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The social stratification of albinos in Tanzania - a case study from Babati

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Abstract

The study investigates the social stratification of albinos in Tanzania. This is done by conducting a case study in Babati and decoding and generalising the attitudes in a national context. This is combined with a litterateur study which has been made analysing the attitudes towards albinos in the media. The study has used a critical as well as continental discourse analysis and decoded the data by using the theories of social constructivism and of stigma. Semi-structured interviews as well as a litterateur study was conducted.

The result proved that the albinos in Tanzania are stigmatised in the society and that people treat them based on myths and preconceptions. This stratification sometimes goes as far as to murders and mutations of albinos. The respondents as well as the media and government refer to the lack of education as the main cause behind the killings of albinos. A combination of the myths about albinos and the lack of education is the reasons that are accurate when analysing the reasons behind the ongoing murders.

Keywords: Albinism, stigmatisation, discrimination, murders, discourse analysis

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1 Introduction to the study area

In all societies in the world there are albinos. In many countries the lack of knowledge of albinism seems to result in insecurity when it comes to the attitudes towards albinos.

Albinos are people that are borne with lack of pigment.¹ This is inherited from parent to child by altered genes which do not create a sufficient amount of pigment to skin, eyes and hair. This makes them oversensitive to sunlight and gives them reduced sight.²

Albinism is an inherited condition affecting at least 1 in 4000 people in Africa. It is thought to be more common among “black” Africans although it affects all human populations.³ In many African countries albinism is considered to be a disability and the social attitudes are characterised by lack of understanding, fear, and also of prejudice based on the appearance of albinism.⁴ In South Africa the albinos are to some extent alienated, ostracized and not seen as normal human beings by other people in the society. There are beliefs surrounding albinos that they are borne as a punishment, that it is a curse giving birth to albinos and that albinos are immortal and that they in fact are spirits. This makes them kept down as anomalies in the society.⁵ The albinos as a group seems to be alienated in the society. Something that could explain such a phenomenon could be lack of knowledge and that myths are created around the albinos.

1.1 Background

In Tanzania the perception towards albinos are based on fear due to the lack of knowledge about albinism. Historically there have been killings of albinos performed by the family or the tribe. In recent years the murders of albinos has escalated to an extent that the media and the government have raised attention to the problem with the purpose to stop it. The numbers of murders and mutations of albino bodies that have occurred is difficult to estimate.

Different figures have been mentioned when claiming both on how many albinos that lives in Tanzania as well as how many albinos that has been killed during the past years. There are 8 000 registered albinos in Tanzania⁶, another source mention that there are about 4 000 albinos countrywide⁷

¹ Nationalencyklopedin

² Observer, Dr Simeon Mesaki, “Albinos: Scientific explanation, causes and tragic consequences” Retrieved 08-05-14 Published 08-03-30

³ Ngairé Blankenberg, “That Rare and Random Tribe: Albino Identity in South Africa” 2000, s. 8-9

⁴ Observer, Dr Simeon Mesaki, “Albinos: Scientific explanation, causes and tragic consequences” Retrieved 08-05-14 Published 08-03-30

⁵ Ngairé Blankenberg, “That Rare and Random Tribe: Albino Identity in South Africa”, 2000. s. 14-15

⁶ BBC NEWS, “Tanzania fear over albino killing” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-17

while another estimate that there are about 150 000⁸. How many that lives in Babati is unknown. The numbers of the killed albinos referred to in the media varies from 19⁹ to 25 albinos during the last year¹⁰. The Secretary General of the Albino Society of Tanzania Samweli Mluge said that since 2002 at least 686 albinos have been killed in witchcraft fuelled murders and this mainly in the Lake Zone region.¹¹

In Tanzania the media report in both Swahili and in English. In Babati the newspapers origin from either Arusha or from Dar es Saalam. There are no local newspapers. The national media covers up the whole country reporting about the things that happens in the different parts. However it is more common that news is spread in a narrative way among people.

“Muti derives from umuthi, a Zulu word for tree is a common term for traditional medicine in Southern Africa where its use is widespread in most indigenous African languages.”¹²

“Muti” is used as a term of any of the traditional medicines that are created of the medicine men/or women. The contest of this medicines are often natural products and often consist of trees and herbs. Nowadays “muti killings” has been brought up to date. This are the different things being mentioned where traditional doctors use the albinos body; *to bring luck to a business* by placing a human skull in the foundation of new buildings, *to secure big harvests* body parts are buried on farms, *to encourage customers* hands are built into the entrances of shops, *to cure strokes* hands are burnt to ashes and mixed into a paste, *to boost vitality, brains, political power and business* blood is used and *to cure infertility and create good luck* genitals, breasts and placentas are used¹³;

(“with the genitalia of young boys and virgin girls being especially highly prized as ‘uncontaminated’ by and therefore more pure and potent”).¹⁴

This seems to concern all humans but in nowadays it is said to be more successful using the body arts of an albino.

According to the media, the reasons behind the killings of albinos is that the witchdoctors urge people who want to achieve good fortune or wealth, to kill or mutate albinos. There are myths spread that

⁷ Guardian, Zuwena Shame, “Albinos in call for new law to safeguard their security” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-05-06

⁸ ABC NEWS, “Tanzania shields albinos from witchdoctors”, Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-04-04

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ Guardian, Zuwena Shame, “Albinos in call for new law to safeguard their security”, Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-05-06

¹¹ Sunday Citizen, Susuma Susuma, “Albinos: say don’t use our plight for political gain” Publishes 08-02-23

¹² Observer, Simon Mesaki, “Albinos: visible victims, regarded as bad omens” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-04-27

¹³ ibid

¹⁴ ibid

albinos can not die. This is why people see them as mysterious and dangerous. The director of a UK-based non-governmental organisation, Action on Disability and Development, cited poverty to be a basic cause behind of the killing of albinos since this occurs in the fishing and mining areas.¹⁵ The albinos are most targeted in the Lake Zone of Tanzania.¹⁶ This is where a lot of mining and business people is said to be living. By recognising the Lake Zone area as an area of where lot of mining and business people live and by connecting the claming that business and mining people are those who most frequently kill albinos it is possible to make the connection to poverty.

The way that the media is working seems to be trying to reach out to the people to affect the way that people think and believe. The media and the government collectively seems to be creating a debate in the country and this could possibly be to protect the albinos rights. Even though the media and the government is trying to end the harassments of albinos by educating the people, the killing continue. The government condemns the killings and also the beliefs against albinos and encourage people that has witnessed this to step forward. The government also assure people that they work to secure every citizen in the country. They urge people to be accepting and understanding towards people with disabilities.¹⁷

Most of the respondents contributing to the study lives with their families. In Babati there has not been any murders or mutations of albinos. But some of the respondents are afraid that this obvious persecution of albinos in the county can cause something to happen in Babati as well.

