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Overview paper
UDC 323.15(410)

AFRICANS IN THE MODERN UK: RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of the African diasporas of modern Great Britain. The focus is primarily on the political and religious characteristics of these communities on the eve of the 2021 census, their similarities and differences. Special attention is paid to the specifics of statistics on Africans from censuses and interim reports. The number and influence of these minorities is steadily increasing, which in the short term will contribute to a change in the ethnic and religious structure of modern British society.

Keywords: Africans, 2021 census, religion, BLM, UK, demographics

Introduction

In the second half of the 20th - early 21st centuries there were global migration processes. During that time, there was a huge movement of human resources from Asia and Africa to Western Europe, the USA, Canada, the Persian Gulf countries and Australia. The increase in the number of newcomers in Western countries has led to ethno-religious shifts, changes in the social, economic and political situation. Great Britain, one of the leading Western European States, did not stay away from these processes. The United Kingdom is currently experiencing a rapid change in the national and religious composition of the population by historical standards. Just over the course of two or three generations, the proportion of people of non-British origin increased from insignificant figures to 15-16% by the 2010s. It has led to a lot of discussions, a wide range of opinions and assessments of scientists, media, political and public figures about how to perceive this phenomenon and what prospects await the country in the near and distant future.

Among all the migrant diasporas in the British Isles, the most prominent and influential are South Asian communities (Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis), Caribbean communities, Africans, and more recently newcomers from the EU coun-

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tries (the Baltic States, Central, Eastern and Southern Europe). According to official data, there are now more than 1 million people from the former African colonies of the British Empire in the country. Large communities were created by South Africans, Nigerians, Somalis, Zimbabweans, Kenyans, and Ghanaians. Modern British Africans, whatever their diaspora, are an energetic element of society. Their numbers and influence on the daily life of the UK are steadily increasing. Analyzing groups of migrants, we can state that they have a number of characteristics which distinguish them from the local population like collective memory, language, idea of the historical homeland, their own cultural norms, values and practices that do not coincide with similar categories of the local population. Here you can also note the idea of their own otherness and a clear mutual understanding that the indigenous people of the British Isles will not perceive newcomers as identical to themselves.

Although the first written sources about Africans in the British Isles date back to the 16th century, and the first archaeological information dates back to the first century A.D., relatively large and noticeable nationwide communities of Africans were formed only in the post-colonial period of British history. Until the mid-20th century African communities in the United Kingdom were small, unstable, and invisible. Almost immediately after the beginning of the mass migration of Africans from the former colonies of the British Empire in the 1960s, newcomers from Africa to the United Kingdom came to the attention of scientists (along with other groups of migrants – Indians, Pakistanis, West Indians).

Ceri Peach (1939-2018) was a geographer and a Professor at the University of Oxford, can be attributed to the founders of the study of postcolonial migration to the UK, who studied the issues of social segregation of immigrant minorities in the UK, the EU and the USA², also studied intermarriages and issues of settlement of newcomers³. Philip Jones of the University of Hull studied the areas of initial concentration of newcomers and in the 1970s identified at least 50 urban areas attracting migrants (primarily in London and Birmingham)⁴. It is noteworthy that the term “community” in relation to groups of migrants was not yet commonly used in the 1960s and 1970s and Ph. Jones used definitions such as “enclave” and “colony”. Nowadays, Peter Congdon of the Queen Mary University of London continues the tradition of studying urban populations. He specializes in detailed analysis of behavioral aspects (the level of community cohesion, etc.), demography and health issues (including drug distribution, epidemiological situation) in

2 Ceri Peach, *Urban Social Segregation*, Longman Publishing Group, London, 1975; Ceri Peach, Susan Smith, Robinson Vaughan, *Ethnic Segregation in (American & British) Cities*, University of Georgia Press, 1981; Ceri Peach, Muslims in the 2001 Census of England and Wales: Gender and economic disadvantage, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 4, 2006, pp. 629-655.

3 Ceri Peach, Immigrants in the Inner City, *The Geographical Journal*, November, Vol. 141, No. 3, 1975, pp. 372-379; Ceri Peach, The Caribbean in Europe: contrasting patterns of migration and settlement in Britain, France and the Netherlands, *Research Paper in Ethnic Relations*, No. 15, 1991, pp. 33-34.

4 Jones Philip, The Distribution and Diffusion of the Coloured Population in England and Wales, 1961-71, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1978, pp. 515-532.

territorial associations at different levels⁵, as well as mixed ethnic groups⁶.

