47: 12) Against this backdrop, Muta criticises free-market capitalism (cf. *ibid.*). He identifies the *Chiney man* as the biggest profiteer from the Christmas season: The local street hawkers buy products at the Chinese wholesale dealers and then sell them by retail. The radio host gives marginalised Jamaicans a voice by mourning their precarious situation and by demanding a satisfactory Christmas business for them (cf. SR 50: 2). Nonetheless, he exposes capitalism as the ruling global economic force and common motif for celebrating Christmas in Jamaica: “Most Jamaicans don’t celebrate Christmas, dem celebrate di almighty dollar. Dem just waan to see how much money dem can mek. From the Chiney man, the Indian man, the Black man, all a dem.” (SR 50: 3) The view Muta puts forward in his narratives is that the original intent of Christmas has dwindled away and, above all, that this celebration has never been based on facts, given that Jesus’ date of birth is unknown.¹⁰⁶ He recites: “No man name Jesus Christ never born at the 25th of December. Christmas have nuttn to do wid no man weh born 2000 years ago. Nuttn at all! It is a European construct, but everybody get caught inna it!” (SR 4: 1)

Muta tries to redefine resistance culture by negating European values and recommending an African-centred perspective. His resistance is also evident in the debate on Jamaica’s (political) mainstream perception of the country’s high days and holidays. Whereas Jamaica, under the direction of the Ministry of Culture, has annually celebrated the so-called *Reggae Month* in February in order to “highlight and celebrate the impact of the musical genre on the country’s social, cultural and economic development” (URL 60) since 2008, an official island-wide *Black History Month* funded by the government has in recent years failed to show (cf. URL 61). Overlapping with Reggae Month, Black History Month was once a month-long celebration of the achievements of Jamaica’s African-Caribbean population. Meanwhile, the islanders are more likely to follow what Muta considers as *white history*:

¹⁰⁶ For instance, Doggett debates: „Although scholars generally believe that Christ was born some years before A.D. 1, the historical evidence is too sketchy to allow a definitive dating.“ (Doggett 2006: 579)

365 days a year wi a celebrate white history. And yuh don't believe mi? Look pon the ooman down the road! Look pon the man dem down the road, inna the store dem! Listen to the politician dem! Look inna Parliament, if yuh nah see white history in deh. Look inna di church, if yuh nah see white history inna di church. Check your thoughts and tink seriously! Your consciousness! And if yuh not see is a white history yuh a celebrate?! The majority a the year wi a celebrate white history. And wi just say one month [referring to the Black History Month; author's note] and people a say, "dis is a American ting". The all Halloween nah American ting? And Thanksgiving? Uno nah see nuttn wrong wid dem tings deh? That evriting wi do, don't reflect wi as a people. And then wi have leaders, weh a guide wi into the same reflection of white people. And the politician dem and the church people dem nah tink no different. Dem just a push the food a likkle further, continuously. The politican promise yuh prosperity when yuh are alive, the preacher promise yuh prosperity when yuh are dead. Everybody a promise Black people ting and nobody nah come out wid the real ting. (SR 50: 11)

In addition, Mutabaruka debates the connection of politics and religion in Jamaica. He treats the seeming non-separation of church and state as an "European idea" (SR 15: 3) and, almost in a sneering way, he affronts the policymakers by alluding to the ecclesiastical connections of Jamaica's schools:

The church not suppose to be intertwined wid the state! Becaw the law of the land overwrite what the church a say! If a man do sup'm inna the church, and even though yuh might say, "bwoy him repent", the law a the land say, "watch yah, yuh haffi go a court get trial, and either yuh go a prison or yuh get hanged or sup'm." The church cannot decide who must go a prison and who mustn't go a prison! It is up to the state fi decide that! Even though the church have dem certain rules and regulation, the church cannot decide pon a statical [state-run; author's note] point, what is for the child in the school! [...] The state run by statical people, the church run by church people! Becaw if the church and the state going to be one, yuh going to have sup'm named theocracy, which is a problem! Theocracy is weh dem say god rule. So, is a government weh god rule. The only problem wid that is not god ago decide who must die and who mustn't die. Is a group of man sitting down inna the name of the church and decide that! [...] And right now inna Jamaica, wah wi find is that, because most of the schools dem is connected to a church, dem don't waan to accept certain people! [...] So wi a calling upon the state! Fi recognise the rights of a Jamaican student! [...] School is suppose to educate yuh. No brainwash yuh into a doctrine weh yuh a impose pon the people dem, weh enslave the people dem fi 500 years and more. 'Caw that is what it is doing. And the custodians of dis indoctrination is the same slave dem. So white people nah haffi deh yah again since slavery, enuh. Him just get some Black people, inculcate dem wid dem religion, dem Anglican, Roman Catholic and whatsoever other ting dem, put inna dem head and then now just send dem out deh inna the state. So yuh find seh weh dem a teach yuh religious education, is only Christianity dem teach yuh 'bout. (SR 15: 3-6)

The Rastafarian anchorman clearly differentiates between the duties and responsibilities of religious and political leaders as he takes no stock in a theocratical reign. In this regard, he argues for a separation of church and state and scathingly comments on the Jamaican government's theocratic comportment:

People stand up inna parliament a talk ‘bout Jesus and the Bible?! A theocracy dem waan put pon wi, enuh! Becaw anytime dem cyaan solve sup’m, dem start to turn to Jesus. Dem don’t waan to turn to Jesus, when evriting nice wid dem and it don’t go bad, enuh. [...] Is a indictment pon how dem see state and church. Church and state mustn’t mix! [...] Anytime yuh hear people start suggest that, is because dem don’t have solution fi the ting. And when dem say it, it nah go find no solution. ‘Caw within the human being the solutions pon human problems exist. Yuh cyaan go outside a human consciousness fi find solution that man create! Is man must find solution inna himself! So all the divinity weh yuh a look for, must be found in the humanity. That is weh divinity lies. When yuh find your humanity, yuh find divinity! There is no divinity outside of man or ooman, ‘caw is consciousness yuh a work wid. Consciousness did rise from human being, intelligence and understanding, based upon the environment weh him live inna. And if him cyaan control the environment weh him live inna, the environment going turn against him. As wi see in Jamaica! (SR 40: 5f.)¹⁰⁷

Muta contemplates about divinity in humans that helps to find remedy for challenges and issues. This mindset is shaped by the Nyabinghi experience and Muta’s spiritual approach towards Rastafari, as one can detect a resemblance. His approach is constituted by a notion of anti-supernaturality and a belief in the supreme being. Thus, for Muta, Haile Selassie is not a supernatural god, but is manifested in the human being itself in the so-called *I-an-I* spirituality. (cf. Mutabaruka 2006a: 30f.)

His anti-supernatural stance furthermore leads him to consider himself as the biblical Thomas, who, so the story goes, was Jesus’ distrustful disciple. In a debate about Christian preachers who offer miracle-evoking meetings in Jamaica, Muta announces:

I, Mutabaruka, and I resign a paper to it, is willing to cut off my locks and go to church, if one a those people can mek some a those man who have one foot mek dem foot grow back wid a miracle from god or Jesus! ‘Caw mi is a Thomas, enuh. Mi worse than Thomas, too. (SR 10: 1)

The biblical saga indicates that after Jesus Christ’s resurrection, Thomas met Jesus and was doubtful about the authenticity of his former leader until Jesus proved him wrong by showing him the nail-holes in his hands. “Thomas become one a the most devoted disciple, because him never just a believe, him waan know!” (SR 10: 2), Muta explains.

In a thought-provoking way, the radio presenter utters a carefully considered criticism of the Christian vestiges in society and the political elite. Due to his anti-Christian stance, he reaps a lot of criticism that was once articulated by a caller during the broadcast to the extent that Muta was called “satan incarnate” (SR 10: 1f.). While it gives the

¹⁰⁷ As a matter of fact, from former prime minister Portia Simpson-Miller to former Minister of National Security Peter Bunting, to current prime minister Andrew Holness, many Jamaican parliamentarians spoke about a *divine intervention* that would help to face Jamaica’s issues such as crime. That’s why Muta quizzically names Peter Bunting “Mr. Bunting the Divine” (SR 41: 5) and Andrew Holness “St. Andrew the Holy One” (SR 39: 4) or “St. Andrew of Holiness” (SR 31: 1).

impression that Muta is driven by such assertions of his opponents and thus constantly tries to craft even more controversial narratives, he generally takes criticism easy and focuses on the listeners who gravitate towards his programme:

Wi try fi heal the people dem wid certain meditation and certain tinkin. And wi try to really communicate to the people in a way weh wi best can communicate wid dem. ‘Caw wi nah come wid no degree fi journalism and no degree fi that. Wi just come as wi, and so wi a speak to yuh. Weh nah like it, bite it! A just so it go. And wi see seh the communication is real and people a gravitate towards the communication, whether uptown, downtown, or middleway. Some people don’t like how mi say the ting dem, some people prefer mi say it di other way. But wi cyaan do it di other way, if a so wi stay. (SR 50: 15)

This section has outlined that Muta promotes a self-determined conception of religion and spirituality, away from heteronomous practices but influenced by African experience and memory. Now let’s delve into his notion of Rastafari.

4.4. “A nuh likkle cult”: on Rastafari and Africanness

“It was Rastafari who was shouting for reparation! So, is not some lazy people weh siddung and just smoke ganja! Even though that is the expression that was there and is still there.”

Mutabaruka (SR 21: 4)

“Yuh know seh wi nah stop Black history month pon none a dem programme, enuh. Every month! So anytime yuh hear wi go inna certain tings, is because wi conscious of weh wi really waan bring cross to the people dem as it relate to dem African-centred perspective and dem Africanness.”

