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Technology Transfer, Foreign Direct Investment and Economic Growth in Nigeria

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the long-run equilibrium relationship between various international factors and economic growth, as well as to assess the short-term impact of inward FDI, trade and economic growth on international technology transfer to Nigeria. To achieve this, the study used a time series data from 1970 to 2010. A multivariate co-integration technique developed by Johansen and Juselius (1990) was employed to investigate the long-run equilibrium relationships between the international factors and economic growth. The results of the analysis affirmed the existence of co-integrating vectors in the systems of this country during the study period (Lee and Tan 2006). The short-term impact of inward FDI, trade and economic growth on international technology transfer to Nigeria was also tested via Granger Causality test, based on Vector Error-Correction Model. The results of the test revealed a short-run causal effect either running unidirectionally or bidirectionally among the variables for the country. Policy implications are highlighted at the end of this article.

Résumé

Le but de cette étude était d'étudier les relations d'équilibre à long terme entre les facteurs internationaux et la croissance économique, ainsi que d'évaluer l'impact à court terme des IED, du commerce et de la croissance économique sur le transfert de technologie de la scène internationale vers le Nigeria. Cette étude a été réalisée en utilisant des données de séries chronologiques de 1970 à 2010. La technique de co-

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intégration multivariée développée par Johansen et Juselius (1990) a permis d'étudier les relations d'équilibre à long terme entre les facteurs internationaux et la croissance économique. Les résultats de l'analyse ont affirmé l'existence de vecteurs de co-intégration dans les systèmes de ce pays pendant la période de l'étude (Lee et Tan 2006). L'impact à court terme des IED, du commerce et de la croissance économique sur le transfert international de technologie vers le Nigeria a également été testé par l'intermédiaire d'essais de causalité de Granger, basée sur le Model de Correction des Vecteurs d'Erreur. Les résultats du test ont révélé un effet de causalité à court terme soit en cours d'exécution unidirectionnelle ou bidirectionnelle entre les variables pour le pays. Les implications politiques sont mises en évidence à la fin de ce rapport.

Introduction

Debate in the literature on the perceived benefits of an increased openness to trade is on the increase. Although few scholars advocate the imposition of trade restrictions (Rodriguez and Rodrik 1999), the general feeling seems to be that traditional analyses may well understate the true cost of protectionism since most of the analyses utilized static models, while ignoring the dynamic costs of trade protection (Saggi 2002). Underlying this view is the notion, that, somehow, trade of goods and services, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and interaction among countries in various other forms all play a crucial role in improving not only the global allocation of physical resources but also in transmitting technology globally (Dollar 1992; Sachs and Andrew 1995). It is also important to know that technology or knowledge is often transferred at a cost, and most empirical evidence have shown that it is indeed costly to transfer technology internationally (Teece 1976; Mansfield and Romeo 1980; Ramachandran 1993).

The dynamic effects of trade have been studied extensively in the literature. Much of the relevant studies emphasize two intertwined aspects of the relationship between trade and technology: 'that trade alters the allocation of resources in an economy and plays a role in transmitting knowledge internationally' (Saggi 200:194). The benefits from free trade and from allowing the maximum technological advancement are well known. Many studies have shown that free trade enhances the transfer of technology, and technology transfer may still have been very much a positive sum game (Craig and DeGregori 2000). However, due to the general perceived positive spillovers from inward Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), the past two decades have seen most developing and emerging economies change from a radical view of FDI and trade, towards a more friendly view, by using FDI and trade as strategies for positive spillovers to local firms, in their quest for

development (Sasidharan and Ramanathan 2007). Consequently, international trade and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) are considered to be the two major channels that facilitate the flow of knowledge spillovers (Lee and Tan 2006).

Given the impact of trade, FDI and technology transfers on economic growth and development, a survey on the role of trade and FDI as channels (Saggi 2002) of international technology transfer, domestic investment, and growth is imperative, hence, the specific objectives of this paper are multi-fold: (a) to investigate the long-run equilibrium relationships among the international factors (international technology transfer, FDI flows, and trade) and economic growth (as proxy by GDP) in Nigeria; (b) to assess the short-term impact of inward FDI, trade and economic growth on international technology transfer in Nigeria. The paper also argues that while many scholars have done a decent job of outlining the various potential channels through which international technology transfer occur little is known, both in theory and practice, about the relative importance of each of these channels and how exactly this transmission occurs, hence, the lack of knowledge automatically limits our understanding of the roles that policy plays in facilitating the process of international technology transfer (Saggi 2002).