Along with the rise of anti-racist discourse in 1984, a popular science book was published by Peter Fry (1927-2006), a well-known British writer and journalist who shared communist views, about the history of the presence of Africans in the British Isles⁷. Thanks to P. Fry, the general public actually discovered the African component of the history of their own country. The well-known British journalist and public figure David Goodhart, author of the voluminous work “the British Dream: Successes and Failures of Post-war Immigration”, was one of the first modern writers who draw attention to the fact that the real economic and cultural problems of the 2000s and early 2010s caused by mass post-colonial migration are ignored or declared as manifestations of racism and xenophobia⁸.

Throughout the 20th and the early 21st century, Western scientists have come a long way on the issues we study, from a concise fixation of migration dynamics to a detailed consideration of all aspects of the life of African diasporas. It should be noted that foreign scientists try to impartially evaluate both positive and negative trends in the development of African communities. Characteristically, the study of the history and current situation of British Africans is simultaneously carried out by representatives of different scientific schools and areas like historians, sociologists, political scientists, ethnologists, economists, geographers, even journalists and public figures.

The main ways of arrival in the United Kingdom for Africans were for studying, employment, refugee status, and family reunification. More than half of the first-generation migrants were young men belonging to the educated and economically active population of African States. Peak migration from Africa reached in the 1980s - early 1990s. Since the 2000s, the flow of newcomers started to decline and in the 2010s mass migration has essentially ceased. Modern annual level of African migration of 10 to 20 thousand people (the difference between those who entered and those who left the country) in comparison with other regions that are sources of migrants for the UK (EU newcomers, South Asia, the Caribbean archipelago) does not seem major neither by absolute (in the 2010s, the migration balance in the UK was 250-300 thousand per year)⁹, nor by relative figures (the contribution of Africans to the current influx of migrants is about 5-7%)¹⁰.

5 Peter Congdon, An Analysis of Population and Social Change in London Wards in the 1980s, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 1989, pp. 478-491.

6 Peter Aspinall, ‘Mixed race’, ‘mixed origins’ or what? Generic terminology for the multiple racial/ethnic group population, *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2009, pp. 3-8; Peter Aspinall, Children of Mixed Parentage: Data Collection Needs, *Children & Society*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 2000, pp. 207-216.

7 Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, Pluto Press, London, 2010.

8 David Goodhart, *The British Dream: Successes and Failures of Post-war Immigration*, Atlantic Books, London, 2013.

9 “Long-Term International Migration time series, 1964 to 2017”; Office for National Statistics, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/longterminternationalmigration200citizenshipuk/current/2.00timcitizenship1964to2017.xls>, (date accessed: 28.11.2020).

10 “Long-Term International Migration time series, 2004 to 2017”; Office for National Statistics, available at: <https://www.ons.gov>.

Speaking about the specificities of regional migration from Africa, it is important to take into account that the main flow of Africans to the UK came from former colonies, primarily from the countries of South, West and East Africa. Migration from North Africa has not been traditional for the United Kingdom and still remains insignificant. Relatively large diasporas (approximately 20–30 thousand people) were created only by people from Libya and Egypt. In this regard, the main focus of this article will be on the diasporas of representatives of Somalia and Zimbabwe, which have formed large and prominent communities, numbering 100–200 thousand people. The number of migrants from two other East African countries, Uganda and Kenya, is also quite noticeable, more than 50,000 and more than 129,000, respectively. However, most of the migrants from these countries are not actually Africans, but South Asian migrants (Indians, first of all) who settled there during the colonial era, were forced to leave Africa in the 1960s and 1970s and move to the former metropolis.

Data from regular censuses, as well as interim reports from the State statistical service, are mainly used to assess the quantitative indicators of African diasporas. These two groups of data form the main source of information about ethnic and religious minorities in the UK.

Census and reporting data

Regular population censuses have been held in the UK every 10 years since 1801 (usually in the spring) and are nationwide events. The basic principle used in these censuses in assessing the ethnic composition of the population is the self-identification of the inhabitants of the country. The question of ethnicity (group) has been included in the questionnaires only since the 1991 census and newcomers from the SSA, respectively, were defined as a distinct group. Note that that ethnic group in the census results could include not only natives of African countries, but also descendants of migrants from Africa in the second and third generation. Thus, there is no data on the number of British Africans confirmed by census data until 1991, there are only rough estimates which are largely based on the second group of sources.

The second group of sources is interim (quarterly and annual) reports that are prepared by the State statistical service of the country based on information about the citizenship of newcomers, as well as the place (country) of their birth. First of all, these are information about entries and departures of newcomers, their gender, age and family status, requests for visas, residence permits, political asylum, British citizenship, data on the issuance of National Insurance number¹¹ to foreigners. This number is used for social benefits, employee insurance, and fiscal purposes. It is issued to anyone over the age of 16 and whose earnings ex-

uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/longterminternational-migrationcitizenshiptable201a/current/2.01altimcitizenship2004to2017.xls, (date accessed: 28.11.2020).