1.2 Formulation of the problem

Although the government and the media approach the issue of albinos, the killings continues. The way that this is done fails to highlight the underlying norms and values causing the killings of albinos. The way the media reports only shows the tip of the iceberg.

There is a need to expose the causes behind the killings of albinos. This study will investigate in what proportions the attitudes are anchored to the norms and beliefs among people in the Tanzanian society proven by a case study from Babati. The study is based on the social constructivism and the

¹⁵ Guardian, Edwin Agola, "British NGO decries rampant albino killings", Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-03-10

¹⁶ Guardian, Pastory Nguvu "Association wants killers of albinos booked", Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-04

¹⁷ ibid

Guardian, Lydia Shekighenda, "Mengi: Condemn albino killings in no uncertain terms", Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-01-15

theory of stigma. This will be used to show in what way the attitudes and the actions towards albinos are reconstructed in the society.¹⁸ It is needed to highlight the beliefs which the actions are based upon. Only by doing so it is possible to make an end to the killings of albinos.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of the essay is to study the attitudes towards and the social stratification of albinos. This will be based on the escalating murders of albinos in Tanzania through a case study from Babati. The study investigates which perspective the media advocates and to what extent the government takes measurements to prevent and stop the killings of albinos.

1.3.1 Research questions

- Why are albinos stigmatized in the society of Tanzania?
- What perception and attitudes exist in the local society towards the killings of albinos and how do the albinos experience this?
- How do media report about the albinos situation in the Tanzania society?

¹⁸ Guardian, Edwin Agola, "British NGO decries rampant albino killings", Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-03-10

1.4 Outline of the study

Chapter one is an introduction of the study area and contains of a presentation of albinism. The background to the killings of albinos, and the focus and purpose of the study will be brought up. *Chapter two* describes the two theories used in the study, the social constructivism and the theory of stigma. *Chapter three* explains the method that has been used and some of the terms in the study are brought up and explained. *Chapter four* provide information from the case study and from the literature study. This is done in three parts where 4.1 involves the media perception and the litterateur study, 4.2 the albino perception and 4.3 the “normal pigmented black’s” perception of the killings of albinos. *Chapter five* declare the result of the study. *Chapter six* analysis the empirical material with support from the theories and the literature study and *chapter seven* discuss the context of the analysis and the study. Further in this chapter, data discovered after the field study will be brought up and analysed. In *chapter eight* the study will be concluded and the questions and the purpose of the study will be answered and clarified.

2 Method

The study is based on the theories of social constructivism and of stigma. This will be used to show in what way the attitudes and the actions towards albinos are reconstructed in the society. An definition to some core terms will follow;

- “Albino perspective” means the perspective that focus on the albinos perception and experience. It also includes expressions from the albinos family or friends.
- “Normally pigmented black” refer to the people in the Tanzanian society who are not albino.
- “The albino society” includes all the albinos in the society, although they are not a homogeneous group.
- “The albino-group” refers to the interviews made with people having “the albino perspective”.
- People “without religion“ is a term which many of the respondents refer to when mentioning people who were not religious and who they seemed to think were less accepting and understanding about peoples differences.
- “Mining” and “business” people is people that works or lives in the surroundings of the mines or work with making business.

This is a hermeneutic study with main focus on understanding and interpreting how individuals and the society they live in are functioning together. This is done by viewing the causes as a unique phenomenon and try to identify what the conditions and consequences based on specific incidents there are. The aim is to understand peoples intentions and actions. This is essential to be able to make judgement based on the experiences and knowledge that has been realized through the study as well as the ones that every person already have. The case study from Babati will be used to decode the attitudes and norms in the Tanzanian society. The method used in the case study is qualitative and this by making semi-structured interviews.

The case study is divided into three different parts, one focusing on the albino perspective, one on the “normal pigmented black’s” perspective and another one focusing on the media perspective on the discrimination of albinos. Interviews with two journalists have also been conducted.

The interviews in the study are based on semi-structured interviews conducted during the case study in Babati. Since few of the people participating in the study knew English, it was necessary to use an interpreter to avoid misunderstandings and to be able to communicate with the respondents. The effect of this might have been a “further step away” from the respondent since their answers had to be translated.

All the interviews have started with an introduction and an explanation of the purpose of the study. All the respondents have been asked if they want to be anonymous. All the respondents have agreed to let their names to be used in the study. The questions asked have focused on the person's perception of albinos and discrimination in the society based on the recent killings of albinos.

When choosing the respondents it was worth taking into consideration that different age, background and sex can effect what experiences people have had and how they express it. Because of this, the study has included both men and women in different ages and with various educational level.

The disposition of the literature study was prepared before arriving to Tanzania. The literature study has been divided into two parts were both have been performed before as well as after the journey to Tanzania. The first was about the media situation focusing on the freedom of speech and the liberty of press. This is connected to how media were and are picturing the albinos situation. The second part was about albinos situation both in Tanzania as well as in other parts of Africa. This was done by analysing the articles written in English in newspapers published on the Internet and by studying literature, scientific- and governmental reports related to the topic.

Concerning the part of the study which have been focusing on the medias reporting of the albino situation a discourse analysis has been used. The discourse analysis is influenced by Foucault, focusing on power and knowledge relations.

The literature is mainly consisted by articles from newspapers retrieved online from the Internet. Sources found on Internet could always be criticized for their credibility. However the sources used in this study focus on peoples and medias perception and attitudes towards albinos and especially towards the killings of albinos and are therefore essential for the study. The literature will be scrutinized through the discourse analysis.

Merits and demerits, the study could be criticized for being a generalization due to the limited amount of interviews and the restricted time used for the study. This study however does not try to state "the truth". This study aim to show what different thoughts, feelings and fears that albinos and the "normal pigmented black" has towards the killings of albinos and how they express this. Since the case study is performed in Babati it is difficult to examine and identity other types of attitudes and reactions which exist in the country apart from the ones that figures in the media.

This study is important since the killings of albinos and the vulnerability of albinos really is up-to-date. The study has been made without prejudice. Based on the impartialness of the researcher to the subject and the country as a starting point.

2.1 Discourse analysis

To explain and understand how the discourse analysis works the literature Bergström & Boréus “Textens mening och makt” has been used.¹⁹

The discourse analysis gives an opportunity to perform a text analysis. The way of how text authors choose to use words and to explain certain things can make it possible to see the tendencies about attitudes towards the subject. There are three types of discourse analysis, of which the study is based on two, *critical discourse analysis* and the *continental discourse analysis*.