This study was motivated by the centrality of technology to development and the reliance of technology-poor developing countries on its transfer from industralised or emerging countries. It is also imperative to attract foreign direct investment, which is a critical factor for both technology transfer and economic growth in all developing nations. This paper is divided into five sections. Section one is the introduction, which includes the general background of the study, statement of the problem under study and objective(s) of the study. Section two contains the review of relevant literature. Section three depicts the adopted research methodology. Section four includes the analysis and discussion of findings; and finally, section five presents the conclusion and implication for practice.

Review of Relevant Literature

International Trade, FDI and Economic Growth

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), usually in form of greenfields investment, mergers and acquisitions, or other cooperative agreements, has been a major source of skills, equipment, productivity and technological transfers, for the most part from developed countries to developing countries. This is based on the notion that domestic firms in developing countries benefit from the FDI externalities through improved productivity, employment, exports and international integration (Costa and De Queiroz 2002; Lall 1997). In supporting the favourable disposition of countries toward encouraging FDI, advocates

of free market economy claim that MNEs generate spillovers which benefit the host economy, which are usually reflected in improved productivity, know-how, and other benefits (Fosfuri *et al.* 2001). According to Meyer (2004), spillovers are usually generated by non-market transactions, especially when knowledge is transferred to host country firms without any contractual relationship with the foreign MNEs.

The theory of the effect of trade policy regime on FDI, trade and growth in a given host country was first presented by Bhagwati (1978) as an extension to his theory of immiserizing growth and further developed by Bhagwati (1985 and 1994), Brecher and Diaz-Alejandro (1977), Brecher and Findlay (1983). Known as the 'Bhagwati hypothesis', it postulates that FDI inflows coming into a country in the context of a restrictive, import-substitution (IS) regime can retard, rather than promote growth. This is because in an IS regime, FDI mostly takes place in sectors where the host developing country does not have comparative advantage, hence, FDI becomes an avenue for foreign companies to maintain their market share and to reap the extra profit created by the highly protected domestic market.

On the other hand, under the export promotion (EP) regime, the main incentives for FDI in a given host country are the relatively low labour costs and/or the availability of raw materials. This allows the foreign investors to operate in an environment that is relatively free from distortions and to increase production of internationally competitive and export oriented product lines (Edwards 1998). In addition, since the production of firms in an EP regime is not limited by the size of the domestic market, there is increased potential for foreign companies to reap economies of scale through international market penetration (Edwards 1998; Kohpaiboon 2002). It is imperative to know that, despite the unique advantages of FDI, local policies of the host country, especially in developing nations, often make pure Foreign Direct Investment unfeasible, so foreign firms choose licensing or joint ventures (Saggi 2002). In all, the relationships between the various channels of International Technology Transfer (ITT) are complex. While trade and FDI are often complements, FDI and licensing may be either complements or substitutes (Hoekman *et al.* 2004). In terms of technology transfer advantage of Trade and FDI, it is important to distinguish the direct effects on the affiliate in the host country and on the host economy, as well as the positive spillover effects through the demonstration to other producers in the host economy of new technologies and management methods. The third area of technology development (namely the deliberate development of new technologies by R&D) is also very crucial in technology transfers (Grossman and Helpman 1995).

In relation to the direct effects of technology transfer by the multinational firm, the dominant model in contemporary literature is the Dunning Eclectic or Ownership, Location and Internalisation (OLI) model (Markusen 1995). According to this model, firm-specific assets (such as product patents and processes and know-how) can be used at no extra cost in more than one plant and therefore in more than one country. Furthermore, the preference for internal rather than arm's length transfer of technology across countries may be explained by the same public goods characteristic of knowledge capital that explains multi-plant production (Lloyd 1996). According to Granstrand (1998), the resources of a firm can be classified as tangible (physical and financial capital) or intangible. Intangible resources are either disembodied (patents, licenses, brand names and designs) or embodied (for example, competences like management skills). While technology is 'a body' of knowledge about techniques, knowledge is an intangible firm resource and this special characteristic often make it expensive to acquire, although relatively inexpensive to use once acquired. Hence, Granstrand (1998) argued that technology is a 'special kind of knowledge' that shares the general properties of knowledge but also has special characteristics distinguishing it from other types of knowledge (Johnson 2006:11). He however linked technology to artefacts and science, with a high degree of codifiability, used for practical applications and is capable of being protected by patent rights. Given the background of Granstrand's work, many literatures generally found the existence of significant cross-country knowledge spillovers in both disembodied and embodied forms (Lee and Tan 2006).