11 "What is a National Insurance number?", Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, available at: <https://www.rcs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Applying-for-a-National-Insurance-Number.pdf>, (date accessed: 12.07.2019).

ceed a certain level, once for a lifetime and it refers to the most important part of the personal data of UK residents.

When working with these sources, it is important to keep in mind that not all newcomers from African countries are actually Africans. They may refer to people of European (British) origin, such as farmers from Zimbabwe and Afrikaners from South Africa. They do not identify themselves as a sub-Saharan ethnic group. At the same time, not all Africans can come to the UK from African countries, some migrants of African origin come from European countries, forming a secondary and tertiary migration, which is quite common among Somalis. In interim reports, some migrants from Somalia may be classified as African (if born in an African country), while others may not be included in the group of African migrants (if they have the citizenship of a European country at the time of entry).

This is the fundamental difference between the first and second data groups. People of Africa are not always Africans, not all British-born consider themselves British, and the European country of origin does not guarantee the European origin of newcomers. The difference in the final figures can be traced by comparison. For example, according to the 2001 census, there were 485,000 Africans living in the country (those who classified themselves as "Black Africans"), and the total number of British residents who were born in sub-Saharan Africa was 692,000 (of which at least 119,000 are people from South Africa, mostly of European origin)¹².

Migration dynamics, the number and composition of Somalis of the largest East African Diaspora in the UK, are not yet well understood. This is partly due to the lack of detailed ethnic statistics (organized by country of origin) in the censuses of the 1960s and 1990s, as well as the closed nature of Somali communities. Illegal migration of Somalis from Somalia and neighboring countries also hinders the availability of objective data.

The first significant increase in the number of Somalis in post-war Britain was in the late 1950s and 1960s. At that time, the British merchant marine suffered a retrenchment of workers and a large number of marines of Somali origin started to seek employment on land, primarily in industry. As a result of that process, Somali communities were born in Manchester and Sheffield. Somalis have become notable not only in ports. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, civil war broke out in Somalia. The victims of that confrontation, which was often inter-clan, and, therefore, extremely violent, were at least 500,000 people, approximately 2 million emigrated from the country. The number of requests for asylum from Somalis has increased dramatically, as that was almost the only opportunity for them to come to the UK. As a result of migration processes in the 1990s, at the begin-

12 "Population in the United Kingdom, excluding some residents in communal establishments, by country of birth", Office for National Statistics, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/populationoftheunitedkingdombycountryofbirthandnationality/march2000tofebruary2001/populationbycountryofbirthandnationality/mar00tofeb01tcm774147821.xls>, (date accessed: 28.11.2020).

ning of the 2000s, at least 60,000 people from Somalia lived in the UK¹³. According to other data, much less – about 43,000¹⁴. During the 2000s, the number of Somalis seeking asylum declined steadily. In 2004, there were 2,500 requests, in 2005 – no more than 2,000, in 2006 – about 2,000, in 2007 – about 1,600, in 2008 – less than 1,500, in 2009 – almost 1,000, in 2010 – generally about 500¹⁵. From 2004 to 2013 the British authorities issued 38,570 residence permits to Somali citizens, the highest number (8,253) in 2005, the lowest (2,126) in 2006, and on average per year about 3 to 4 thousand. Characteristically, the percentage of Somalis in the total number of foreigners who received a residence permit during that period is extremely small – only about 2.4%. However, the percentage of children among Somali migrants is significantly higher than the average – 37%. For comparison, over these ten years, 1.6 million foreign citizens received residence permits, including 369,000 minors (22.9%)¹⁶. A small but steady influx of Somalis continues in the 2010s. The most common grounds for obtaining a residence permit among Somalis in the 2000s and 2010s were refugee status (up to a quarter of all cases), as well as family reunification. Almost 72% of Somalis are British passport holders¹⁷.

By 2011, the number of the Somali Diaspora, according to official statistics, increased to more than 100,000 people¹⁸. This number most likely does not include illegal migrants and Somalis who came to the UK from other African countries (Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti) and European countries (France, Holland). In addition, it is important to take into account the permanent movement of some British Somalis (to Somalia and back to the UK) and the beginning of the formation of a second generation of migrants among them (those who were born already on the territory of the country), which is also probably absent in the statistics. Taking into account all these circumstances, up to 250,000 newcomers of Somali origin can now live in the British Isles¹⁹.

The formation of the Zimbabwean Diaspora coincided with the mass migration of Somalis and dates mainly to the 1990s and 2000s. Before that period, almost nothing was known about migrants from Rhodesia in the UK. That part of

13 Gail Hopkins, A changing sense of Somaliness: Somali women in London and Toronto, *Gender, Place and Culture*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2010, pp. 520-523.