The critical discourse analysis inspired of Fairclough focus on the use of language in speech as well as in written texts. This is described as a form of social practice and the purpose is to expose veiled power structures. Discourses construct social identities and contribute to keep the existing social relations. The function of the method is also to investigate the relations between the discourse and the social structures.²⁰

The continental discourse analysis, mostly inspired of Foucault, contains of a practice that generate certain type of remarks. A discourse can be described as a system of rules that legitimate some knowledge but not others and reveal who is allowed pronounce with authority. Discourses contain a set of knowledge about what is true about the world connected to a power perspective.

When discourses are created people can be controlled through a set of actions which is called mechanisms of exclusion. Power exist in the relations between people and this is restricting some people, but beneficial for others. Power and knowledge is closely related, but there are people who claim to have the knowledge, but despite this are excluded from the agenda. This is because the people with authority determine the “truth” and has the power to establishes the discourse. On the other hand it could be the case that people who has knowledge also lack the access to power. The established knowledge is the force behind the mechanisms of exclusion. The knowledge controls the mechanisms and determine what is possible to say and how to say it. Discourse analysis is often a help to reconstruct social identities. One example is that, in public media it is shown how the expressions about the original population of the northern countries are constituted. It is obvious to see and important to understand how the discourse shapes the way to report and how this limits the conditions of the population of the northern countries identity. This means that one identity is confronted against another. It is normal that one emanate from “we” and “them” when trying to analyse a discourse.²¹

¹⁹ Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina, 2005 *Textens mening och makt*, Lund, Studentlitteratur s. 305-328

²⁰ *ibid* s. 307-308.

²¹ Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina, 2005 *Textens mening och makt*, Lund, Studentlitteratur s. 308-312.

The critical discourse analysis will be useful to emphasise the power structures reconstructed in the use of language and in the way of expression. This is being used to identify the level of power and status. The continental discourse analysis pays attention to how knowledge connected to power legitimate and produces the norms in the society.

The discourse analysis can help to discover in what way the existing power-relations affects the structures and attitudes in a society. It will bring up the contemplated uneven allocation of power and impact possibilities and declare who is the subject. The method is combined with the theories chosen to analyse the study, since both of them focus on the subject being discriminated and under-represented in the context.

3 Theory

To find a relevant perspective to analyse the material, the case study is based on the social constructivism as well as the theory of stigma. The social constructivism will be conducted to analyse the underlying discourses and structures. The theory of stigma focus on the social rejection of people who are treated as different.

3.1 The Social Constructivism

The social constructivism focus on how the world is structured and composed. It gives a perspective on how to investigate the use of language as an expression of underlying discourses and structures. It can clarify how the normative structures in a society shape the actors, their interests and identities. The social constructivists try to show what symbols there are that reconstruct and give legitimacy to different norms. A norm is a standard of appropriate behaviour based on different actors with different identities. The social constructivists say that the society and the relations between people create the interests under which the power relations are reconstructed. Power is not only material as in military technology but also constituted of the knowledge and the creation of identities that shapes different opportunities. Some people gain and other people loose status from this creation of identities. The issue of who “we” are and how “our” identity is shaped is therefore necessary to clarify. It is only by doing so it is possible to realise who “they” are and how these peoples identity are created.²²

3.2 The Theory of stigma²³

Stigma is an attribute that can be socially defined as deeply discrediting. It is also defined as a two part sequences that firstly uses a norm as a starting point for the stigmatization, secondly an attribute is needed to function as a link between the person and the stigmatization.²⁴

The theory of stigma focus on social rejection connected to norms and values in the society. The social construction has two main parts. First a differentiation based on certain rules and second a direct depreciation of a person. These rules are constructed by the society and is closely connected to the values of the people. This brings about different “truth” about people and groups that say that they are

²² Baylis, John & Smith, Steve. *The Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to international relations*, New York 2006)

²³ Brunt, David & Hansson Lars, 2005 *Att leva med psykiska funktionshinder*, Lund, Studentlitteratur s. 57-67

²⁴ Link, B. G & Cullen, F.T & Mirotznic, J & Struening, E, ”The Consequences of Stigma for Persons With Mental Illness: Evidence From the Social Sciences”, Retrieved 08-05-17

different. When these differences are taken for granted stereotypes are created and that in a way that makes them recreate in a way that has a negative effect on the stigmatized group. That makes a distinction between a “we” and “them” where the stigmatized people experience discrimination and a loss of status.²⁵

The access to power depends on assets to social, economic and political power. The exclusion of power contributes to separation of people and distinctions of people in different categories. Power is therefore relevant when it comes to creation of opportunities and maintains stigmatization of people or groups.²⁶

On an individual level people may stigmatize other people for their own benefit to feel self-esteemed, and to be in control and superior to the “others”. This can also be used between groups so that one group is superior to the other. Stigmatization can also serve political purposes. By fuelling discrimination and segregation of certain groups the power of the country can be maintained.²⁷ Since the theory of stigma exposes the “truth” that is created by the society and about certain people it is a useful tool in this study.

Both of the theories focus on the exposure of underlying normative structures and the creation of a “we” and a “them”. The creation of identities are legitimized through the structures of the society. The differences between the two theories are not obvious since they seem to aim to expose the same sort of power relations in the society. This could be said although the different theories do not originate from the same scientific discourse. The purpose of using two theories is that where social constructivism is a heavy holistic theory that focuses more on the structures in the society, the theory of stigma is more specific emphasizing the signs and actions which the norms and identities are based upon. This is why the theories have been used to complement each other in describing the discrimination of certain people and groups in the society.

²⁵ Brunt, David & Hansson Lars, 2005 *Att leva med psykiska funktionshinder*, Lund, Studentlitteratur s. 57-58.

²⁶ *ibid* s. 60.

²⁷ *ibid*

4 Empirical data

In this chapter the main findings of the conducted interviews will be summarized. The interview with the journalists and the media articles will complement each other and pays attention to the general expressions used in the media about killings of albinos.

The two other parts focus on the albinos as well as the “normal pigmented black’s” perception of the killings of albinos.

4.1 The perception of albinos, reports in the media and in scientific articles

4.1.1 Interviews with journalists

The study includes interviews with two journalists in order to get medias impression of both the attitudes in Babati as well as in Tanzania towards albinos. The two journalists, Charles Masanyika and Zacharia Mtigandi both works for Star TV office, a national TV channel.

The journalists expressed that in their opinion the problems facing albinos in Tanzania is not as urgent in Babati, since none of the killings occurred in Babati. The journalists only knew about killings of albinos in Mwanza, Mara, Kagera and in Mbeya and encouraged a study there instead.