Some empirical studies (Chakraborty and Basu 2002; Love and Chandra 2004) also supported the theory that trade and FDI function as engines of growth, through government's trade and FDI liberalization policies. This is also collaborated in Tian *et al*. (2004), by stating that increased FDI ratio is likely to lead to rapid economic growth. Hence, Tian *et al*., concluded that FDI and trade should be encouraged in the less developed economies to accelerate technological change and economic growth, since the two serve as motivation for the advanced countries to be more innovative and allow developing countries to draw upon the stock of knowledge created by their innovations. Contrary to these positive conclusions, past studies on the impact of trade, FDI and the diffusion of technology on economic growth have produced mixed results. Basant and Fikkert (1996), Singh (2003) and Young and Lan (1996) are not so optimistic about the importance of trade and FDI in the growth process. Singh (2003), argued that trade contributes to productivity growth in only some unique industries, rather than all industries in an economy. Other studies like Young and Lan (1996), observed that FDI

flows from industrialised countries have more weight in the diffusion of technology than those from developing countries. In addition, Chakraborty and Basu (2002) warn that the impact of FDI on growth is not always positive, a warning that is also shared by Greenaway and Sapsford (1994) and Behzad and Reza (1995) about the impact of trade in the diffusion of technology on economic growth.

Trade and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Nigeria

The Heckscher-Ohlin Theorem states that countries tend to export the goods whose production is intensive in factors with which they are abundantly endowed (Mahe 2005). Due to lack of capacity development, Nigeria relies on the US, the UK and Western Europe for the importation of strategic capital goods like machinery and equipment, where it lacks a comparative advantage, while the greater percentage of her exports, mostly primary products, are targeted toward US markets. Given the importance of trade, international trade can make a decisive contribution to sustainable development by promoting the equitable integration of Nigeria into the global economy, which can significantly boost economic growth (Okejiri 2000). However, trade and investment liberalization will provide maximum benefit to Nigeria 'when it is operating within a sound supporting domestic policy framework and pursued in tandem with political will' (Mahe 2005).

Although tariffs provide the Nigerian government with its second largest source of revenue after oil exports, in order to increase the country's technology capabilities, import policies were revised in March 2003 (Okejiri 2000). This led to the reduction of tariff on strategic imports, mostly raw materials, base metals, and capital equipment, to as low as 2.5 percent. Despite this effort by Government, the poor level of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) protection due to poor enforcement of intellectual property laws, has been described as one of the barriers to innovation and technology acquisition in the country (Akinlo 2004). Moreover, considering the dilapidated state of Nigeria's infrastructure, the option of locating in a self-contained Free Trade Zone (FTZ) is compelling, where tax concessions and other incentives form an added benefit for improving profitability and project returns. After a slow start, the Nigerian government is again talking up the benefits of FTZs and fresh opportunities are emerging for investors, hence, investors will need little persuasion to set up in a more stable and cost-efficient environment (Eedes 2005). In research conducted by Ibrahim and Onokosi-Alliyu (2008), using co-integration techniques, the paper examined the determinants of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Nigeria during 1970-2006. The results observed that the major determinants of FDI were market size, real exchange rate and political factors.

Furthermore, by performing simulations using impulse response and variance decomposition analysis, the result advised against uncontrolled trade liberalization. In a related research by Akinlo (2004), the paper explored the impact of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) on economic growth in Nigeria, for the period 1970-2001. The ECM results showed an insignificant impact of both private capital and lagged foreign capital on the economic growth. These results seem to support the argument that extractive FDI might not be growth enhancing as much as manufacturing FDI. In addition, the output of this extensive research showed that export has a positive and statistically significant effect on growth, while financial development has a significant negative effect on growth, which might be due to the high capital flight it generates. Lastly, the research observed that labour force and human capital have significant positive effect on growth, hence, a suggestion for labour force expansion and education policy to raise the stock of human capital in the country (Akinlo 2004).