14 "Country-of-birth database, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development", available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/18/23/34792376.xls>, (date accessed: 29.11.2020).

15 Laura Hammond, Somali Transnational Activism and Integration in the UK: Mutually Supporting Strategies, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 6, 2013, pp. 1006-1009.

16 "Grants of settlement by country of nationality and category and in-country refusals of settlement", Home Office, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/427915/settlement-q1-2015-tabs.ods (date accessed: 14.07.2019).

17 "Detailed country of birth and nationality analysis from the 2011 Census of England and Wales", Office for National Statistics, May 16, 2013, p. 9.

18 "Population by Country of Birth and Nationality Datasheets January 2011 to December 2011", Office for National Statistics, available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=Population+by+Country+of+Birth+and+Nationality+Data+sheets+January+2011+to+December+2011>, (date accessed: 14.07.2019).

19 Laura Hammond, Somali Transnational Activism and Integration in the UK: Mutually Supporting Strategies... p. 1006.

the former British Empire became one of the last independent African countries (only in 1980) in the post-colonial era. Zimbabweans did not actually participate in the mass migration of Africans in the 1960s and 1970s but they caught up at the turn of the 20th - early 21st centuries. In 1971 about 7,000 Africans of Zimbabwean origin officially lived in the UK, in 1981 – 16,000, in 1991 – 27,000, in 2001 – 47,000²⁰. There were approximately 120,000 migrants from Zimbabwe in the UK in 2014²¹. Between 2004 and 2015, newcomers from Zimbabwe received 65,000 residence permits, the maximum number of permits was registered in 2010 (9.8 thousand), the minimum was registered in 2006 (3.4 thousand), 3.9 thousand applicants have been refused a residence permit. The most common grounds for granting residence permits to Zimbabweans were family reunification, refugee status, and the length of time (5 years or more) of work in the country²².

Between 2001 and 2010, Zimbabwe was consistently among the top ten countries whose citizens most frequently requested political asylum from the British authorities. Obtaining refugee status has become a popular migration way for Zimbabweans, largely due to the high approval rate of applications (about 26%). Since the beginning of the 2010s, the number of applications for asylum has declined, migration legislation and visa requirements with this country have become stricter (until 2002, there was a visa-free regime between the countries)²³.

Issuing British passports to newcomers from Zimbabwe also reached the highest values in the first decade of the XXI century. Only 3,176 Zimbabweans became British citizens from 1990 to 2000, a maximum of (449) - in 2000, a minimum of (158) – in 1997. From 2001 to 2016 60,432 migrants from Zimbabwe received a British passport, a maximum of (7,703) - in 2009, a minimum of (547) - in 2001. A total of 63,608 Zimbabweans were added to the number of British passport holders between 1990 and 2016²⁴. The variety of ways of migration for Zimbabweans to the British Isles creates a rather mixed picture of the legal grounds for them to stay in the country. As of the mid-2000s, 14% of British Zimbabweans had British citizenship, 27% had a work visa, 13% had a student visa, 5% had refugee status, 19% had a residence permit, and 10% were waiting for a reply to their asylum application²⁵.

20 "Population resident in the United Kingdom, excluding some residents in communal establishments, by country of birth", Office for National Statistics, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/migration1/population-by-country-of-birth-and-nationality/2014/rft-table-10-underlying-datasheets-pop-by-cob-jan-14-to-dec-14.xls>, (date accessed: 15.07.2019).

21 Ibidem.

22 "Grants of settlement by country of nationality and category and in-country refusals of settlement", Home Office, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/427915/settlement-q1-2015-tabs.ods, (date accessed: 30.11.2019).

23 "Asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants and dependants, by country of nationality", Office for National Statistics, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/593027/asylum1-q4-2016-tables.ods, (date accessed: 30.11.2020).

24 "Citizenship grants by previous country of nationality", Office for National Statistics, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/546762/citizenship-q2-2016-tabs.ods, (date accessed: 30.11.2020).

25 Alice Bloch, Zimbabweans in Britain: Transnational Activities and Capabilities, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 2008, p. 292.

The above official data on the number of the Zimbabwean Diaspora, as suggested by a number of independent researchers, may be inferior to real figures that include illegal migrants and citizens of other States. Many Zimbabweans first obtained citizenship of Zambia and Malawi to facilitate their arrival in the UK and then migrated to the Foggy Albion²⁶. According to representatives of the Diaspora, in 2006 alone, there were between 200,000 and 500,000 Zimbabweans in the UK. In the media one can find the information about 600,000 people²⁷. There are more modest estimates of 200,000 migrants. Even if these numbers are obviously exaggerated, the problem of illegal migration for the Zimbabwean Diaspora still remains painful. It is possible that the tripling of the official number of migrants from Zimbabwe in just ten years (from 2001 and 2011) is due not so much to new migrants as to the legalization of Zimbabweans who are already in the country. By the way, the number of Zimbabweans detained for migration violations is quite small, in the range of 100-200 people annually²⁸.