Mutabaruka (SR 34: 1)

“Is not no autobiography and no selected speeches of Haile Selassie did a guide Rastaman! Rastaman did a chat because him know of Haile Selassie as revolutionary and liberating force.” (SR 13: 7f.) Muta’s statement in a hot tempered reasoning with a caller about the origins of Rastafari hints at his personal conception of Rastafari, which emphasises an Afrocentric spirituality of liberation and a certain livity that goes along with it rather than religious and Bible-related argumentation. What I set out to do in this last chapter is to show, firstly, Muta’s perspective on Rastafari, secondly, his Rasta activism relating to the

reparation of the Coral Gardens incident and, thirdly, his notion of decolonisation, which coheres with his understanding and manifestation of Africanness.

4.4.1. The roots of the *original* Rastaman

The radio host's assumptions deviate from the tenets of other Rastafarian groups (or Houses) such as the Bobo Shantis or the Twelve Tribes of Israel. As mentioned in chapter 3.1.3., Muta turned away from the Twelve Tribes due to their insistence on a Black rendition of the Bible. During our interview, he revealed that the structured and religious character of Rastafari was not a feature that captivated him in the long term:

The idea of Twelve Tribes was kinda fascinating that here is a group of Rasta very structured organized. Whole heap a intellectual uptown youth, who coulda articulate Rasta in anedda level. Becaw, really and truly, a whole heap a Rasta, if yuh talk to dem, dem cyaan really articulate why dem is Rasta! The Twelve Tribes was structuring it. And coming from school, yuh waan to see that. But then after yuh start to dig deep, yuh realize seh structure is not it, it is the experience. And it wasn't allowing yuh to experience what is Rastafari inna its essence. Rastafari is a way of life, is a livity, enuh! And is not a livity as it relates to the dogmas and religious ideas of Christianity. It go outside and beyond Christianity. Is like a ancient person living in the present! [...] So, the Nyabinghi wasn't structured. But it was defining what I waan to see in Rasta! The experience! The experience of living in the bush, using woodfire instead a electric stove. The idea of planting a tree, planting vegetables and eat it. The idea of doing tings that yuh wouldn't normally do! The Twelve Tribes person study the Bible, read the Bible. That is studying Rasta, to come to a conclusion 'bout Rasta. The livity of Rasta is beyond religion, is beyond just saying "the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Conquering Lion of Judah, Emperor Selassie the First" and all studying the history of Ehtiopia now. Is a livity! [...] Is Rastafari come mek I know how fi chop coconut widout mek the wata spill! And is Rasta mek I know seh yuh have three eye inna the coconut. One soft yuh can dig it and drink out the wata outta it. So, is just some simple likkle tings, but is livity! And that is really what grab I! It move beyond just god. (Interview 1: 29f.)

In fact, as Muta also confirmed in the interview, the House of Nyabinghi clearly has influence on him. Its members follow similar principles and conceptions of the Rastafarian lifestyle. However, Mutabaruka cannot be categorised into any of the Rasta congregations. Instead, he is a unique and complex case with unusual and unorthodox opinions and is (as opposed to the majority of Rastas) less shaped by Christianity (although it is incorporated through his upbringing and socialisation), but even more so by Asian (or Eastern) philosophies (cf. Interview 1; SR 13; Zips 2011; Zips 2015: 116) in terms of his spiritual perception of what he defines the "Rastafari experience" (Mutabaruka 2006a: 29). Other Rastas hold against him that he is hard to classify. Priest Fego from the Bobo Shantis in Bull Bay, for instance, finds fault with him: "Muta show mi seh him is not Twelve Tribes, him is

not orthodox, him is not Bobo, him is not Nyabinghi. [...] Yuh cyaan be neutral inna dis ting yah, enuh. Yuh cyaan neutral inna dis war yah. Is a war, enuh. Either yuh deh pon god side or yuh deh pon satan side.” (Interview 4: 1) The radio host’s relatively free and unlinked view of Rasta is even perceived as very controversial within the Rastafarian community of Austria, as formless debates with two of Vienna’s figureheads revealed. They primarily criticised Muta’s anti-Bible demeanour.

It is important to realise that all the different Rasta Houses offer divergent ideas and pursue dissenting postulations of what Rastafari is about, how the movement started and who is identified as a Rasta (cf. Barnett 2005). In the focus of these versatile arguments is Haile Selassie I., who was proclaimed the Black people’s redeemer by the alleged founding father of Rastafari named Leonard Percival Howell. Muta explains his view on the origins of Rastafari as he talks to a Steppin Razor caller:

Before Haile Selassie was on the throne of Ethiopia, him did name Ras Tafari. Yuh have people inna Ethiopia and Africa who used to follow Ras Tafari before him name Haile Selassie. That is why yuh hear people say dem a Rastafari, meaning seh dem a follow Ras Tafari. [...] How Rasta a behave now, dem tun the ting in just a religion. Dem perceive and really validate Haile Selassie tru Bible. When dem quote the Bible dem say, “Haile Selassie say his foundation is in the holy mountain.” Haile Selassie never say nuttn like that! So, the reasoning is that yuh have some original Rastaman who couldn’t read and couldn’t write, but listen to Leonard Howell who say Haile Selassie ushering a new perspective in Black man redemption! And dis man going redeem Africa, dis man going redeem Black people outta white supremacy and slavery! [...] Now the people dem inna Jamaica who start follow Leonard Howell, dem a Christian minded people and dem a read the Bible, enuh. So in reading the Bible dem start to associate certain passages a the Bible wid Haile Selassie, like Revelation 5 and Psalms 87. Thus, when dem declare that now, dem start to feel like dem have to use the Bible fi validate dem perception of Haile Selassie. The Rastaman dem who I know, who nah read Bible, never use the Bible fi validate Haile Selassie nor use weh Haile Selassie inna the autobiography say and inna the selected speeches. Dem use Leonard Howell and then now dem start to troddin a ital livity, and inna that experience it start to open up a whole heap a nature arguments. (SR 13: 8f.)

The radio host points out that the coronation of Ras Tafari Makonnen as Haile Selassie I. on 2nd November 1930 in Ethiopia was perceived as the self-fulfilling prophecy for Jamaica’s downtrodden African diaspora and thus was the catalyst for the foundation of a Jamaican grouping that has ever since praised Selassie as the Black people’s redeemer and treated his coronation as the remedy for white supremacy.¹⁰⁸ In the quotation Muta reveals the Christian background of some of Jamaica’s early Rastafarians, which eventually has led to a more biblical interpretation of Selassie’s significance in many Rasta movements to this

¹⁰⁸ Although slavery was officially abolished in 1834, almost 100 years before, the miserable situation for Jamaica’s Black majority hadn’t changed a lot. Colonial power relations were maintained by white people and repressive measures were pervasive. (cf. Andwele 2006: 11f.)

day. But Muta also refers to the *original* Rastafarians who followed Leonard Howell's fundamental philosophical and theological arguments (about Selassie as the *Black god*, but without any reference to the Bible) and the incorporation of a natural way of life. In the so-called *Pinnacle* community in the parish of St. Catherine, which was the hub of the Rastafarian movement in the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s, Howell and his followers designed the principles that are still present amongst various Rasta groups: self-sufficiency, the practice of *oneness* and a re-education with an Afrocentric mindset (cf. Chevannes 1994: 121-124; Lee 2003: 143-151).

Nevertheless, due to its rebellious anti-church and anti-government proclamations, the nascent community faced pressure from the British monarch Queen Elizabeth II. and Jamaica's then-prime minister Alexander Bustamante, who eventually ordered a brutal *razzia* in Pinnacle in 1954 (cf. Lee 2003: 209-220), which heralded the beginning of the end. For years, Rastafarian communities all over Jamaica had then been exposed to atrocities carried out by the British colonial government and the early post-independence government of Jamaica (cf. URL 62). Muta recollects an absurd police training method which symbolically shows the Rastafarians' low standing in those days: "There was a time in Jamaica weh Rasta couldn't walk pon the road dem. And not only that, enuh. Whole heap a people don't know that the police inna Jamaica used to use the image of Rasta as target practice inna dem gun place to fire after." (SR 35: 5) There was tension between Rastas and the authorities and the public opinion in Jamaica was shaped by an insulting and dooming stance towards the Selassie-praising, ganja-smoking, and dreadlocks-wearing movement, as the host reports:

Rastafari from dem time deh get certain persecution. Rastafari get humiliation. Evriting weh bad fi happen to a Jamaican, happen to Rasta, by the society! There was a time when Rasta couldn't walk pon the road! And is not that wi did a scam nobody, becaw one a the times the only two tings dem coulda lock up Rasta for was ganja and badword [swearword; author's note], according to dem. As a matter of fact, the times dem when mi go a jail, a dem two tings mi go a jail for. Ganja and badword! (SR 12: 3)

Despite being a respected intellectual and radio presenter today, Mutabaruka was unjustly (briefly) imprisoned due to allegedly possessing ganja and using swearwords, the usual *Rasta motives* (cf. SR 12: 3; SR 46: 2). Whereas Muta believes that Rastafarians still are humiliated nowadays (cf. SR 12: 3), he fierily argues that the degradation of Rasta on a big scale had primarily lasted until Haile Selassie visited Jamaica; an incident which he regards as the proof of the movement's legitimation: "That was when Rastafari in dem own

soul became legitimised by that visit of Haile Selassie to Jamaica. Before that, in 1963 and in the 1950s there was a brutal war against the Rastafari faith. [...] So wi were brutalised, but now wi see that the struggle of a few has become the struggle of many!” (SR 22: 5)