Given the pattern of FDI flows to Nigeria (mostly in the oil sector) and the apprehensions as regards the benefits from extractive FDI, several factors suggest that the indirect benefits of FDI may be less in extractive (especially the oil) industry. This is due to the fact that the extractive sector (such as oil sub-sector) is often an enclave sector with little linkages to the other sectors. Moreover, the transfer of technology between foreign firms and domestic ones may be less in extractive industries where the technology embodied is often extremely capital intensive (Akinlo 2004). Based on recent trends, there is high expectation that much of these investments would be supported by private international inflows, mainly from China, Russia and the Middle East. There is also expectation of a continued influx of capital from the official donor sector, which will likely be targeted towards longer-term large-scale infrastructure investments, as well as Nigeria's budget (Leigh 2008).

Research Methodology

This research employed time series data of the selected country, from 1970 to 2010. Multivariate co-integration analysis, Granger-causality tests within the framework of Vector Error-correction Model (VECM) were used to analyse the dynamic relationships among technology transfer, FDI, international trade, output and domestic investment (Johansen and Juselius 1990).

Data Sources

The following sources of data were used in this article: the Import of Machinery (IMPM) data were collected from the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics (UNCTS) Database, Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Statistics database. Real Gross

Domestic Product per capital (GDP), Export and Import data were sourced from the United Nations Statistics Database (UNdata), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) handbook of statistics, and World development indicators (WDI) ONLINE (World development indicators online). FDI and Domestic investment figures were from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) FDISTAT Database, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United Nations Statistics Database (UNdata). Other sources were the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Database, International Financial Statistics (IFS) of the World Bank; publications of central bank of Nigeria and other agencies of government. The results were produced using EVIEWS 6.0.

Econometric Model

According to Asteriou and Hall (2007), econometric methods (models) can help to overcome the problem of complete uncertainty, by providing guidelines on planning and decision-making, as well as a way of examining the nature and form of the relationship among the variables. However, since models need to meet certain criteria in order to be valid, building up a model is not easy. Hence, sound decision-making is required on the variables to include in the model, so as not to cause unneeded variables mis-specification problems (too many variables) or omitted variables mis-specification (Asteriou and Hall 2007). Thus the following models were formulated:

$$IMPM_t = a_1 + a_2 FDI_t + a_3 GDP + aDI + aEXP01 + aIMP + å… \text{ equation (1)}$$
$$FDI = b + bIMPM + bGDP + bDI + bEXP01 + bIMP + å... \text{ equation (2)}$$
$$GDP = c + cIMPM + cFDI + cDI + cEXP01 + cIMP + å… \text{ equation (3)}$$
$$DI = d + dIMPM + dFDI + dGDP + dEXP01 + dIMP + å… \text{ equation (4)}$$
$$EXP01 = e + eIMPM + eFDI + eGDP + eDI + eIMP + å… \text{ equation (5)}$$
$$IMP = f + fIMPM + fFDI + fGDP + fDI + fEXP01 + å… \text{ equation (6)}$$

Where

IMPM = Imports of machinery for host country
FDI = Foreign Direct Investment inflow to host country
GDP = Real Gross Domestic Product for host country
DI = Domestic investment of host country
EXP01 = Exports of host country
IMP = Imports of host country
å = disturbance
a1…a7 = unknown population parameters

The econometric model used in this analysis was based on past theoretical and empirical research of Kim and Seo (2003) and Lee and Tan (2006), and Madsen (2007). The model, as specified above, was in the form of a vector auto-regressive model (VAR) as used in Lee and Tan (2006:397). The researchers tried to identify the impact of technology transfer into the Nigerian economy through equation (1); while the impact of FDI, international trade and technology transfers towards output (GDP) was determined through equation (3). However, since Akaike Information Criterion-AIC (Akaike 1974) is one of the most commonly used in time series analysis, and for the fact that both AIC and Schwarz Bayesian Criterion-SBC (Schwarz 1978) are provided by EViews in the standard regression results output, both were considered in selecting the models for this study (Asteriou and Hall 2007).