Thus, by using the census data and the statistical reports, we can observe the dynamics of the population of the two largest East African diasporas – Somalis and Zimbabweans. An important nuance in estimating the number of these diasporas is that official data does not include illegal migration. In addition, the demographic characteristics of migrants from these countries include a high birth rate, a large proportion of young people (under the age of 25), and relatively early marriages.

Religious factor

In religious terms, the majority of UK African migrants are Christians (up to 65%), forming a majority in the Nigerian, Kenyan and Zimbabwean diasporas. There is a large proportion of Muslims (approximately 20%), who dominate, in particular, among people from Somalia. Religion for Africans living in the UK is very important part of their lives that lets them save traditional values, encourage the culture of mutual aid and a sense of belonging to their community. Although the vast majority of newcomers from Africa in the UK profess Christianity but not within the European churches (Anglican, Catholic, etc.), but on the basis of their own religious associations. Such African offshoots of Christianity were called new religious movements (“African new religious movements”). They represent a variety of areas of Christianity with significant impact of African culture. In modern Britain churches from Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Ghana are most active.

One of the first Christian missions of Africans in the UK was the “Mission of African churches” in Liverpool founded by the Nigerian Daniels Ecarte, it oper-

26 Pasura Dominic, *Zimbabwe: Mapping Exercise*, Research Report, International Organisation for Migration, London, 2006, pp. 7-14.

27 Ibidem.

28 “People entering detention by country of nationality, sex, place of initial detention and age”, Office for National Statistics, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/593038/detention-q4-2016-tables.ods, (date accessed: 30.11.2020).

ated from 1931 to 1964²⁹. Among the largest Nigerian missions operating in the UK, you can also include the Church of the Lord Aladura. The “African initiated church”, which continues the traditions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, has a significant influence among migrants from Africa.

The religious sect from Zimbabwe “Jowani Masowe Chishanu” had a marked impact on external and internal migration flows in Africa. The ideology of this organization is a combination of Protestantism and local cults. Supporters of this sect can be found in many cities in Central and Eastern Africa, as well as outside the continent³⁰. More than half of all British Zimbabweans are Protestant Christians. In the UK, there are branches of almost all Protestant churches in Zimbabwe (Pentecostals, Methodists, Baptists, Anglicans, etc.). Some Pentecostal churches from this country opened their British cells before the mass emigration of Zimbabweans, in the mid-1980s. In particular, the FIFMI Church (Forward in Faith Ministries International) started operating in the UK in 1985 but it has only been actively growing since the 2000s now with more than 70 cells. A group of adherents stood out and formed their own Church (“Agape for All Nations Ministries International”), which now has more than 50 parishes in the country. Since 2000, another British Zimbabwean Pentecostal Church “the Apostolic Faith Mission International Ministries UK” has begun its history. It includes up to fifty parishes in different cities of the country. The core of a single Pentecostal parish is formed, generally, from 50-300 active parishioners. Catholics are also trying to keep up with Protestants, whose presence has become noticeable, for example, in Birmingham, where Zimbabweans have their own Catholic congregation (“Zimbabwean Catholic congregation in Birmingham”).

Usually it is the Church that acts as the place of primary localization for newcomers from Zimbabwe. Communities and areas of influence of this Diaspora are formed around parishes, where pastors have influence. According to the opening of churches which to judge the settlement of Zimbabweans in the country. In modern Britain, it is difficult to find a major city where at least one of their parishes does not exist. Unlike other African diasporas, newcomers from Zimbabwe are not concentrated in London but are spread across many cities. There are large communities of Zimbabweans in Liverpool, Manchester, Luton, Leeds, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bristol, and Oxford³¹.

There are also Catholics among the newcomers from Zimbabwe. The structure of their associations is usually more orderly than Protestants’, in particular, the activities of Catholic priests (for example, the texts of hymns) must be coordinated with the Church leadership in Zimbabwe itself. In the UK, under the guise of women’s organizations, six Catholic guilds are active with their own distinctive

29 Afe Adogame, African Christians in a Secularizing Europe, *Religion Compass*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 2009, pp. 488-501.

30 Isabel Mukonyora, Masowe Migration: A Quest for Liberation in the African Diaspora, *Religion Compass*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2008, pp. 84-95.