Along this *struggle*, the revolutionary poet has been influenced by various Rastafari *bredren*, of whom he mentions a few in the Steppin Razor show. Two of Muta’s erstwhile companions during his time in the Rastafari community of the Twelve Tribes Of Israel are current PNP-opposition leader Peter Phillips and pan-Africanist Jerry Small, who (similar to Muta) hosts a talk show on NewsTalk93 FM. Muta remembers that Phillips and Small were responsible for shaping a Rasta mentality for the youth (including himself) in the early 1970s: “Between him [Peter Phillips; author’s note] and Jerry Small wi used to trod up and down. And Jerry Small a the only one weh left outta the whole heap a group deh. All a dem feel seh dem can go inna government go change the ting and tun the system demself.” (SR 21: 6) A lot of the former Rasta-inspired people such as Peter Phillips have later become involved in politics, which Muta doesn’t regard as a sphere to attain a conscious transformation. He complains about Phillip’s progression as a political leader, who (so Muta) seems to lose sight of his own Rastafarian past (cf. *ibid.*). One of the host’s longtime comrades is Prof I, a Rastafarian in the Nyabinghi tradition who, as the poet alleges, maintains “a certain ancient kinda way” (SR 12: 3) of how to live a Rastafarian life. As opposed to a mainstream conception, the notion of an *ancient* Rastafarian way implicates a certain livy and way of keeping spiritual gatherings, the so-called *Binghis*. According to Muta, such perception is practiced at *Redemption ground*, which is Prof I’s *yard* and community spot for reasonings and gatherings (cf. *ibid.*).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately, Prof I was not around when I visited the Redemption ground during the fieldwork in 2018.



Image 18: Ras Septon with dreadlocks (Source: Schwager 2008h)



Image 19: Marcus Garvey statue, St. Ann's Bay (Source: Schwager 2008i)



Image 20: Author with Bobo family (Source: Schwager 2018g)

4.4.2. “Yuh nah haffi love wi, but yuh betta respect wi”: about the Coral Gardens reparations

In his broadcast, Mutabaruka vehemently and emphatically reminds his audience about the Coral Gardens massacre of 1963, which is also known as *Bad Friday*.¹¹⁰ In the Coral Gardens-Rasta commune near to Montego Bay in the parish of St. James, a state-sanctioned offensive resulted in deaths and imprisonments of more than hundred Rastafarians (cf. Campbell 2014). In this context, Muta is evocative of the barbarity of the police and military back then and pleads for an official apology from politicians. Since this subject is one of his focal points in the episodes selected for this thesis, his activism for reparations deserves a further examination and is thus presented in this subchapter.

It is said that during the events of the Good Friday (respectively *Bad Friday*) weekend in April 1963, Rastafarians and agents of the state had traded armed blows following a fire at a gas station which was attributed to actions of Rudolph Franklyn and the local Rastafarian community. The then-prime minister Bustamante (again!) ordered the prosecution and a (dead or alive) capture of all Rastafarians and demanded their dreadlocks should be cut off – not only in the respective impoverished neighbourhood and Rasta encampment of Coral Gardens but across the island. Whereas the media had supported the government’s view that it was an unlawful uprising by the Rastas for a long time, the view changed to a perception that treats the occurrences as the outcome of a state-inflicted violence and systematic discrimination against the Rastafarian community. (cf. *ibid.*)

For years, in annual commemorations (cf. URL 63) Rastafarians and the whole of Jamaican society have looked back on these brutal assaults, remembered the victims and fostered (political) dialogue. To sceptics of these commemorations, Muta counters:

Wi might be chanting and keeping these commemorations every year and people might say, “what purpose it serve?” When Irie FM took dis march in 2013 and the rally on the road for the recognition of the Coral Gardens massacre, [where] wi did start from Ward theatre and move up to Mandela Park, it was one a the biggest rallys anybody has ever seen. Wi a say that the race is not for the swift! Dem say, the battle is not fi the strong, but is who can endure to the end. Well, mi know say sup’m a happen. Becaw if mi never know seh sup’m happen, mi woulda gone somewhere else. [...] Rastafari go tru all a dis tribulation and trials fi years! Fi years! But wi persuade and wi stand tall! And wi waan say to my Rastafari bredren and sistren dem, don’t mek the ting get yuh giddy and get yuh twisted, enuh!

¹¹⁰ The documentary film *Bad Friday: Rastafari After Coral Gardens* provides an inclusive insight into the events of that time and interviews with some of the victims (cf. Thomas/Jackson/Wedderburn 2011). A personal memory of the incident features Rasta elder Prince Elijah Williams in *Book of Memory: A Rastafari Testimony* (cf. Kuelker 2004).

Becaw there is a light at the end a the tunnel! Wi know! Wi nah aks nobody that! African people must find dem place inna the scheme of tings again! (SR 21: 4f.)

The Rastafarian mastermind reminds his listeners of the giant dimension of the 2013 protest march in Kingston that was organised by Irie FM, the Rastafari Millennium Council, the Coral Gardens Committee heads, and himself in order to raise consciousness in the nation about the compensation of the Coral Gardens massacre (cf. URL 64). He encourages his Rasta comrades to withstand and appeals for the support and participation of Jamaica's Rasta-affiliated Reggae artists: "The Rasta dem cyaan just a jump up and dung the place a stage show every day and don't really tek part inna sumting that is relating to the history of Rastafari!" (ibid.: 5) In Steppin Razor, Muta appears as a Rasta activist who steadily claims compensation as well as recognition:

I am calling upon the government of Jamaica to recognise the importance and significance of compensating the ones who is still here and apologise to the Rastafarian community. Because wi have already seen weh these atrocities against the Jamaican people by the state continue in different ways. [...] Rastafari is not a fringe group. Rastafari is one of the main characteristic of Jamaica! And a nuh likkle cult! When people a talk 'bout Rastafari is a cult. Mi nah inna cult business! Wi have contributed to the development of the Jamaican society holistically! Wi did come and a show the people dem healthy food, healthy lifestyle, when people a mock wi and a jail wi. And now wi see is part of the whole ting. [...] The two most visible face pon a t-shut right now mongst people who progressive and radical, Che Guevara and Bob Marley! Most place yuh go. If yuh go inna t-shut shop inna California, inna New York, inna Amsterdam, the two face dem who is most prominent is Che Guevara and Bob Marley! And is Rastafari shape Bob Marley! So Rastafari is not no fringe ting inna Jamaica. [...] (SR 30: 3f.)

Muta tries to rectify the inadequate image many Jamaican people (especially politicians and Christians) have about Rastafari, namely that it is a marginal movement in Jamaica's society. He wants people to realise that it was Rastafari that had shaped Bob Marley, who in turn made Jamaica a popular and internationally-known island. Therefore, in a broadcast from March 2016, he demands the recognition of the cultural momentum that Rastafari has built up over the years:

The Rastafari community is the community that has placed Jamaica on the map! Because if it wasn't for Rastafari, there would be no Bob Marley! So wi have to really go to the root and give thanks fi Rastafari that was able to shape and sanctify Bob Marley, that him could go out deh and put Jamaica pon the map! Rastafari has given the world weh dem waan to call a new cultural expression in relationship to weh dem woulda call a religion. The cultural expression of Rastafari has spread wide and far, near and top and bottom. Wi waan to say, Rastafari, undoubtedly widout any dispute, has made Jamaica into a cultural mekka! The culture of Rastafari has enabled Jamaica to be a cultural mekka! So, wi nah beg no one fi no respect! Rastafari respect is due! And respect must be given! (SR 21: 3f.)

Whilst addressing top-ranking politicians, he calls for respect and elucidates that the Rastafarian's quintessence has generated "a new concept of self as it come on to how African people see demself inna the Western world yah" (SR 35: 5). This concept is tantamount to the preservation of an Afrocentric self-confidence. Apparently Muta's assertiveness and activism turn to account: Following the pivotal commitment of public defender Arlene Harrison Henry and her extensive report on the Coral Gardens incident (cf. Barnett 2018: 149), a political handling of it (and, therefore, of Muta's long lasting activism) was eventually accomplished in April 2017, when the Jamaican government under prime minister Holness issued a formal apology to the Rastafarian community. Holness stated the government (which was from the same party as in 1963, namely the JLP) deeply bemoaned the incident from 1963, which should never have happened. Holness declared a compensation in form of a trust worth U.S. \$75,000 for the benefit of the attack's survivors. In addition, the prime minister promised that parts of the Pinnacle property became a protected heritage site under the Jamaican National Heritage Trust (cf. URL 65). What appears like a great achievement for the Rastafarian community and its long struggle for official recognition and respect illustrates only the beginning of the whole process, as Muta comments:

Apology is one, but the mending is the next. What yuh going to use to soap the ting is the next. But, I fi one accept the apology. Wi are going to see the next move between that and the government! What going to tek place now in order to what wi call compensate the remained victims of that atrocity! So, the struggle continue! (SR 37: 1)

The host gives a strong and comprehensible argument that acknowledging the injustice done to Rastafarians is only the first step towards the main goal which is to grant victims' compensation. By the end of July 2019, more than two years after the official apology, still no monetary compensation was delivered to the 40 Coral Gardens victims still alive (cf. URL 66). Thus, on the symbolic level Holness' promise for compensation may have been a success for the Rastafari movement, but the process is pointless until reparation is made through compensation. The political adoption (and thus recognition) of the Rastafarians' claims has indeed helped Rastas to accumulate symbolic capital. It is, however, the economic capital that matters in terms of compensation. Although it is no longer a forlorn matter, further action needs to be taken by the responsible decision-makers. Muta's aim is to attain the last facet of a three-level way towards reparation. In his opinion, at first an

apology is articulated, then a compensation is paid, and finally the compensation ipso facto has to result in reparation. (cf. SR 21: 3ff.; SR 30: 3f.)