The journalists mentioned that albinos can reach out through media by viewing their own perspective. One time an albino went to the media in Babati to give his opinion about the albino situation. The journalists said that they, as well as the government, help to educate the people about these issues.

It is however not that common that people read newspapers. Most people live in the villages surrounding Babati town and because the infrastructure is not so well developed, it is difficult to distribute newspapers to the villages. It is also a fact that not everyone can afford to buy newspapers. Some people read the newspaper very carefully and then sell them again. It is more common that people listen to radio and that information is spread in a narrative way.

4.1.2 Opinion expressed in media and in governmental and scientific reports

4.1.2.1 The killings of albinos

The killings of albinos seems to become a common phenomenon especially in the Lake Zone²⁸ and point towards traditional healers.²⁹ Witchdoctors can use albino body parts in a potion that will make people rich.³⁰ One belief is that albinism is a curse put on a family, another is that albinos are some kind of ghost-like creature. Bodies and parts of killed albinos have been found.³¹ The problems with the killings of albinos exists because people want to get rich quick and in the wrong way.³² According to media, if someone does not see the wrong in targeting a whole group it is a sign of an underground cult.³³

4.1.2.2 The discrimination of albinos

Albinos are a very uncharted group. They are often abandoned by their fathers because of a widespread fear and distrust against raising children with albinism. This often results in poverty since they lack proper education, if any, due to lack of economic recourses among the mothers. During the last year several murders of albinos has occurred.³⁴

Sunday Citizen point to the exposure among albinos, the number of killings being registered and the area where it is more frequently occurring. One of the causes mentioned is poverty and the lack of governmental interactions to arrest and to prosecute the people who does this things and who spread this beliefs.³⁵

The Secretary General of the Albino Society of Tanzania, Samweli Mluge, said that since 2002 at least 686 albinos have been killed in witchcraft fuelled murders, mainly in the Lake Zone region.³⁶ The albinos are overwhelmed with fear and in some parts albinos have complained about people who ridicule them.³⁷ There have been several numbers of murders of albinos reported in the media. Some

²⁸ Guardian, Pastory Nguvu "Association wants killers of albinos booked", Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-04

²⁹ Guardian, Sinda Ndewasinde, "Killings of albinos - disturbing and highly unsettling", Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-04

Guardian, Lydia Shekighenda, "Mengi: Condemn albino killings in no uncertain terms", Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-01-15

Guardian, Dr Simeon Mesaki, "Albinos: Scientific explanation, causes and tragic consequences" Retrieved 08-05-14 Published 08-03-30

³⁰ BBC NEWS, "Tanzania fear over albino killing" Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-17

³¹ ibid

³² Guardian, Dr Simeon Mesaki, "Albinos: Scientific explanation, causes and tragic consequences" Retrieved 08-05-14 Published 08-03-30

³³ Guardian, Sinda Ndewasinde, "Killings of albinos - disturbing and highly unsettling", Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-04

³⁴ Regeringskansliet Utrikesdepartementet, "Männskliga rättigheter i Tanzania 2007", Retrieved 08-05-17

³⁵ Sunday Citizen, Susuma Susuma, "Albinos: say don't use our plight for political gain", Published 08-02-23

³⁶

³⁷ Guardian, Lusekelo Philemon, "Govt accused of turning blind eye to albino killings" Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-03-05

example of this is that; first, in three weeks about three incidents has happened³⁸, second four death has occurred in the past three month and there are more then 8 000 registered albinos in Tanzania³⁹, third at least 11 albinos have been killed in the Lake Zone since the first incident last year.⁴⁰ Fourth ADD director, Theodory Mwalongo, said that in 2006 alone 25 albinos died in suspicious circumstances.⁴¹

The media stated that the government ignore the killings of albinos.⁴² They are not putting enough effort to protect the albinos.⁴³ The organisation Non-State Actors Support Programme also accuse the government of turning a blind eye to the issue.⁴⁴ Over the past five years the killings of albinos has became acknowledge by the politicians but nothing has happened. Now all of a sudden they have started to fight it.

4.1.2.3 The governmental actions

The minister of Labour, employment and of youth development, John Chilligati said that the government condemned wrong beliefs about albinos and the killings of them. He assure that the government is not “asleep” and that they do what they can to secure every citizen in the country. IPP Executive Chairman Reginald Mengi also condemns the killings of albinos.⁴⁵ The local non-governmental organisation called “Non-State Actors Support Programme” condemned the killings of albinos in the Lake Zone which are driven by witchcraft.⁴⁶ The ADD director Theodory Mwalongo blamed the government and said;

“There is no strategic plan or political will to educate the society to abandon the misconception that limbs of albinos bodies would make them rich.”

He also points towards poverty as a cause to why the killings more frequently occur in fishing and mining areas.⁴⁷ Sunday Citizen point at the lack of engagement, strategies and efforts by the government

³⁸ Guardian, Pastory Nguvu “Association wants killers of albinos booked”, Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-04

³⁹ BBC NEWS, “Tanzania fear over albino killing” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-17

⁴⁰ Guardian, Lusekelo Philemon, “Govt accused of turning blind eye to albino killings” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-03-05

⁴¹ Guardian, Edwin Agola, “British NGO decries rampant albino killings”, Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-03-10

⁴² BBC NEWS, “Tanzania fear over albino killing” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-17

⁴³ Guardian, Dr Simeon Mesaki, “Albinos: Scientific explanation, causes and tragic consequences” Retrived 08-05-14 Published 08-03-30

⁴⁴ Guardian, Lusekelo Philemon, “Govt accused of turning blind eye to albino killings” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-03-05

⁴⁵ Guardian, Lydia Shekighenda, “Mengi: Condemn albino killings in no uncertain terms”, Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-01-15

⁴⁶ Guardian, Lusekelo Philemon, “Govt accused of turning blind eye to albino killings” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-03-05

⁴⁷ Guardian, Edwin Agola, “British NGO decries rampant albino killings”, Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-03-10

to prevent the killings of albinos.⁴⁸ The government state that people with disabilities need to be shown care and acceptance.⁴⁹ IPP Executive Chairman Reginald Mengi urge people who has witnessed these crimes to step forward to testify.⁵⁰

“There is no justification in bragging about being religious if you disregard the plight of God’s creation”.⁵¹

4.1.2.4 Reactions from the society

“The Association of People with Disabilities” in Tanzania ask the government to mount a search for all killers of albinos so that legal action can be taken against them.⁵²