31 *Nigerian Muslim Community in England. Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities*, Change Institute, Communities and Local Government, London, 2009, pp. 16-18.

signs in clothing (Zimbabwean Catholics have a strict dress code). They are in close contact with the mother guilds in the country and try to interact peacefully with the Protestants. British Zimbabweans regularly organize interfaith conferences. The congregation is becoming a place for migrants from Zimbabwe where they can count on the material and moral support of their fellow countrymen.

Religion plays an equally important role in everyday life among Somalis. Especially in terms of home education, which is very common in the Somali Diaspora. In the process of learning at home, in fact, only the skill of primitive counting is mastered, and the Koran is also memorized. All senior family members play an active role in this. The study of the Koran begins at the age of 4-5 years and consists in the sequential memorization of surahs. Teaching the basics of arithmetic is usually carried out in an informal game environment and also mostly orally. Many Somali parents are of the opinion that the mathematical science taught in British schools, in its entirety, may not be useful to their children³². For Somalis, the oral tradition of passing on experience and knowledge remains the main one. It is the spoken word, not the written word, that underlies the system of perception of the world, and it is often said in Arabic, as the language of the Koran.

The Islamic dress code can be a serious barrier to employment for women of Somali origin. Women's clothing in a foreign environment for Somalis is one of the most important elements of their identity. All married women and young girls in Somali communities are clearly required by tradition to wear closed Muslim clothing outside the home. Of course, migrants from Somalia have regional differences in style but the main trends are clothing that hides almost all parts of the body. It is difficult to find something more alarming for British society today than similar attire³³.

African churches and Muslim organizations in modern conditions are not opposed to their activities by the British authorities. The extreme tolerance of the country's leadership to the religious activities of migrants creates favorable conditions for the growth of the influence of such structures. There is a counter-circumstance that provides the same African churches with a stable influx of parishioners, it is the rejection of Africans by the local population not only as representatives of another race, but also as co-religionists. The exclusion of Africans (of course, Christians) in Anglican parishes, according to some researchers, was the main reason for the occurrence and expansion of the network of African churches in the UK. Migrants from Africa, who began to come actively in the 1960s and 1970s, found that they were not perceived as equals in English churches. The place of the Church and religion in society was different from what Africans were used to dealing with in their historical homeland. Although in the main postulates it was, of course, Christianity, but the style of service and the na-

32 Lesley Jones, Home and school numeracy experiences for young Somali pupils in Britain, *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1998, pp. 63-72.

33 Gail Hopkins, A changing sense of Somaliness: Somali women in London and Toronto... p. 532.

ture of communication of parishioners with each other were noticeably different. Noticeable inconsistencies appeared in the XIX century, when missionary structures from the mother country introduced Africans to Christianity. Branches of Protestant churches were often granted independence from the parent organization. This practice was common among Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists. However, in Great Britain itself, the attitude of the local population towards both Christianity and African speakers of this religion was influenced by a number of controversial ideas, including the idea of the racial superiority of the white man.

Africans reacted to such a cold reception from the British brothers on belief by creating their own churches, which were collectively called "Black Christianity". One of the first religious groups of Africans who chose independent life was the Association "Claiming the Inheritance". It gathered representatives of some Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic churches from Africa and the West Indies. Later, such churches received a more neutral name - "independent" ("Black Independent Churches"). By the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, there were more than 160 of them in the UK. Most Africans in modern Britain who consider themselves Christians attend churches led by preachers from Africa³⁴. According to Afe Adogame, African Christianity in the UK is characterized by a large number of activities, lack of missionary goals, participation in political rhetoric on racism, and willingness to work with Christians around the world. African churches use "the switching or exchange of pulpits" when a representative of one congregation presents a series of lectures and sermons in other congregations, regardless of differences of opinion or doctrinal differences. Christian associations of Africans remain almost entirely African, and to the best of their ability they pursue the interests of migrants from Africa³⁵.

Gaudencia Mutema points out great importance of not only Christianity but also religion in life of African migrants. Religious structures provide material (housing, food, loans) and spiritual (including raising children, promoting a healthy lifestyle) assistance to Africans, participate in organizing money transfers, building social connections, relocating and finding shelter (migration from the country or even the entire continent was the only way to stay alive for someone)³⁶. Pentecostal churches, such as the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa and the Muslim association "Nation of Islam", have been particularly successful in this area. In addition to the basic principles of world religions (Christianity, Islam), people from Africa practice local African (sometimes pagan) cults, not seeing, by the way, any contradictions with the commitment to monotheism. In the case of the Africans, British society faced the spread of completely alien cultural practices in their own

34 Patrick Kalilombe, Black Christianity in Britain, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1997, pp. 306-323.

35 Afe Adogame, *Betwixt Identity and Security: African New Religious Movements (ANRMs) and the Politics of Religious Networking in Europe*, Center for Studies on New Religions, 2001, <http://www.cesnur.org/2001/london2001/adogame.htm>, (date accessed: 30.11.2020).