In general, Muta considers the Rastafarian's long-lasting yearning for reparation as decisive for establishing a Caribbean reparation movement at academic and political platforms (cf. SR 21: 4). However, the reparation that is addressed in this context is of greater dimension, namely the reparation for the damage the African slaves had suffered during slavery and colonial-era days and for the atrocious consequences their Jamaican descendants have been confronted with.¹¹¹ Whilst addressing the United Kingdom and Spain, the two former colonial powers which have ruled Jamaica, the radio philosopher explains:

Reparation is when yuh accept the wrong that yuh did to a people, and then yuh do sumting about it! That is reparation! Reparation is not, "yuh ago lend mi money tru IMF, so that mi can build betta school." That a nuh reparation! That is a system designed by the capitalist state to deal wid economics and social order. Reparation is, "yuh did sumting to my foreparents so yuh really sorry seh that tek place and yuh ago mend it." That is reparation! Steppin Razor! (SR 14: 4)

Having been on the agenda of many Rastafarians for a long time, the plea for such a reparation has recently entered manifold spheres, e.g. Caribbean sports activities such as the *CARICOM Reparations Youth Baton Relays and Rallies*. Muta reports on the sports event and argues as follows:

It is a run to sensitise Jamaica and the argument for reparation for that atrocity that was done in slavery days. Wi believe that Europe, especially Britain, France, Spain, owe the people dem who was traumatised and are still traumatised for the atrocity that was done. The worst atrocity that ever was done against a people. And dis reparation run is part of the sensitisation of people of Jamaica. 'Caw whole heap a when yuh talk about reparation they don't know what yuh are talking about. Some people mix up reparation wid repatriation. When dem say reparation they mean repatriation. When dem say repatriation dem mean reparation. But the both a dem come hand in hand. But the one is different from the other. Reparation means yuh ago repair what was done to the people. (SR 47: 1)

At this point, Muta mentions another crucial aspect of the Rastafarian demands besides reparation, namely claiming a physical return to the motherland of Africa, also called *repatriation* (cf. Zips 2006b). A long time ago, Rastas started to claim reparations and repatriation in order to rectify the historical evil of slavery and colonialism. Primarily through famous Rastafarian Reggae artists, the demand for reparations and repatriation for the descendants of Africans (who were oppressively disconnected from their continent

¹¹¹ Beckles' *Britain's Black Debt* provides an in-depth discussion of Britain's slave markets and reparations in the Caribbean (cf. Beckles 2013).

during the transatlantic slave trade) has been made opened to the public. In recent years, Reggae artist Chronixx was one of the protagonists singing about it, as the lyrics of his song *Capture Land* mediate:

America, a capture land
The whole a Jamaica, a capture land
A long time dem waan trick the Rastaman
Like dem nah know seh that man a real African
Yuh tink mi nah memba King Ferdinand
And thieving Columbus have a golden plan
Dem mek a wrong turn and end up in Caribbean
One rass genocide kill nuff Indian
And turn paradise in a plantation
And bring cross one ship load a African
Now here comes the thieving Queen from England
No she Carmwell and envy mother
Century pon top a century full a sufferation
And after four hundred year mi see no reparation
And now dem waan fi kill wi wid taxation
But I beg yuh, please take mi to the motherland
I beg yuh carry mi go home
And bring mi round a East
'Caw man a Rastaman
And Rasta nah live pon no capture land
(cf. Chronixx 2014)

Nowadays, the same postulations are demanded by the Caribbean political alliance CARICOM and Caribbean academics. In 2014, CARICOM declared a *Ten Point Plan for Reparatory Justice*, which calls for regional rehabilitation programmes, formal apologies, and repatriation rights, et cetera (cf. URL 67). These programmes and activities are supported by famous scholars such as Jamaican professor of social history Verene Shepherd, whom Muta calls his “favourite radical” (SR 43: 7). Ultimately, as the radio host points out, one can recognise a regional political and academical adoption of the Rastafarians’ plea for reparation and repatriation. An official political agenda can help to realise their postulations. In the course of a formal meeting with UK’s then-prime minister David Cameron in 2015, Jamaica’s former leader Portia Simpson-Miller tried to raise the issue of reparations, which, however, was ignored by Cameron (cf. URL 68). Muta is deeply upset by Cameron’s ignorance and his attempt to repress the matter of slavery reparations (cf. SR 14: 6f.) and he animadverts that former slave owners were paid compensation up to the amount of 20 million pounds after the abolition of slavery:

Our colonial master, after taking us from Africa, when him decide seh him ago free the African people dem from slavery, him give the backra master [slave master; author's note] 20 million pound fi compensate from the loss of work force! Him give the slave owner 20 million pound! Now when him give dem the 20 million pound, dem say, "alright, slaves! Uno free!" [...] Now, when the man let wi go inna country weh wi nah own no land, him never get the 20 million pound and say, "mek him send dem back a dem land, enuh, mek dem repatriate to Africa." Becaw dem come not by free will, but by force! And if dem come by force, and wi let dem go pon a land weh a nuh fi dem own, wi nah give dem no land, wi nah give dem no nuttn fi defend fi demself, what dem going to turn? Dem going to turn scammer! Larceny! All the tings dem weh yuh don't waan and don't like, it going to breed dis people! Becaw uno never send mi go back a Africa! (SR 14: 2f.)

However, success was achieved when the University of Glasgow (Scotland) signed the first formal act of reparation for the Caribbean in form of a 20 million pound contribution to the new Glasgow-Caribbean Centre for Development and Research in July 2019. It will be operated by the University of the West Indies and the University of Glasgow, guided by the principle of reparatory justice for the victims of slavery and colonialism and will deal with research in a reparative context. Before this decision, the University of Glasgow had acknowledged the millions of pounds it received from the proceeds of slavery. (cf. URL 69)

In this light, Muta is very proud of his Rastafari *bredren* and *sistren* who have led Jamaican people (or the African diaspora in general) to the construction and comprehension of Africanness and (diasporan) African redemption: "And when everybody seem to waan to forget dem Africanness, it is the Rastafari bredren and sistren that is reminding the Jamaican people that, 'look here man, don't cut off your umbilical cord!'" (SR 21: 4) In order to describe the intimate connection between Jamaica and the African continent, Muta uses a somatic allegory, the umbilical cord. This allegory had already been used by Nelson Mandela during his public speech in Harlem in 1990 when he referred to the relationship of Black Americans and Black South Africans (cf. URL 70). Similarly, famous Black American sociologist and intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois speaks about this transatlantic (or rather global) bond in his autobiographical text *Dusk of Dawn*:

On this vast continent were born and lived a large portion of my direct ancestors going back a thousand years or more. The mark of their heritage is upon me in color and hair. These are obvious things, but of little meaning in themselves; only important as they stand for real and more subtle differences from other men. [...] But one thing is sure and that is the fact that since the fifteenth century these ancestors of mine and their other descendants have had a common history; have suffered a common disaster and have one long memory. [...] But the physical bond is least and the badge of color relatively unimportant save as a badge; the real essence of this kinship is its social heritage of slavery; the discrimination and insult; and this heritage binds together not simply the children of Africa, but extends through yellow Asia and into the South Seas. It is this unity that draws me to Africa. (Du Bois 2007: 59)

Rastafarians have certainly been pioneers in raising awareness of this *kinship* or social and mental heritage, as demonstrated by Du Bois. Not exclusively but predominantly on Jamaican soil, the Rastas' travails have evoked a collective memory and consciousness that highlight diasporan history and implicate an identification with Africa. Muta verifies the necessity of returning to an African identification: "Rasta had become a beacon of hope for the salvation of the Jamaican people, who must recognise demself eventually as African people!" (SR 12: 3) In this regard, the poet approves of *decolonising* notions and practices in order to dispose of the heteronomy and (post)colonial remainders. Let's observe his narratives relating to that subject in the next subchapter.

4.4.3. **"The slave mill still a gwaan": the decolonisation of (post)colonial realities**

Mutabaruka doesn't pursue a rhetoric that is too radical, as other pan-Africanists do. For instance, American Black nationalist Malik Zulu Shabazz, who had a call-in interview with Muta during the Steppin Razor show in August 2017, talked about a military preparation of the US-based New Black Panther Party "for the big war that is to come" (SR 42: 1). Although Shabazz, who is even rated a racist and extremist in the *Extremist Files* of the Southern Poverty Law Center (cf. URL 71), didn't elaborate his statement, one can suppose that he alluded to a (Black) war against white supremacy and white racism in the USA. American anthropologist and pan-Africanist James Small, who also had an intensive interview with Muta on air in 2016, spoke of a war between the US-police forces and the Black community and in this context promoted an economical war, which he stated would be the economic boycott of white American businesses by Black people (cf. SR 27: 5f.).

Even though Mutabaruka is a militant voice and an advocate for socio-political causes, he is neither a bigoted activist who denigrates white people nor a segregationist who supports physical violation. Moreover, the philosopher discerns the need for resurrecting consciousness and knowledge of (African) history, which consequently reconstitutes an African integrity for (Jamaican) people of African origin. For this reason, as presented in this thesis, he doesn't concur with most of the westernised (colonial) ideas and thus contextualises them in the realm of (political, economical, sociocultural, religious) *decolonisation*.