Results and Findings

The estimated results of unit roots test

Due to the significance of the unit root in determining both the co-integration and causality analyses, the series in this study was tested for unit roots via the standard Augmented Dickey- Fuller (ADF), Phillips-Perron (PP), and Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-Shin (KPSS) tests.

Table 1: The results of Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) Test
(Ho: a unit root)

	Level		First Difference	
Variables	Constant without Trend	Constant with Trend	Constant without Trend	Constant with Trend
Nigeria Model Variables				
DI	0.124335	-0.309808	-3.145541**	-3.361598***
EXP01	2.514984	1.442281	-3.301828**	-3.687529**
FDI	0.993062	-0.704361	-5.639046*	-6.088482*
GDP	0.172443	-3.352558	-6.807686*	-6.722904*
IMP	-0.282022	-0.737150	-4.567816*	-4.563187*
IMPM	1.268557	-0.224709	-5.805208*	-6.405380*

Note: Asterisks *, ** and *** denote statistical significant at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. Lags are selected automatically by EViews 6.0.

These tests were performed using a statistical package known as EViews 6.0. The package automatically selects the number of lagged dependent variables in order to correct for the presence of serial correlation (Asteriou and Hall 2007). The standard ADF test was conducted for unit roots in the

levels (for both constant without trend and constant with trend) and first difference (for both constant without trend and constant with trend), given the automatically selected Schwarz Info Criterion and the maximum lags, in order to determine the number of unit roots in the series of Nigerian variables. The result is reported in Table 1. Although, the test was started with level, the result showed consistent results by rejecting the null (Ho: a unit root) hypothesis of a unit root at first difference, against the one-sided alternative whenever the ADF statistic is less than the critical value, at a statistically significant values of one percent, five percent and ten percent. Hence the researchers' conclusion is that the series is stationary.

Similar to the ADF test, the PP test for the country was conducted for unit roots in the levels (for both constant without trend and constant with trend) and first difference (for both constant without trend and constant with trend).

Table 2: The results of Phillips-Perron (PP) Tests (Ho: a unit root)

Variables	Level		First Difference	
	Constant without Trend	Constant with Trend	Constant without Trend	Constant with Trend
Nigeria(N) Model Variables				
DI	0.439370	-0.148130	-2.65569***	-2.604309
EXP01	2.320468	0.972072	-3.30182**	-3.74274**
FDI	1.763926	0.704361	-5.641124*	-6.086636*
GDP	0.018424	-2.356968	-6.769487*	-6.689742*
IMP	-0.809650	-1.275888	-4.613034*	-4.607808*
IMPM	1.599318	-0.295587	-5.888616*	-6.383675*

Note: Asterisks *, ** and *** denote statistical significant at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. Lags are selected automatically by EViews 6.0.

The lag truncation was specified to compute the Newey-West heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation (HAC) consistent estimate of the spectrum at zero frequency, via the default Bartlett Kernel estimation method (Asteriou and Hall 2007). The results are reported in Table 2. The results presumed a rejection of null (Ho: a unit root) hypothesis of a unit root at first difference, against the one-sided alternative whenever the PP test statistic is less than the test critical values at a statistically significant values of one percent, five percent and ten percent. Hence, the researchers' conclusion is that the series is stationary.

The KPSS tests, for the country, was also conducted for unit roots in the levels (for both constant without trend and constant with trend) and first difference (for both constant without trend and constant with trend), via the default Bartlett Kernel estimation method and the Newey-West bandwidth; the results are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: The results of Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-Shin (KPSS) Test

	Level		First Difference	
Variables	Constant without Trend	Constant with Trend	Constant without Trend	Constant with Trend
Nigeria Model Variables				
DI	0.325089**	0.14051***	0.293300	0.158950**
EXP01	0.507892**	0.14550***	0.195006	0.178243**
FDI	0.745004*	0.13006***	0.315861	0.117715
GDP	0.736431**	0.072152	0.116336	0.105210
IMP	0.414510**	0.112198	0.173065	0.133714
IMPM	0.648086**	0.14437***	0.321293	0.109837

Note: Asterisks *, ** and *** denote statistical significant at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. Lags are selected automatically by EViews 6.0.