36 Gaudencia Mutema, Religion and African Migration: A Survey, *Religion Compass*, Vol. 4, No. 5, 2010, p. 274.

country, in particular, the belief in magic and witchcraft with performing cruel rituals for expelling evil spirits.

The place and status of religion in the life of the African diasporas of modern Britain differs significantly from the state of affairs in the host society. It loses influence among the British, and in some ways influence even strengthens among migrants from Africa. Religious structures serve the purpose of uniting and consolidating African communities and provide them with significant support in social, charitable and educational activities. This factor affects the daily life of Africans and their interaction with the host society, complicating rather than facilitating interethnic and interreligious relations.

Political field

The UK's African communities, which have formed about 1.5% of the country's population by the 2010s, represents a young and rapidly developing immigrant group. They have a significant impact on the political life of the country. Thanks to the implementation of the multiculturalism policy in the second half of the XX – early XXI centuries, migrants were able to get equal rights and opportunities with the local population. Many British people of African origin have had successful public and political careers in their new homeland. For example, Baroness Valerie Amos, a well-known politician and diplomat, a recognized expert in human rights protection, racial and gender equality. She ran the Commission on Equality of Opportunity for a long time. She was the first woman of African descent to serve in the Cabinet of the British government. From 2010 to 2015, Amos held the position of under-Secretary-General for humanitarian Affairs. Since 2015 she runs the School of Oriental and African Studies of University of London (one of the world's leading centers for Asian, African and Middle Eastern studies), becoming the first African woman to head a British University³⁷.

The tradition of high social activity of British Africans, which first began in the first half of the XX century, led to a rapid growth in the number of public organizations of various types. The beginning of the XXI century in the UK acted, at least, several thousands of African organizations, human rights, charity, youth, sports, national, women's, professional, etc.

Usually, the country of origin serves as the core for integration into various structures for Africans. Almost all social organizations of Africans were created by representatives of a single Diaspora. However, associations of migrants from individual countries and regional and professional social structures exist alongside. Among them, for example, you can find the "West African women's organization", "National Black Police Association", "Society of Black Lawyers", "Black theater Co-operative".

37 "Valerie Amos to be ninth Director of SOAS", University of London, available at: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/news/newsitem103350.html>, (date accessed: 30.11.2020).

However, not all African diasporas are socially and politically active. In particular, organizations of Somali origin in the UK are small in number and do not have high authority at the local level. Clan disunity hinders. In the 1970s The "Somali London Community Cultural Association" started its activity, which united small organizations of Somalis, but in 1995 it stopped working. The next attempt to create a single organization took place in 2011 through the creation of the "Council of Somali organizations", which included about three dozen small organizations and movements. In 2010 the "anti-Tribalist movement" of Somalis was created in London, opposing clan discrimination in Somalia and the UK. However, at the extended family level migrants from Somalia remain one of the most cohesive African communities in modern Britain. Perhaps it is because of the focus on intra-clan issues and the weakness of their own public associations that British Somalis have little interest in political matters at the local level. Based on surveys and through routine observation, it was noted that the main topics of conversation of migrants from Somalia usually revolve around the situation in Somalia and their own clan. They hardly discuss what happens in the area where they live or in the city³⁸. Although they certainly have their own politicians. For example, Mark Hendricks, who was a member of the European Parliament in 1994-1999. 17 Somali candidates participated in the 2010 local elections and nine representatives of Somali communities were elected to local councils in 2014³⁹.

There are also public associations among Zimbabweans, including those that specialize in legal advice (for example, "Zimbabwe Association" и "Zimbabwean Action Group"), primarily on political asylum issues. The national state (British) here gives priority to solidarity at the community level, which has its own system of values, as well as criteria for individual and collective behavior. Mutual assistance, care for the members of their group and respect from their fellow countrymen sometimes become more important for Zimbabweans than compliance with the laws of Great Britain. Like Somalis, Zimbabweans are in close contact with their historical homeland, including through the Internet and mobile communications. More than 90% of British Zimbabweans have relatives in Zimbabwe (15% - a spouse or partner, 24% - a child or even several children, 70% - a parent or parents, 50% - siblings, etc.). About 70% of Zimbabweans have contact with foreign relatives at least once a week, 16% every two weeks and 11% every three or four weeks. 56% of those migrants who were in Zimbabwe in 1993 and earlier communicate with their relatives on a weekly basis. Approximately half of Zimbabweans visit their homes regularly (more than once a year)⁴⁰.

Large African communities in the UK affect the politics and public rhetoric of representatives of the country's leading political parties. The speeches of British leaders, Prime Ministers and Cabinet Ministers have become extremely tolerant

38 David Griffiths, Somali refugees in Tower Hamlets: Clanship and new identities, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1997, pp. 5-24.