A decolonisation is reflected in the fact that he debates renaming Jamaica's roads and parishes since their names represent the colonial past (cf. SR 9: 1).¹¹² He also talks about the so-called *Rhodes Scholarship*, a prestigious studentship for the University of Oxford that is named in honour of white supremacist and imperialist Cecil John Rhodes:

Cecil Rhodes kill off thousands of Africans. The place is now called Zimbabwe. It was once called Rhodesia after Cecil Rhodes who killed thousands of people, like King Leopold inna the Congo. But Black people very proud fi get the Cecil Rhodes scholarship. Wi love when wi are honoured by our slave masters. When our slave masters honour wi, wi feel good. When our Jamaican people honour wi, wi say, "cho, is a likkle local honour that." (SR 9: 1)

Muta tries to educate his audience by critically analysing issues that are usually considered as good in mainstream thinking, such as awarding the Rhodes Scholarship. Such considerations are part of his notion of mental decolonisation: "The slave mill still a going and the slavery still exist. If is even in our mind, it still exist." (SR 45: 12)

When it comes to politics, he discusses the colonial residues of the British crown. Since Queen Elizabeth II. as the *Queen of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms* owns the land of any of the 16 Commonwealth territories, technically speaking, she also reigns over Jamaica. Muta is worried since the Queen could reclaim her crown land at any time. (cf. SR 23: 1)¹¹³ As mentioned earlier, the ownership of land is an important and emotional topic for Muta. One of the dictums he presents in the context of decolonisation and the struggle for sovereignty and self-governance is *Land is power*, which he had already picked out as a central theme for his poem *Big Mountain*:

dont let di whiteman tongue fool yu
dont let his paper cool yu
dont let his fire water get u down
stand up and fight for your piece of ground
stand on big mountain its your ancestors earth
land is power without it life has no worth
stand on big mountain you'll have to be strong
good must overcome the struggle is long

in afrika and asia he went to civilize nations
yet in the land of liberty and justice he has reservations

¹¹² Unaltered since the pre-independent era, Jamaica has been divided into 14 parishes. For instance, the parish of St. James was given its name in honour of King James II., who was the reigning monarch in the 17th century. The parish of Hanover was named in honour of the British monarch George I., who was from the House of Hanover. (cf. URL 72)

¹¹³ Surprisingly, since 2003 there have been regular proposals by Jamaican politicians for a constitutional amendment to make Jamaica a republic and replace the Queen with a president as head of state. Most recently, Andrew Holness has added this attempt on his legislative agenda in 2016.

on the big screen he played his silly game
usin the image of john wayne
robbin and rapin he stole the land
refuse and resist the whiteman plan
(Mutabaruka 2005: 24)

The poem addresses the imperialist invasion of the Indian reservations by white oppressors in the USA. In a broadcast from November 2017, shortly after Robert Mugabe's ousting as Zimbabwe's president, Muta lets his listenership know what his favourite slogan implies:

Mugabe is the only leader weh decide seh him waan tek back the land fi the people dem. And dem put a embargo [and] sanctions pon him country, mek it look like seh is because him wicked why the people dem not inna good economical situation. But wi must remember seh the American and the British dem do that wid everybody. And mi see dem a dweet all ova the world. [...] Most a the wars dem that have been fought pon earth is fought ova land. People desire is to own land. And when white people go into your country is land dem a search. Land, land, land! When Columbus come a Jamaica first, is the land dem waan fi dig up fi find gold. When America go into Iraq, is land dem go deh fi control. So, land is power. If yuh don't have no land, yuh don't have power. (SR 45: 5)

Although he refers to the colonising and invading countries, Muta is aware of the slogan's positive ulterior motive. Following in Garvey's footsteps, he emphasises the socio-political and economical importance of land ownership for Black people. In spite of claiming that Mugabe should have resigned a long time ago, Muta seemingly appreciates how the former Zimbabwean ruler (who died in September 2019) had exerted himself for the political implementation of pan-African visions and notions such as land ownership. Instead of parroting the Jamaican (and Western) mainstream view, Muta tries to throw a different light on Mugabe's political philosophy and its treatment in the Western world:

In Jamaica it's not a popular line fi defend Mugabe, especially amongst people who claim politics. But wi nah care, because wi see weh dem do to the people dem and our people when mi talk 'bout defend land! When Mugabe did a tour the line, dem did a love him up and hug him up and give him all "Sir". But from dem realise seh him ago tek weh the land from the white people dem now, him is no longer whatsoever him is. Him is denounced as a terrorist. Yuh understand? If yuh check the history a America and England, the leaders dem get denounced as tyrants when dem nah support their regime. (SR 45: 14)

Mugabe's practice of politics had been regarded as very controversial and still is after his death. Especially in the Western media, he has been portrayed as a corrupt despot (cf. URL 73). Of course, no one should accept the many deaths for which Mugabe was reportedly responsible for. However, whilst dismantling the postcolonial practice of Western countries,

Muta wants his listeners to recognise the courage Mugabe had as a pan-African Black leader to dislodge white control and mastery in Zimbabwe.¹¹⁴ In general, the host identifies the deliberate downgrading of African leaders through the Western media:

But I hear people still a put Mugabe in a light because of these white media weh feed dem news 'bout African leaders. Just like how dem tell yuh 'bout Gaddafi, Idi Amin, Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Jomo Kenyatta, all a dem. The only one that white people love is Nelson Mandela. And yuh see the one who the white people dem love, Black people dem love dem, too. The one who the white people dem hate, Black people hate dem, too. Uno nah see sup'm wrong wid that? [...] Why is it that every time African leaders look out fi dem country and the interest a dem country, it turn out like seh dem is evil and dem is painted evil. [...] Dem a listen to BBC, CNN, Fox Channel. All a the channel dem weh support white people ting. And then now dem form dem view off a all a the African leaders dem. Show mi one African leader inna Africa right now, weh dem media don't vilify, except Nelson Mandela?! (SR 45: 4f.)

Whilst Muta abhors such a negative and deprecativ representation of African leaders, he forces his audience to critically reflect on the prevalent media display and demands that Black people question their opinions imitated from the white media.¹¹⁵ He mentions that Nelson Mandela is the only positive example that news services such as BBC, CNN and Fox Channel appoint. "Dem waan everybody to be like Nelson Mandela!" (ibid.: 13), Muta wonders about the exaggerated adoration of the former South African president, whom he rather deems a Western world's stooge (cf. SR 45: 5, 7). By comparing ownership in South Africa and Zimbabwe, he unveils that whereas in South Africa white people still own the land, due to Mugabe's efforts the Zimbabwean land now belongs to Black people (cf. ibid.: 7f.). One may now consider Mutabaruka's statements as exorbitant Black and white portraits with potential racist tendencies. Such a speculation is, however, smoothed out by the keen thinker as he showcases his view on racism:

Racism is a philosophy that says that yuh don't like another racial group because the group is destined to be inferior. And yuh use your influence a power to hold sumting ova that group. Racism cannot be widout power. It is power that drives racism. Economical, social and political power. If yuh don't have the means by which to decide another race's standing socially, economically and politically, it

¹¹⁴ Mugabe's political philosophy is also known under the term *Mugabeism*, as described by Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni: „Mugabeism as form of populist reason is a multifaceted phenomenon requiring a multi-pronged approach to decipher its various meanings. At one level it represents Pan-African memory and patriotism and at another level it manifests itself as a form of radical left-nationalism dedicated to resolving intractable national and agrarian questions. Yet, to others, it is nothing but a symbol of crisis, chaos and tyranny emanating from the exhaustion of nationalism.“ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009: 1154)

¹¹⁵ Without reflection, white (or Western) media oftentimes represents a view of certain situations and news, via which it contributes to the maintenance of a white hegemony within the Black/white polarisation. Zips and Kämpfer argue that Black nationalists are presented as *hate teachers*, although they aim to tackle the social unbalance and seek justice. Suchlike medial and political attributions seem to be inappropriate. (cf. Zips/Kämpfer 2001: 27f.)

cannot be racism! [...] When white people create societies and structures, so as to keep demself as supreme, wah dem call white supremacy, and white supremacy maintain itself tru power! So, there is no argument about Black people being racist! How the hell Black people can be racist and dem don't have no power to decide the economical and political welfare or wellbeing of other races. As a matter of fact, wi are the only group of people that cannot decide the political, economical, social condition of any other group of people! [...] Whether in a society as a nation or as a group of people, superior mean yuh are above a group. Black people is in no position to decide any other race political or social order! If I talk pon the radio and a talk seh, "look what likkle white people do to wi", people start to say, "bwoy, Muta is a racist weh him a talk 'bout white people". How can talking about white people mek yuh a racist? Racism is not talking. Racism is when yuh act, when yuh decide seh your race is superior to the next race and then yuh use power. [...] I talking about white people or Black people talking about white people or white people talking about Black people, it may have racial slurs, but it don't reach racism! [...] I don't know of no Black people as a group of people can decide seh 'bout no group of white people nor a group of Chiney people. Yet still, racism ova the years fi hundreds of years have decided how wi function in earth and has kept us down and oppress us. (SR 18: 6ff.)

Muta suggests a definition that considers racism as an oppressive practice to enforce subordination, exclusion, and stagnancy. However, talking alone doesn't constitute racism. As Zips writes, Muta understands "race" as an impregnable historical distinction between Black and white (cf. Zips 2015: 118). This correlates with the strong influence his favourite book *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* has had on him. Its dramatic phrases concerning racism and the animosities in the USA back then (cf. Haley 1999) have had a lasting effect on the philosopher.