The albino society warns the politicians not to use their plight for “political currency”. They say that there are some of the politicians who pretend to sympathise with the albinos but instead they just try to gain popularity. One politicians who has been complaining that the government has not taken action against the killings of albinos has in fact not done anything trying to stop it.⁵³ But the killings of albinos needs to be followed up according to the media.⁵⁴ The government should also educate people in order to change their false beliefs. This should be a combined job for government, the civil society organisations and NGO:s, focusing on the human rights issues.⁵⁵

“The albinos are human beings. They have the constitutional right to live peacefully and securely. They should not be targeted because of their inabilities. In fact, they need more protection than the rest of us because they should not be left to suffer double tragedies.”⁵⁶

The media call upon the government to employ their full power to fight this problem.⁵⁷

Non-State Actors Support Programme say that this is a violation of the human rights provided for the constitution. The organisation wanted to appeal to the government to come up with practical intervention to stop the killings and the myths of albinos.⁵⁸ The UK-based non-governmental organisation, Action on Disability and Development (ADD) advised the government to declare the

⁴⁸ Sunday Citizen, Susuma Susuma, “Albinos: say don’t use our plight for political gain”, Published 08-02-23

⁴⁹ Guardian, Pastory Nguvu “Association wants killers of albinos booked”, Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-04

⁵⁰ Guardian, Lydia Shekighenda, “Mengi: Condemn albino killings in no uncertain terms”, Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-01-15

⁵¹ ibid

⁵² Guardian, Pastory Nguvu “Association wants killers of albinos booked”, Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-04

⁵³ Sunday Citizen, Susuma Susuma, 08-02-23

⁵⁴ Guardian, Dr Simeon Mesaki, “Albinos: Scientific explanation, causes and tragic consequences” Retrieved 08-05-14 Published 08-03-30

⁵⁵ ibid

⁵⁶ ibid

⁵⁷ ibid

⁵⁸ Guardian, Lusekelo Philemon, “Govt accused of turning blind eye to albino killings” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-03-05

killings of albinos as a national disaster. ADD director, Theodory Mwalongo, wants the government to come up with a long-term plan to address poverty to avoid such incidents.⁵⁹

4.1.2.5 Discrimination of albinos in South Africa

The article “That Rare and Random Tribe: Albino Identity in South Africa” by Ngaire Blankenberg, describes the situation for albinos in South Africa. Blankenberg base her story out of own experiences as well as out of her study of albinos performed in South Africa.

Ngaire writes in the article that when she was borne her family did not know what she was. As she got older other people in the society started to look at her with horror and fascination. They could not spit words at her or ridicule her since “everyone knew” that if someone did so the curse could be transferable.⁶⁰ Ngaire writes that although albinism is a medical condition it is often regarded as a racial or spiritual state of being. The “condition” is loaded with symbolism and meaning.⁶¹ Ngaire refers to Nomasonto Mazibuko when she says that albinos do not like to be called albinos. Since they are not a separate category of humanity. They are simply people with albinism.⁶²

Ngaire says that identities is formed by celebrations of traditions, collective memories, beliefs, stories and ancestry. Identities is more often ethnic then racial. She writes;

“In as much as identities are formed through ethnic identification, blackness as the corresponding race is taken as a given.” “. . .it is rather the sign of Africanity”.⁶³

Being black is a sign of solidarity with Africa. She says that in South Africa there are two evident challenges to the unproblematic view that blackness is the core identity. First there are thoughts of mixed race, being classified as “coloured” and second there are the black albinos.⁶⁴

One of the myths about albinos is that they are born as a curse or a punishment for something done by someone in the family. In the Zulu culture it is believed that people who make fun of the albinos will end up with an albino in their own family. Another myths is that albinos can not die. Ngaire mentions that there is a strong belief that albinos simply just disappear.⁶⁵ The fact that people do not really see the albinos as mortals means that they in fact see them as spirits or recarnations of sprits and since spirits cannot die, neither can the albinos. Ngaire says that the visible differences becomes a lack of humanity

⁵⁹ Guardian, Edwin Agola, “British NGO decries rampant albino killings”, Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 08-03-10

⁶⁰ Ngaire Blankenberg, “That Rare and Random Tribe: Albino Identity in South Africa”, 2000, s.7

⁶¹ Ngaire Blankenberg, “That Rare and Random Tribe: Albino Identity in South Africa”, s.8-9

⁶² *ibid*, s.11

⁶³ *ibid*, s. 12-13

⁶⁴ *ibid*, s. 12-13

⁶⁵ *ibid*, s.14-15

in peoples eyes and that the albinos are seen as “the others”.⁶⁶ The albinos are marginalized twice and since they are oppressed as “black” people in the society but also oppressed as anomalies in the community.⁶⁷

Ngaire refers to an interview made with an albino called Ms. Zwane who says that;

“Being an albino pushed me to work hard in my studies, to travel the world to prove albinos are human beings, to those who reject them in the society”.⁶⁸

According to Ngaire albinos are often obligated to prove that they are “normal”.⁶⁹

“. . . one of four ways, that they can accept you is when they’re well educated, and when you can prove to them that you are above them”.⁷⁰

4.2 The albinos perception of the stratification of albinos today

4.2.1 The respondents

The study has shown that albinos do not think there is such a thing as a united albino society. In Tanzania the albinos are spread out living with families. The study contains of interviews with five people from the albino perspective. In the albino-group the interviews were made with; Josef Masasi who has been working as a administrative officer for the government for 28 years but are now retired, Maria Shauri and daughter Magdalena Martin that works as farmers, Joice Estomy who has been selling bananas but effects from the sun forced her to stop. She works now and help people for example with cleaning and finally Elinami Braicon Kimei who has just started up a store in Babati town. The way of thinking and the opinions in this group of respondents has in some issues changed from one another.

4.2.2 The killings of albinos

The respondents confirm that witchdoctors urge people who want money or good fortune to kill albinos. Some of the respondents talk of “mining” or “business” people or of people “without religion” as the people who does this. The reason to why people does this is that people are afraid of albinos and that they are not educated to understand why and what albinism is. When talking about solutions of how to prevent this they all have similar answer. The problem among people is the lack of education about what

⁶⁶ *ibid*, s.16

⁶⁷ *ibid*, s. 18

⁶⁸ *ibid*, s.26

⁶⁹ *ibid*, s.26

⁷⁰ *ibid*, s.26

albinism is. This lack of knowledge results in myths about albinos being spread which has horrifying effects on the albinos in Tanzania.⁷¹

4.2.3 The ways of discrimination

Most of the respondents expressed that they have experienced discrimination. A general opinion among the albinos is that they are discriminated when meeting a person for the first time. Some of the albinos do not feel as if they are important in the society.⁷²

Maria Shauri, the mother of three albino children, said that albinos are not part of any cooperation, people act different towards albinos and that people think that they are contagious.