39 "A Record 9 British-Somali Councillors Elected in UK Local Elections", *Warya Post*, June 6, 2014.

40 Ibidem.

over the past 20 years. Africans hold major positions in government and local authorities, become leaders of public opinion and are members of Parliament. What was unthinkable a few decades ago is becoming a reality. The marriage of Prince Harry with the American film actress Meghan Markle, who has African roots (her mother is African-American), in 2018 seemed to confirm that. The tradition of active political life among British Africans dates back to the mid-20th century. The African-American political movement "Black Power", which started in the 1950s in the USA, had a huge impact on the development of African nationalism, the struggle of Africans for civil and political rights in Western countries, as well as the rise of academic interest in the study of African history and the evolution of the identity of migrants from Africa.

"Race Today" was one of the leading publications on African issues in the UK. Publication (usually once or twice a month) began in 1969 and ended in 1988. The magazine was politically oriented and in the 1970s was rightfully included in a number of notable mouthpieces of African political journalism, adhering to the ideas of libertarian Marxism and anti-racism. The magazine's key figures were writer Darcus Howe and poet Linton Kwesi Johnson. Today, the BLM ("Black Lives Matter") movement has updated many political aspects of the situation of Africans in Western countries, especially in 2020. Developing on the new principles of decentralized governance and successfully applying the possibilities of communication via the Internet, the supporters of this organization managed to organize a number of high-profile direct actions in the UK. On August 04, 2016 they blocked the airport in London, on June 25, 2017 they initiated protests in London, in June 2020 mass protests have erupted in many cities of the country, the monument to Edward Colston was destroyed in Bristol and the monument to Winston Churchill in Parliament square was desecrated in London.

Thus, we can observe that by the turn of 2020-2021 African social forces and structures are becoming a real political force in the UK capable of active events. Among other things that was possible due to the long process of implementing the ideas of multiculturalism, promoting the ideas of equality and protecting the interests of ethnic and religious minorities. The country's main political parties, Labour and the Conservatives, are already forced to take that into account in their current political activities, both in domestic and foreign policy (when interacting with African countries), focusing on changing the ethnic composition of their electoral base. It can be assumed that the social and political influence of Africans in the UK will only grow in the coming decades.

Conclusions

To sum up, African diasporas are approaching the turn of the decade, the eve of the new 2021 census in the UK, as an active element of British society. Their number is constantly increasing (in absolute and relative terms). The reli-

gious and political aspects of their existence are becoming notable throughout the country and beyond. Once again racial conflicts in the USA and the EU have confirmed the importance of encouraging a dialogue among different ethnic, religious and racial groups. There is a revision of the historical past including through the destruction of monuments to famous figures of former eras, which can be considered one of the signs of growing civil confrontation. For the UK, even if it is distancing itself from the problems of the continent through Brexit, the change of the ethnic component in the population can be called one of the most urgent trends in demographic development. Such trends inevitably lead to changes in political, economic and social relations. No matter how much the British establishment would like it, it is unlikely that it will be possible to avoid this common path for Western European countries.

The Covid-19 and the consequences of its spread have had a very negative impact on the global economy and the UK is no exception. The country's economy is experiencing the largest decline in growth over the past few decades also showing negative growth in some months. The burden on the social sphere is increasing and social tension is growing with it. The 2021 census will be an important milestone in assessing the country's African communities, most likely confirming all the intermediate trends of the 2010s about the growth of the number of Africans, their fragmentation into separate diasporas with their own specifics and the high birth rate among them. Projections of the second half of the 20th – early 21st centuries about the integration of Africans into the host society on the platform of a common British identity did not come true. Religion, language, identity, employment patterns, cultural traditions and much more contribute to the separation of African diasporas from British society and from each other bringing the UK not to a common unity and cohesion but to a new level of fragmentation just along ethnic and religious boundaries.

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Григориј Карпов

АФРИКАНЦИ У ВЕЛИКОЈ БРИТАНИЈИ: ВЕРСКИ И ПОЛИТИЧКИ АСПЕКТИ

Сажетак

Овај чланак посвећен је афричкој дијаспори у Великој Британији. Примарни фокус је на политичким и верским карактеристикама ових заједница, њиховим сличностима и разликама, у сусрету попису 2021. године. Посебно се бавимо и статистичким подацима о овим заједницама на основу претходних пописа и извештаја. Број и утицај ових заједница стабилно расте и он ће на краћи рок допринети промени у етничкој и верској структури модерне Велике Британије.

Кључне речи: Африканци, попис 2021, религија, БЛМ, Велика Британија, демографија

Date received: November 5, 2020

Date accepted: February 29, 2021