Concerning the notion of decolonisation, he analyses the problematic nature of the subordination of so-called third world countries (such as Jamaica) to more powerful nation-states, as has already been briefly pointed out. Muta debates this phenomenon in the context of an Anglo-American sociocultural and geopolitical penetration and, first and foremost, in the process he snarkily speaks about globalisation:

Globalisation is the raping of your food and eating habits. That is what globalisation is. It mek yuh become like a zombie to what they place in front of yuh to put in your mout' to eat. Dem call it fast food. Kill yuh quick! Globalisation is what yuh do when yuh go to your bed and who yuh go to your bed wid at night, whether yuh are a man and yuh go to bed wid a man or yuh is a ooman and yuh go to bed wid a ooman. [...] Globalisation don't allow sovereignty of people of different historical background or different cultural perspectives. It put yuh under one order. That is what it is. It put yuh under one order, economical, social, political, religious, sexual and any other "al" yuh can find come under that. Terrible ting, and wi haffi watch it! Because Africa is weh dem a really pinpoint yah now. All roads lead to Africa, that is what is happening. (SR 22: 6)

Similar to Muta, Jamaican anthropologist Donald Robotham regards globalisation as a hierarchy-reinforcing and hegemony-generating process, which is determined by political, economic, and cultural power games (cf. Robotham 2000a: 2). Robotham ascertains the

following: “This global racial-cultural hierarchy places Anglo-American culture at the apex and Sub-Saharan African culture at the base. Hegemony is exercised, first of all, within the complex racial and cultural hierarchies internal to the United States and Europe, and through this route, extends itself globally.” (ibid.: 3) This conforms with Muta’s arguments about globalisation and its evocative *one order*. Furthermore, Muta’s notion of sovereignty resembles the philosophy of Marcus Garvey, who pursued a similar conception of a (Black) nation’s sovereignty (cf. Martin 1986: 36, 105). Garvey’s trite yet penetrative slogan was to “never be a race of servers, but a race of sovereigns” (ibid.: 105). The Rastafarian host recognises such a sovereignty of current African leaders concerning the antagonism they exhibit against the intention of Western countries to force African nations into laws of same-sex marriage or more liberal gay and lesbian rights (cf. SR 22: 6).¹¹⁶ In this connection, he contextualises the matter with Jamaica’s situation by means of an analogy with the treatment of slaves:

Imagine, dem [the former slave drivers; author’s note] give wi a book and tell wi seh, “lookyah, the ting [homosexual activity; author’s note] not suppose to work da way deh.” And now dem turn to these slaves, these uneducated slaves, and say, “lookyah, uno betta work it out!” So, what must wi tink?! [...] Because a in deh so [in the Bible; author’s note], these, weh dem woulda call, uneducated, backward, former slaves got their ideas from. And is the Europeans who give dem that book! So, how come now, when the former slaves start to read it and realise seh “but dis ting cyaan work out so”, yuh hear say, bwoy right now the former slaves is homophobic! Homophobic, that is weh dem call wi! Terrible, terrible, terrible. (SR 11: 5)

Furthermore, Muta addresses the international (political and medial) pressure that is already put on Jamaica in order to conform to an internationally acknowledged morality that is regarded, mainly by Anglo-American countries, “as an important marker of civilisational status” (URL 75). Homophobic thinking is indeed anchored in the habitus of many Jamaicans. Since the habitus is persistent, it is not easy to change a mindset that has been part of the socialisation for the last few centuries (!). The long-standing culture of opposing homosexuality is based upon people’s historical socialisation, which, as Muta points out, had primarily been shaped by the British slave drivers’ mind control practices and the forced devotion to the Bible.¹¹⁷ Since many of the former British colonies still maintain the legal

¹¹⁶ For many African countries, e.g. Uganda, a legal adoption of the decriminalisation of same-sex practices not to mention marriages is unimaginable and the pressure from Western countries to do so (and, hence, the aid cuts by those) is oftentimes regarded as a hegemonic ambition and an approach of keeping African countries dependent. (cf. URL 74)

¹¹⁷ The reasons for the present-day anti-homosexual disposition are very complex. Helber provides a detailed review of the convergent socio-historic and (post)colonial aspects (cf. Helber 2015).

code that is known as the *buggery law* – a legislation that defines anal intercourse as unnatural and penalises it with imprisonment for up to ten years (cf. Offences Against the Person Act 2014: 26)¹¹⁸ – statutory regulations reinforce a homophobic stance. It thus seems paradoxical when international pressure comes from a country such as the United Kingdom, which in the past laid (or forced) the foundation for such a mindset. However, as recent international reports reveal (cf. URL 76), the social climate and situation for the LGBTQ community in Jamaica has improved in recent years and it seems as if acceptance of homosexuals will become more common in Jamaican society. Yet, the removal of the archaic law appears to be a lengthy process as it is still unpopular among Jamaican society and might be a possible backlash for parties when it comes to elections. It is therefore interesting that promising attempts were made by former prime minister Portia Simpson-Miller. The PNP-affiliated politician had raised hope for the LGBTQ collective, when she announced to revisit the buggery law during her 2011 campaign (cf. URL 77). In retrospect, however, her statements seem to have had another (superior) intention, namely to sustain the aid-relationship with the pro-gay foreign governments such as Jamaica's former colonial motherland, the UK. Muta rebukes Simpson-Miller for her empty promises:

There was sumting going on three years ago weh the prime minister of England did say, that dem going to retink aid to countries that is homophobic and weh governments don't recognise the rights of the gay community. So she play into that by saying that! And now wi don't hear she say nuttn more 'bout it. [...] Why she say that originally is not because of the Jamaican situation! She say that because at the time David Cameron and him friend dem declare seh if uno keep discriminating against gays, wi going to draw in and withhold aid from uno! So she had to say that! (SR 7: 7f.)

Muta uncovers the main reason for the prime minister's promise, which was that then-UK prime minister David Cameron intended to withhold aid from anti-gay countries. The poet gets to the point: "And if yuh don't accept that, dem want to now create problems fi your economy, becaw dem have power. So dem can decide your moral or ethical perspectives." (SR 41: 2) As stated before, such courses of action by Anglo-American countries clearly show an attempt to maintain their hegemonic status and hierarchical superiority and to retain a dependent condition for the (in their view, inferior and backward) aid-receiving nations. It displays, as Raymond Smith argues, "[that] small nations are pawns in a game that is played by others." (Smith 1988: 178)

¹¹⁸ In fact, the law, which officially is called *The Offences Against The Person Act*, doesn't formally interdict homosexuality per se, nor does it prohibit a lesbian or gay lifestyle. However, anal intercourse is one of the main activities associated with same-sex intimacy and that's why gays and lesbians are technically more likely to be charged with the offence of that law.

It should be noted that although Mutabaruka is shaped by a heteronormative ideology and manifests scepticism about societal progressions relating to transgender identities or the exaggerated televising propaganda of same-sex couple households (cf. *ibid.*: 2f.), he does in no way denounce homosexuality or disregard the LGBTQ community. In reality, as the latter quotation shows, he respects their issues and debates them on air. He publicly criticises the ubiquitous, intolerant mindset of Jamaican people and calls for a review of their crude attitude. (cf. SR 18: 13)

Nevertheless, Muta doesn't mince his words and would reprehend gay people if they acted maliciously. A problem he regularly alludes to is the wrongdoing of the homeless gay prostitutes in the infamous red light district of New Kingston, an uptown area of Jamaica's capital (cf. SR 4; SR 20). Funnily enough, in this debate Mutabaruka becomes a voice for female prostitutes, as is evident in a broadcast from December 2014:

And I waan give a cry out fi the female prostitutes! The female prostitutes tell mi seh, "Muta, the bwoy dem [alluding to the gay prostitutes; author's note] come pon the road and a tek away job. Enuh, wi haffi a fight man fi dem!" [...] Dem nah easy when dem siddung deh say, "Mutabaruka, mi listen to yuh pon the radio all the while, enuh, yuh haffi tell dem seh must stop tek ova our corner so, enuh, 'caw dem have no pickney fi feed!" The ooman dem a complain to mi. [...] So mi just a warn the people dem who is in authority! There is a bomb that is going to explode in that area of Kingston! Yuh have the youth dem right now who is creating havoc in New Kingston wid dem gay lifestyle inna the gully. And also now dem coming up pon top a the road fi come terrorise people wid dem situation! The authorities need fi rectify that red light district in New Kingston. (SR 4: 3)

The Rastafarian calls for a rectification of the milieu's situation. As one can recognise, he vouches for everybody who is in a precarious situation, even for sex workers.

This section has offered insights into Muta's views on Rastafari and reparation and presented his notions of decolonisation. Through an epistemological emphasis on the Steppin Razor radio show and its commentaries and through reconstructing history and embedding it in a socio-political context, I tried to show that Muta's narratives play a part in decolonising social colonial impositions and strains and in challenging the hegemonic Western system of knowledge and power. He is determined by an anti-white supremacist stance he has accumulated since his encounter with Black Power and Rastafari (cf. chapter 3.1.). The externalisation of Muta's habitus becomes apparent by his constant agency to demand justice towards African-Caribbean people. The Rastafarian thinker attaches an Afrocentric perspective to his considerations as he accounts for a disposal of the condition *deformed* by white dominance and white supremacy.