Shauri gives her personal experience of the hunt for albinos;

“One time a man came to her house to look for a house girl. The mother got suspicious and because the daughter was not at home she could refuse the “offer”. The mother said that she is thankful that her daughter was not at home at that time because maybe she would have insisted on taking the job. The mother continues, . . . later she found out that the man that came to her house had gone to all of the houses with albino children. When he arrived at one place and found out that the albino was a boy or a girl he, dependent on which, he asked for either a house girl or house boy. The mother later heard that the man found two albino girls in one of the villages close by and she says that these girls have not been seen since. . . This proves to her that she has reason to be suspicious and she feels scared and protective about her children.⁷³

One exception is Joice Estomy who does not feel that she is discriminated and has no experience of bad attitudes towards her. She feels protected in the religious society where she lives. Estomy knows about the killings of the albinos and she wants the government to secure the possibilities for albinos to be protected to minimize the risk of them being abused.⁷⁴ Josef Masasi does not feel discriminated today since he has a good education and has had a job working for the government, even though he felt so before. According to him an albino can prove his capability by getting a good education and a good job. This is however complicated since it is more difficult to go school for albinos since they have problems with their sight. It also assumed that the parents can afford to keep their children in school. Masasi says that people rather discriminate or ridicule other people based on their low level of education than because of the albinism. The person that in fact are albino and has a low education, has problems with

⁷¹ Interview with; All the people in albino-group

⁷² Interview with; Elinami Braicon Kimei

⁷³ Interview with; Maria Shauri

⁷⁴ Interview with; Joice Estomy

discrimination. All in all, Masasi believes that the albinos have reason to be afraid of getting killed nowadays.⁷⁵

4.2.4 The change of attitude

Some albinos have started to work against discrimination and to get equal rights. For example there is a political party representing the albinos.

The respondents said that when people get to know an albino the person changes in their opinion about the albino. Masasi said that when he went to school the children had some problems with him in the beginning and he also said that his own parents did not think that he was a normal human being when he was borne. But that changed.⁷⁶ The respondents want the government to educate the people, to encourage acceptance and understanding. The trend could change when; the media makes interviews with albinos, when the guilty are caught and punished and when the government can offer a better services to support the albino society⁷⁷.

4.3 The local society's perception of the stratification of albinos today

4.3.1 The respondents

The respondents representing the normal pigmented black people was Ana Nema, who was interviewed in Mamire, Elihuruma. H. Mshana who is working as an agricultural officer in Mamire, Zephania Sanka who was interviewed in Mamire, Mwanaidi that has a textile shop in Babati town, Eva Sulumbi who is working in a shop in Babati town, Ramadam M Mauura that has his own shop in Babati town, Samuel. E. Mbwambo that works as a business man in Babati town, Aina Mruui who sell clothes in Babati town.

The answers differed more within the “normal pigmented black” than within the albino group. In general it is possible to say that everyone believes that the albinos are discriminated but it differs considering the example on how they choose to describe it. Only one of the respondents has no opinion or knowledge about albinos.

⁷⁵ Interview with; Josef Masasi

⁷⁶ ibid

⁷⁷ Interview with; Maria Shauri and daughter Magdalena Martin

4.3.2 The killings of albinos

The reasons for why the respondents think that the killings of albinos occurs differs a bit among them. All of the respondents mention the killing of albinos and how the witchdoctors urge people to do so. Most of the respondents refer to “the mining people”, and “the businesses people” or “the people without religion” as those people who does this kind of things. Only one of the respondents mentions that she has heard that people from Dubai seek the albinos⁷⁸. It was mentioned that albinos are killed because people think that they are mysterious and evil⁷⁹. Another view on the reasons behind the killings of albinos has to do with peoples “bad believes” and their “poor thinking capacity”⁸⁰.

4.3.3 The patterns of discrimination

The respondents say that the families can kill the albino children or that they could hide them in their home, but if the tribe finds out about the albino child they brings it into the deep forest and feed it to the animals. This happens even if it is a grown-up albino that has been hidden.⁸¹ In the society the albinos are seen as unusual and different⁸². According to Mwanaidi the albinos are discriminated and some people think that they smell bad. People do not believe that the albinos can work hard since they can not handle much sunshine. She says that some people look at them as animals. In the schools the kids are running away from albino but when the teachers are telling the class about what albinos are then they accept the albino. People do not believe that albinos are mortal. When performing the interview with Mwanaidi two other people joined the conversation and said that albinos could be living in the society and then they just disappear. They are not buried. The disappearing of albinos confirm the myths about albinos being immortal. The albinos are not seen as “normal”.⁸³ This because there are lots of believes and myths regarding albinos.⁸⁴ The respondents believe that what the government is doing is increasing the protection for the albinos.⁸⁵

4.3.4 The protection of albinos

All of the respondents have talked about education of the people. Some talk about uniting the albinos, either in political ways like political parties or NGO:s, or to group them together to be able to protect

⁷⁸ Interview with; Aina Mruiu

⁷⁹ Interview with; Samuel. E. Mbwambo

⁸⁰ Interview with; Ramadam M Mauura

⁸¹ Interview with; Eva Sulumbi

⁸² Interview with; Zephania Sanka

⁸³ Interview with; Mwanaidi

⁸⁴ Interview with; Eva Sulumbi

⁸⁵ Interview with; Aina Mruiu

them.⁸⁶ If albinos get a good education they have a better chance of achieving respect from the people, get married and get children. The respondents also believes that if the government and media educates the people the problems would go away.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Interview with; Elihuruma. H. Mshana, Mwanaidi

⁸⁷ Interview with; Mwanaidi

5 Result

1. The albinos are stigmatized in the Tanzanian society.
2. The killings of albinos are based on them being albinos.
3. There are myths and misconceptions spread about albinos.
4. People has fear and precariousness towards albinos.
5. There is lack of knowledge about what albinism is.
6. Albinos fear the attitudes being shown from other people in the society.
7. Albinos are discontented by the absent of action from the government.
8. The media represents the albinos and work toward a change in attitudes towards them.
9. By focusing on education, protection and economic support would improve the albinos situation.

6 Analysis

6.1 *The stigmatization of albinos*

The stigmatization of albinos in Tanzania is based on the experience among people, that there are a noticeable difference in appearance of the albinos, compared to people in general. This creates a base from which insecurity produces “truth” about albinos which is expressions of the norms and values in the society. The “truth” about albinos is turned into stereotypes when taken for granted of people. The norms and values state the “rules” of appearance and turns social rejection toward those that are different.

In Tanzania the stigmatization of albinos has taken the expression in murders and mutations of albinos. This is done by people who seek wealth. Examples of the norms and creation of identities are the attitudes which the study has given example of.

6.2 *Attitudes and discrimination towards albinos*

The respondents has claimed that the killing of albinos are based on myths being spread among people about albinos.⁸⁸ Among these myths one belief is that albinism is a curse put on a family⁸⁹, another is that albinos are some kind of ghost-like creature⁹⁰. These are clear signs of putting stigma on the albinos as a group. Some of the respondents even mention that albinos are seen as contagious⁹¹. Other beliefs that has been expressed were, that normal pigmented black in general think that albinos smell bad, that they are unusual and are different and that people see them as animals.⁹² This is an abusive way of describing albinos which is clearly engrained with stigma. There has been descriptions of albinos as not hard working people (in sunshine at least), that they scare people and that albinos can not die (instead just disappear). This is why some people think that the albinos are not berried, which means that they are not normal.⁹³ The stigma about albinos is extended to even describing albinos as evil, mysterious⁹⁴ and as “dangerous white people”.

In the interview with Eva Sulumbi she mentions that albinos are being killed by their own family or tribe, when stating this it is needs to say that, although this might happen among people, it is probably

⁸⁸ Interview with; Masasi, Maria Shauri and daughter Magdalena Martin, Elinami Braicon Kimei, Mwanaidi, Eva Sulumbi, Ramadam M Mauura, Samuel. E. Mbwambo, Aina Mruii

⁸⁹ Interview with; Maria Shauri and daughter Magdalena Martin

⁹⁰ Interview with; Mwanaidi, BBC NEWS, “Tanzania fear over albino killing” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-17

⁹¹ Interview with; Maria Shauri and daughter Magdalena Martin

⁹² Interview with; Mwanaidi

⁹³ Interview with; Mwanaidi

⁹⁴ Interview with; Mwanaidi, Samuel. E. Mbwambo

more likely that parents protect their children and accept their differences. The reaction that occur among people when talking about the differences about albinos reveal of what attitudes which underlies. The theories bring about a perspective which might prove that the families hide there children in fear of being perceived as different or abnormal.

The theory of stigma focus on peoples access to power. This is achieved through the opportunities given to a person. These opportunities are intimately connected to the education level which a person has got since this often is a base of receiving a good job. As Masasi stressed in the interview albinos need to get well educated to be able to get an opportunity to receive a good job with high status to prove their capability.⁹⁵ Ngaire has made interviews and refers to an interview with an albino called Ms. Zwane who says that;

“Being an albino pushed me to work hard in my studies, to travel the world to prove albinos are human beings, to those who reject them in the society”.⁹⁶

It seems to be the albinos obligation to prove that they are “normal”.⁹⁷

“... one of your ways, that they can accept you is when they’re well educated, and when you can prove to them that you are above them”.⁹⁸

This all prove that the albinos themselves feel that it is part of their responsibility work against the stigmatization towards themselves.

Most of the respondents and the articles used in the study has pointed towards the lack of engagement and effort among the government to make a end to the killings of albinos. In the media several people and organisations has expressed what measurements they hope the government would take but most of them fined that the government turn a “blind eye” to the issue of killings of albinos.⁹⁹ They want the government to set example and to put more effort to support albinos and to starting prosecute of the guilty to make an end to the roomers that lionize the albinos today.¹⁰⁰ This is sign of the discontent that there is concerning the attitudes towards albinos.

⁹⁵ Interview with; Josef Masasi

⁹⁶ Ngaire Blankenberg , “That Rare and Random Tribe: Albino Identity in South Africa”, 2000. s. 26

⁹⁷ ibid s. 26

⁹⁸ ibid s. 26

⁹⁹ Interview with; Elinami Braicon Kimei, BBC NEWS, “Tanzania fear over albino killing” Retrieved 08-05-17 Published 07-12-17

¹⁰⁰ Interview with; Maria Shauri and daughter Magdalena Martin, Samuel. E. Mbwambo

6.3 The reporting of albinos in the media

The media often plays an important part in the recreation of identities in the society and of the stigmatization of groups. In Tanzania, in the case of killings of albinos however the media is working on education and changing the attitudes among people towards albinos.

The theory of stigma sees the positive effects of media proclaiming the albino perspective since the media is not a part of the recreation of the stigmatisation of albinos. It is also a positive effect that the different albino-interest groups receive a chance of reaching out to people across the country to spread their version of the problem of killings of albinos. There has generally been a lot of governmental criticism. The albinos as well as people in general do not seem to think that the government is doing enough to prevent the albinos from being killed.

The journalists expressed that their opinion of the killings of albinos is that the issue was less relevant in Babati since no one of the murders or mutations had happened there. They also forward that the media is educating the people. According to the theory of stigma the fact that albinos are alienated in other parts of the country and that they are killed based on them being albinos is a sign of the way that people in general in the country think about albinos. Because of this it is also most relevant in Babati. If there is not believed to become changes although the media and the government is working to change the attitudes among people it could be the wrong way used to effect the people.

7 Discussion

After the study has been completed further articles has been written about the killings of albinos. Criticism has been directed towards the government in their way of handling the issue of killings of albinos. This has resulted in that more attention has been forwarded by media as well as the government now prioritise the issue to a larger extent to prevent a on going development continuing in a negative direction.

The president Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete said that the police has got orders to intensity the investigations of witchdoctors accused of involvement in killings or mutations of albinos.¹⁰¹ The president informed about several actions taken to the strengthened the albinos rights. Al Shaymaa Kwegyr is an albino who is placed together with nine other members of parliament in the parliament to represent the albinos.¹⁰² The government is working drafting a bill that will strengthen the albinos rights.¹⁰³

“President Kikwete, used one of his monthly televised addresses recently to announce a crackdown on the traditional healers accusing them of charlatanry, declaring, ‘These killings are shameful and disgusting to our society,’ and ‘a senseless cruelty’ adding, ‘it must stop forthwith and directed the police to crack down on such practices’.”¹⁰⁴

There has been criticism forwarded towards the government both from outside the country as well as from the inside. This criticism exist among others of the founder of South African Albinism Society, Namasato Mazibuko who visited Tanzania expressed the need to clarify the motives behind the killings of albinos in Tanzania.¹⁰⁵ Mazibuko stated;

”Albinos have the rights to life, that is why we want to see the President to know the fate of our fellows.”¹⁰⁶

“... They (the albinos, authors remark) are being victimised, threatened and they are not in peace.”¹⁰⁷

“In my country people do understand the rights of albinos and respect them, but Tanzanians don't take this seriously.”¹⁰⁸