5. Conclusion

By means of his weekly platform, the Steppin Razor radio show, Mutabaruka dissects existent societal values and ideals, religious norms, domestic issues, and international affairs. However, as he is an insurgent host, he mostly assails Jamaica's political elite and its corrupt and malfunctioning political practice. He regards the majority of politicians as current colonial masters who maintain an oppressive and hierarchical system that resembles the structures of slavery when African slaves had been the victims of relentless white colonial rulers (cf. chapter 4.1.). For Jamaica, a country that has been strongly affected by the exploitation and indoctrination of the British colonial regime until now, Mutabaruka is a role model who acknowledges the responsibility to uphold a collective consciousness that is inspired and shaped by an Afrocentric ideology as opposed to the imposed Western model of thinking. Without following Black chauvinism and abstruse concepts, the avowed Rastafarian emboldens the deprived, non-elite, and subordinated part of Jamaica's society to overcome any one-dimensional and Western-modelled mindset (relating to class, skin colour, religion, gender, sexuality, etc.), to inspect the causes of unequal social conditions and, particularly, to reclaim and pursue self-empowerment. He articulates and pursues his own politics of resistance, difference, and African resilience for the poor, marginalised and oppressed.

Being a *watchman for the people*, he awakens his listenership to recognise slavery and colonialism as part of the global narrative in no way consigned to history. In fact, Mutabaruka makes his listeners aware of current and past geopolitical actions undertaken by so-called superpowers in order to destabilise and control *smaller* nations (such as Jamaica). In this context, especially by addressing the inglorious deeds of the USA, China, and (ex-)colonial power Great Britain (cf. chapter 4.1.4., 4.2.1., 4.2.3., 4.4.3.), he invites his audience to critically reflect upon dissident views and to consider new opportunities and approaches with such background knowledge, as "it's all about trying to make the people dem understand demself pon a next level." (SR 42: 4) Usually hardly debated about in the public sphere on air (at least not through a Rastafarian point of view), his narratives expose the oppressiveness of the geopolitical climate that still determines Jamaican politics and society in the 21st century. Thereby, the lines between the *good* and *bad* countries/actors are often blurred, obscure, and sometimes completely contradictory. Even though the narratives that are presented in this thesis won't change an exploiting (postcolonial) system right away, the

Jamaican radio presenter at least unblocks a possible course of future action and changes contemporary discourse that at best affects society and contributes to its transformation.

In principle, this thesis puts down on paper Mutabaruka's worldview and his attitudes towards specific topics. Having been a philosopher and radio host for almost three decades, he has provided a conglomerate of philosophies and positions over the years. This thesis simply represents a section of it. His ideology consists of countless versatile and convergent arguments that may be subsumed under the wording *Mutaism*, as suggested by a channel manager on YouTube (cf. URL 78). With this text I contribute to the demonstration of such an ideological tenet and I can thus verify the hypothesis. By means of the 50 broadcasts that I consulted, it was possible to present an eclectic and coherent worldview of the renowned Rastaman. My conjecture proved to be correct as the more radio shows were incorporated, the more complex Muta's views and arguments became. One can only imagine the intensity a thesis would have if all existing Steppin Razor shows were incorporated (approximately 340 episodes until now). By conducting formal and informal interviews and field observations it has also become clear that the fieldwork in Jamaica was essential for a holistic analysis.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that in the Steppin Razor programme, Muta mostly confronts (Jamaica's) socio-political issues. It would have been valuable to also include narratives from his broadcast Cutting Edge, in which he deals with rather philosophical and spiritual matters. This work, however, serves as a primed foundation for further endeavours to research Mutabaruka's medial and radio-affiliated agency and can be an addition in this respect.

Pierre Bourdieu's *tool kit* functioned as a suitable theoretical instrument for analysing the social structure of the emerging fields and the habitus of particular actors, with special attention to Mutabaruka. Due to the radio host's socialisation in the Black Power movement of the 1960s (cf. chapter 3.1.1.) and his immersion in Jamaica's Rastafarian groups during the early 1970s (cf. chapter 3.1.2., 3.1.3.), his habitus was shaped early by pan-African conceptions and has since then contributed to his critical mindset, which he now promulgates in his broadcast. He has acquired entertainer qualities since his school years (cf. chapter 3.1.1.) and uses them in the programme not only to advocate what he calls an *ancient* or *original* Rastafarian stance (cf. chapter 4.4.1.) but also to express constructive criticism towards actors from the fields of politics (cf. chapter 4.1.), religion (cf. chapter 4.3.3.), and mainstream society (e.g. the Dancehall community) (cf. chapter 4.3.1., 4.3.2.). Despite the

charisma attributed to him, Muta infuriates numerous key actors on a weekly basis and thus has become *the man they love to hate*.

In his broadcast, the famous philosopher uses an extraordinary presentation technique: He speaks in the Jamaican vernacular and integrates audio tapes and live interviews. Furthermore, he uses a theatrical rhetoric that provokes and seeks equality in terms of justice and power for Black people. In doing so, Muta steps into famous Black leader's shoes; leaders such as Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, or Martin Luther King, who have had a strong influence on him. In the course of the thesis, it has become evident that his logical reasoning is greatly characterised by notions of Garvey, primarily with respect to conceptions of sovereignty (cf. chapter 4.3.3., 4.4.3.), self-reliance (cf. chapter 4.3.1., 4.4.3.) and political virtue (cf. chapter 4.1.3., 4.2.3.). Whereas his militancy, harsh elocution, and his anti-assimilationist and distinct Black and white differentiation (cf. chapter 4.1.2., 4.3.3., 4.4.3.) remind of Malcolm X, his agency pertaining to the reprehension of specific *Black* practices (cf. chapter 4.3.1.) and his philanthropic interaction with others let me claim that he also favours Martin Luther King, who was known for reprehending Black people's norms on the one hand and welcoming and embracing white people on the other hand.

Although Mutabaruka's points are often based on a rationale of binary oppositions (e.g. good/wrong, Black/white) and touch on essentialist and generalised concepts, he is not a Black and white thinker per se. This text has made clear that his narratives feature a *skin colour-related consciousness* rather than any form of racial narcissism or fanaticism. In order to buttress his Black Power influenced arguments, he doesn't act carelessly through a heuristic approach but leans on the intellectual examination of his own lifeworld, other people's realities, and on a broad range of literature and writings from (mostly Black) revolutionary masterminds. At the same time, his narratives and analyses exceed a local Jamaican particularism and reach a global scope. By honouring African ancestry and legacy, his opinions as presented in the radio show provide a base for an alternative education and celebration of Jamaica's heritage. In diasporan countries, arbitrariness, economic stagnation, power abuse, and corruption are omnipresent (cf. chapter 4.1.1., 4.1.3., 4.1.4., 4.2.2.). Above all, practices such as scamming (cf. chapter 4.2.1.) and sociocultural, political, and religious penetration influenced by the Western World (cf. chapter 4.1.4., 4.3.1., 4.3.3., 4.4.3.) seem to direct young people towards an embodiment of questionable values and principles. Therefore, the Rastafarian's weekly radio presence is of paramount importance as he teaches an alternate and uplifting way of thinking and living. In addition, he becomes a civilian crime investigator and policy adviser for the mitigation of Jamaica's high crime rate (cf. chapter

4.2.). The different chapters have illustrated that Muta is not only an opinion leader but also an opinion maker. Due to the Steppin Razor's call-in format, he is even an opinion poller as he provides space so that callers weigh in on various topics and issues.

Last but not least, I want to mention Reggae singer I Saba Tooth and his call in the Steppin Razor programme during which he announced that Mutabaruka would be a future national hero of Jamaica in terms of the Jamaican honours system. The caller's statement beautifully describes Muta's extensive pedagogical influence and marks a fitting end of this thesis: "Mutabaruka is qualified not only to be a national hero to go on money, but Mutabaruka going to live on generation and generation to come in the knowledge of a sense of education within the library and within the cranium of the entire human race, especially in Jamaica." (SR 50: 12)

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Radio Shows:

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 1: MUTABARUKA. 2014. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 27th of November 2014, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 2: MUTABARUKA. 2014. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 4th of December 2014, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 3: MUTABARUKA. 2014. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 10th of December 2014, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 4: MUTABARUKA. 2014. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 17th of December 2014, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 5: MUTABARUKA. 2014. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 25th of December 2014, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 6: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 19th of February 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 7: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 2nd of April 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 8: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 30th of April 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 9: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 11th of June 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 10: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 25th of June 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 11: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 2nd of July 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 12: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 23rd of July 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 13: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 17th of September 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 14: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 1st of October 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 15: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 15th of October 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 16: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 19th of November 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 17: MUTABARUKA. 2015. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 3rd of December 2015, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 18: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 7th of January 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 19: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 15th of January 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 20: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 20th of January 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 21: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 17th of March 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 22: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 7th of April 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 23: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 26th of May 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 24: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 9th of June 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 25: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 23rd of June 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 26: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 28th of July 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 27: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 18th of August 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 28: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 26th of August 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 29: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 13th of October 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 30: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 20th of October 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 31: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 24th of November 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 32: MUTABARUKA. 2016. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 22nd of December 2016, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 33: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 26th of January 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 34: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 2nd of March 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 35: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 16th of March 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 36: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 30th of March 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 37: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 13th of April 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 38: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 11th of May 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 39: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 22nd of June 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 40: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 13th of July 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 41: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 3rd of August 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 42: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 10th of August 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 43: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 2nd of November 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 44: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 9th of November 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 45: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 23rd of November 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 46: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 30th of November 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 47: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 7th of December 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 48: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 14th of December 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 49: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 21st of December 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

STEPPIN RAZOR (SR) 50: MUTABARUKA. 2017. Steppin Razor: The Art of War. Irie FM. Ocho Rios 28th of December 2017, 2:00 – 6:00 pm.