The Tanzania Albino Society (TAS) secretary general, Samwel Mluge says;

¹⁰¹ ABC NEWS, “Tanzania shields albinos from witchdoctors”, Retrieved 08-04-08 Published 08-04-04
DN, ”Albino-utnämning i Tanzania”, Retrieved 08-05-11Published 08-04-08

¹⁰² DN, ”Albino-utnämning i Tanzania”, Retrieved 08-05-11Published 08-04-08

¹⁰³ Guardian, Hannah Mwandoloma, “Government seeks legislation on safety of albinos”, Retrieved 08-05-22 Published 08-05-05

¹⁰⁴ Observer, Simon Mesaki, “Albinos: visible victims, regarded as bad omens”, Retrieved 08-05-13 Published 08-04-27 kl. 13:55

¹⁰⁵ Guardian, Zuwena Shame, “Albinos to see Kikwete for a guarantee on their safety”, Retrieved 08-05-22 Published 08-05-07

¹⁰⁶ ibid

¹⁰⁷ ibid

¹⁰⁸ ibid

“We are working on a research proposal, we want to find out why people have the superstitious beliefs that lead them to the killing of albinos. Thereafter we will come to a conclusion that will give us long term solutions to the problem,”¹⁰⁹

Human Rights Activists Groups chairperson William Mwamalanga;

“...we suggest that the government should go further by forming a special unit that will come up with a clear picture of the problem,”¹¹⁰

Mwamalanga want to call attention to the problem with killings of albinos which he says is larger than estimated. He said that;

“... society should be ready to change and shun away with beliefs...”.¹¹¹

This development is sign of the expanded action taken to prevent the killings of albinos. Whether this is due to the criticism directed from the civil society or if it is a sign of the former lack of priority is difficult to say. It could just as well be a combination of both. Connected to the issue of priority it is also appropriate to have a discussion on who runs the discourse. In the case of killings of albinos the respondents have expressed that the government has major responsibility in paying attention to the issue. However the civil society is able to influence the way that this is done. The conclusion drawn of this is that the government is partly to blame for the major number murders of albinos. The reason to why the government has not earlier choose to end the killings of albinos could also be speculated in. However it is convenient for people with power to have “the others” to blame and to consolidate around in other important issues. The fear of albinos could with this explanation been used to join the Tanzanian people together while today the people instead could collectively turn against “the people without religion” which are the people that the government choose to blame.

Some of the respondents and the media were favouring expanded “protection” of the albinos and the government has since the finishing of the study taken measurements toward this. In Mwanza Region were 30 albino schoolchildren have been placed in a boarding school.¹¹² The authorities claim this to be for the albinos own safety. It is important to realise that this also could be a sign of isolation were instead of changing the attitudes in the society toward albinos they are removed from it. This could instead be a sign of a further exclusion.

¹⁰⁹ Guardian, Guardian, Hannah Mwandoloma, “Government seeks legislation on safety of albinos”, Retrieved 08-05-22 Published 08-05-05

¹¹⁰ Guardian , Lydia Shekighenda, “NGOs prod govt to investigate, stop killings of albinos”, Retrieved 08-05-13 Published 08-04-05

¹¹¹ ibid

¹¹² Guardian, Zuwena Shame, “Albinos in call for new law to safeguard their security”, Retrieved 2008-05-22 Published 08-05-06

So how is it possible to explain why this stigmatization in the first place occur on the albinos, this is a important question to ask. The "African identifies" is partly based on the mutual skin colour as a starting point for the identification between people. Since the albinos do not share this identification people feel insecure towards them and this often function as a foundation of the creation of mythss about the albinos as a "group".

Today it is common that children as well as adults talk of albinos in terms which is signs of stigmatization and this due to the myths which surrounds the albinos.

"Albinism, especially in Africa, is shrouded in mystery, misinterpretation and in many cases infanticide was/is common. . ."

"The most common name in Kiswahili speaking areas is 'Mzungu', this being kind of mockery name. Teasing and name-calling are common in referring to albinos. In Tanzania the word is Zeru Zeru (ghost) or mzungu."¹¹³

This might seem harmless but is what keeps the myths to stay alive and to reproduce. When performing the interviews in Tanzania it became clearly that when talking about albinos most people spoke of "zeru zeru" a term which for the author was unfamiliar at that time. It is interesting to study what attitudes the respondents express by the way they choose to express themselves when talking about albinos. This is signs of discrimination. That is what creates this persecution of albinos, this since it is based upon a group possession. The way that several of the respondents has expressed themselves it is clearly that the myths that are spread among people about albinos shapes the attitudes that are not favourable and that today evidently result in killings of the albinos in this case concerned.

It is difficult to identify the medias part in explaining the issue of killings of albinos. Whether or not the media is educating the people proclaiming and influencing people to embrace their version of the killings of albinos, or whether the media has clever ways of resaving the influences which circulate in the country is hard to state. To properly understand the circumstances it is essential to know how the narrative society works were the information is passes from one person the one other.

In what context the study has been made should not either be forgotten. The study was made according to the method described in chapter three and this by using semi-structured interviews, using an interpreter. Since the interpreter were well aware of the intentions of the study there is a risk that the "story" being told was changed to suit the study or to fit with the general picture in the media. This could also has happed subconsciously without being the interpreters own intention.

¹¹³ Observer, Dr Simeon Mesaki, "Albinos: Scientific explanation, causes and tragic consequences" Retrieved 2008-05-22
Published 08-03-30

8 Conclusion

When this study first was conducted the thought that figured by the researcher was that the media would be the actor reproducing the norms and values that existed towards albinos. This would be explained by demonstrating in what way that the media reported about albinos or maybe how the media choose not to prioritise the issue at all. This has not been the case of the study. Instead the researcher has found that the media contribute to the education and the forwarding of the albinos perspective. This to contribute to the changing of attitudes and beliefs about the albinos as a group.

The social stratification of albinos are unmistakable in Tanzania. The murders are a obvious example of the ongoing attitudes and treatment of albinos. Throughout the study several signs and proof of discrimination towards albinos has occurred. The way that people in general speak of albinos demonstrate the underlying myths and preconceptions that conceive the stigmatisation of albinos. This is what makes them stigmatised today. The media is understood to be fairly neutral and does not recreate the stigmatised identities in the media, with exception from the creation of the albinos as a homogenous group. It is interesting to pay attention to in what way the media and the government has increased there protection and support of the albinos in these latest weeks and month. They have indicates their actions which gives signals that they take the issue seriously and that that they believe that a change and a end of the killings of albinos will happen. In the future it would be interesting to discover what effects and transformations this latest changes in the politics has resulted in.

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