7. Table of figures

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SCHWAGER, Sebastian. 2018g. Author with Bobo family. Personal Property.

8. Appendix

8.1. Appendix A: poems by Mutabaruka

Mutabaruka – *Drum Song*

i speak
 you listen
i send messages above
 your thoughts
i caress your soul
makin it elusive
i speak you dance
you dance
 your end less
dance
awakenin the mystery of life
life not as you know it
life as you dream it
when i speak
i speak of love
i speak enhancin words
reachin greatness
 end less
ly
i speak also of deaths
deaths entangling deaths
deaths that start livins
i enslave to set free
i breed
 among you i breed
 yourself
only you will know it
i speak to free you from your self.
yourself that was lost
 until
i spoke i speak of
greater freeman in the heights I go
 slow...
to pass my message
my message that will build
man
 one
(Mutabaruka 1980: 23)¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Please note that the poem was exactly cited from the book. Thus, don't mind any misspellings and the special formatting. This fact applies to all poems in the thesis.

Mutabaruka – *White Sound*

everytime i hear the sound
everytime i hear the sound
everytime i hear the sound
the sound that sounds like:
remember nigger remember
the sound that sounds like:
the whips on your back
the sound that sounds like:
the chains round your neck
the sound that sounds like:
who raped your progenitors
the sound that sounds like:
who practised genocide on your people
the sound that sounds like:
who divided your race
stole your culture
the sound that sounds like:
infiltrated your land
corrupted your soil
the sound that sounds like:
planted the seeds of inferiority in your minds
kept down your progress
the sound that sounds like:
who built nations from nigger sweat nigger gold
the sound that sounds like:
remember nigger remember
you're no Ethiopian
you're a negro
i named you a negro
the sound that sounds like:
remember nigger remember
you're no African
you're a negro
i named you a negro
the sound that sounds like:
SLAVE: BLACK SLAVE
BOSS: WHITE BOSS
GOOD: WHITE GOOD
BAD: BLACK BAD
everytime i hear the sound
everytime i hear the sound
everytime i hear the sound
the sound that sounds like
the sound that is not my name
(Mutabaruka 1980: 6f.)

8.2. Appendix B: other poems

Jean-Baptiste Mutabaruka – *Song of the Drum*

Listen to the palpitations
 of the twice-wounded heart
 of the friend who rises up for your sake
beating in scarcely audible pulses,

Wilfully blind one with the soft look;
Touching your slender neck my hand closes
 in impotent clenchings;
Look at my lonely forehead furrowed
With the precocious wrinkles of the torment
 of a dream as deep as my faceless race;

Hear my hollow voice how it loses itself
 among the discordant echoes
 with my desperate cries
 of hobbled Hope
Behind the high barrier
In the face of my burning thirst;

See how they weigh on my bowed shoulders
 The years of brutalization
 When the awakening of the pattering mornings
 Sounded on the dusty roofs
 Of our burned huts...

My countenance soiled with the salt ashes
Of destroyed riches, I bring it
To the limpidity of your look
To be washed clear of its traces of soot.

You girl with the graceful neck
Turn your face bewildered
By the reflecting fires
Of this country shining
 in its stolen jewels.

The sombre child of a luminous country
I ruminate on the sorrow of a shoulder
Which moved away when its warmth had animated me.

Who will blow on the embers
 long buried
under the cold of forgetfulness?

No one knows
And tomorrow's knowledge

Controls nothing in the present...

O neglected savage of the consumed hamlet.

Speak to me of your beauty
Of the original beauty rather
Of faces once known
And today bewildered
 in the great dispersion
 tear-stained, emaciated with hunger:
The star has failed, the signal has disappeared
 behind false pretences.

Speak to me, my friend, of the waters
 full of pearls, of silt,
 of ores;

The excavator has abstracted them
Do you know this my friend
In your dumbness of chastity?
Hear my cry, if from my gagged mouth
Or from my blocked nostrils
Can still issue
A warning note

A broken voice to pierce
The polite silence
A nasal and a nocturnal voice...

And now I give you a song
 unlearned by time
Recaptured by time
In the time of your grandparents:

 'The hero has departed
 Chaste and noble beauty
 Child promised for the nuptials
 Of evenings singing the return
 Of your true-love
 Covered in glory and laurels.'

The hero has departed promised beauty
The morning call of the war-drum
 Has only ceased to hammer on the air
With the rending of hearts
 In the morning of farewells

The strangled sobs of the mothers
The rasped throats of the fathers
And the painful pigeon-throated mourning
 Of the old grandmothers.

Child promised for the evenings of dancing
In the widened circle of alliances

I celebrate the future path
Of him who shall return
Your lover my brother-in-arms.
When will the hero return
Stranded down there
Beyond the offices
Among tactful gestures
Both emptied and nourished
By decorated waiting?

Tell me, tell me
My journey is for today
My departure irrevocable,
For lands unknown
For lands buried
Under sand and mud,
The boundaries established on the graves
Of liquidated forefathers.
In the reddening West
The incandescent belfries
Announce from afar
The desecration of space.

Tell me, yes tell me
Your word of advice
The dull-witted pebble
Oh no, it's the uncertain step...
A swallow of creamy milk
A handful of narrow-leaved sprays
A little walk behind the house
A blow at the friendly fire
A quick touch of father's weapons...
Who will reawaken this long-smothered flame
To its burning?
(Mphahlele 1967: 145-148)

8.3. Appendix C: Jamaican Patois vocabulary

For all Patois words listed here, I used the *Chaka-Chaka* spelling (cf. Federici/Coppola 2015; Mühleisen 2002: 195f.) and consulted the *Jamaican Patwah* online dictionary (jamaicanpatwah.com) as a reference:

Jamaican Patois word or phrase	English translation
a	is/are; at; and; to; a; to will; it; of
ago	going/to go/will go
aks	to ask
anedda	another
anyting	anything
becaw/'caw	because
betta	better
big up	to give respect
boasy	boastful
'bout	about
bredda, bredren	brother, friend(s)
buss	to burst
bwoy	boy
cho!	darn!/dammit!
coulda	could (have)
cyaan	to cannot
dat/dat deh	that (pron.)
dawg	dog/friend
deh	there
dem	they/them; for plural in general
demself	themselves
di/de	the
dis	this
doh	though
dung	down

dweet	do it
enuff	enough
enuh	you know (as interjection)
evriting	everything
faada	father
fambily	family
fi/fah	for/to
gi'	to give
gwaan	going/go on
gyal	girl
haffi	to have to
inna, ina	in/in the
ketch	to catch/get
killy killy	murderer
leggo	to let go
likkle	little/small
madda	mother
man	man (sg.), men (pl.)
mek	to make
memba	to remember
mi	I/me/mine
miself	myself
mout'	mouth
nah	not
nuff	plenty/a lot
nuh	no, don't/doesn't
offa	to offer; off of
ooman	woman (sg.), women (pl.)
outta	out of
ova	over
pon	on/upon
rhaatid	damn
riddim	rhythm, instrumental

seh	that (conj.)
shut	shirt
siddung	to sit back/sit down
sista	sister
sistren	a group of women
sumting, sup'm	something
ting	thing
tink	to think
toppa	the best
troddin	to tread
tru	through
tun	to turn
uno	you (pl.)/you all
waan	to want
wah	what
wata	water
weh	where (conj.); who/that (pron.)
whappen	what happened
whole heap a	a great many/ a lot
wi	we/us/our
wid	with
widout	without
wiself	ourselves
wonderfill	wonderful
woulda	would have
wuk	to work; a work
yah	here
yuh	you (sg.)

9. Abstracts

Abstract English

This thesis deals with Jamaican philosopher, artist and performing poet Mutabaruka, who is also the host of the famous interactive talk show named *Steppin Razor* on Jamaica's most popular radio station Irie FM. In the course of his weekly broadcast, the internationally renowned Reggae artist brings awareness towards socio-political, religious and Rastafari-related issues. Since he always challenges hegemonic ideals and societal values rooted in Jamaica's colonial past, the avowed Rastaman is an uncomfortable and unorthodox voice within the country's media landscape and thus loved and hated in equal measure. Mutabaruka is responsible for an awareness raising not only in Jamaica but the African diaspora in general. He advocates Black Power and opposes an Eurocentric, white supremacist and neo-colonial point of view. The master's thesis represents a collection of his opinions as I analyse the social commentaries and narratives from his *Steppin Razor* radio programme.

Abstract German

Diese Masterarbeit behandelt den Jamaikaner Mutabaruka, welcher in den 1980er-Jahren als Reggaekünstler und bekennender Rastaman berühmt wurde. Er ist auch Poet, Schauspieler, Philosoph, Aktivist, Lektor und nicht zuletzt Social Commentator und Talkshow-Host in seiner wöchentlichen Radiosendung *Steppin Razor* auf Irie FM, Jamaika's populärstem Radiokanal. Als Radiomoderator debattiert er über soziokulturelle, politische sowie religiöse Themen. Durch seine gesellschaftsanalytischen, mentorhaften und oftmals zurechtweisenden Argumente ist er mitverantwortlich für die Bewusstseinsbildung auf Jamaika, auch außerhalb der Rastafari- und Reggae-Gemeinschaft. Geradezu in Diskursen von Black Power, afrikanisch-karibischen Erfahrungswelten und postkolonialen Unterdrückungstendenzen, sind die Aktualität und die Bedeutung seiner Narrative von größtem Ausmaß. Anhand der Analyse seiner Radiosendung, beabsichtigt die Masterarbeit eine Zusammenfassung der Meinungen von Mutabaruka und die Darstellung seines intellektuellen Kapitals in einem kohärenten Bild.