Lags are selected automatically by EViews 6.0. unlike the ADF and PP tests, the null (Ho: model is stationary) hypothesis of a stationary model was rejected at levels, hence, the degree of integration of these variables was further confirmed by the KPSS test as the result of the test showed that the null hypothesis of KPSS test is non-stationary, which is the reverse of those of ADF and PP tests (Masih and Masih 1996).

The test results of multivariate co-integration analysis

One of the major objectives of this study was to investigate the long-run equilibrium relationships among the international factors (international technology transfer, FDI flows, and trade) and economic growth (as proxy by GDP) in Nigeria. The multivariate co-integration technique developed by Johansen & Juselius (1990) was employed to determine these relationships, since the variables in the system of the country (Nigeria) were I(1), and may possess some kind of long run relationship. The test results are reported in Table 4.

After a series of selection processes using the likelihood ratio test with a potential lag length of 1 through 4, the results of the multivariate co-integration analysis reported in Table 4 indicated the existence of co-integrating vectors in the systems of this country. Based on the trace statistics, the researcher observed from the results that there were four co-integrating vectors in the model of Nigeria (at a lag interval of 1 to 3). Although only the trace statistics results are needed for the pantula principle method of model selection for co-integration testing, both the trace and the maximal eigenvalue statistics in the analysis indicated the existence of four co-integrating vectors for the Nigerian system (Asteriou and Hall 2007).

Table 4:   Johansen's test results for Multiple Co-integrating Vectors

Order of Co-integration		Trace		Maximum Eigenvalue	
Null	Alternative	Statistics	C. V. (0.05 level)	Statistics	C.V (0.05 level)
		Nigeria Model			
		Variables: IMPM, FDI, GDP, DI, EXP01, IMP (*P*=2)			
r = 0	r 1	300.2901 *	117.7082	117.2672*	44.49720
r 1	r 2	183.0229 *	88.80380	70.35526*	38.33101
r 2	r 3	112.6676 *	63.87610	55.84345*	32.11832
r 3	r 4	56.8241 *	42.91525	35.06454*	25.82321
r 4	r 5	21.75966	25.87211	17.18951	19.38704
r 5	r = 6	4.570152	12.51798	4.57015	12.51798

Note: r indicates the number of co-integrating vectors. Asterisk (*) indicates rejection at the 95% critical value. C.V. denotes Critical Value.

The interpretation of this result (Table 4) implied that Nigerian models have a long-run equilibrium relationship with one another and were adjusting in the short-run via four identified channels (Lee and Tan 2006). As stated earlier, if two variables are co-integrated, the finding of no-causality in either direction is ruled out and the typical trends are eliminated from the variables involved. Although, the existence of co-integrating vectors (co-integration) in the systems of this country presumed the presence or absence of Granger-causality, it does not indicate the direction of causality between the variables. Hence, the direction of the Granger-causality was detected through the vector error-correction model (VECM) derived from long-run co-integrating vectors (Granger 1969; Lee and Tan 2006). It is important to point out here that temporal precedence does not imply a cause and effect relationship, but establishing the order of the temporal precedence can be very useful in understanding the nature of the relationships and policy recommendations necessary to ameliorate the situation (Onafowora and Owoye 2006).

The estimated results of Granger-causality tests

The second objective of this study was to assess the short-term impact of inward FDI, trade, and economic growth on international technology transfer into Nigeria during the selected period of study. The assessment involved testing the short-run Granger-causality among the variables for the country.

For a Vector Autoregressive (VAR) first-differences system with co-integrated variables, as depicted by the models in this analysis, the Granger-causality test was conducted in the environment of Vector Error-Correction Model (VECM) and the inclusion of the relevant error-correction terms, so as to avoid mis-specification and omission of important constraints.

Table 5: Granger Causality results based on Vector Error-Correction Model (Nigeria Model)

Dependent Variable	Independent variable						
	[Wald Test Chi Square (Significance level)]						
	IMPM	FDI	GDP	DI	EXPO1	IMP	ECT_{t-1} terms
IMPM	------	0.774603	13.2586*	6.84582***	9.0264**	3.618038	20.3855*
		0.8555	0.0041	0.0770	0.0289	0.3058	0.0004
FDI	4.581385	-------	13.27705*	13.39065*	16.9366*	10.123**	25.2264*
	0.2051		0.0041	0.0039	0.0007	0.0175	0.00001
GDP	2.813294	16.6522*	------	7.57411***	2.172380	7.059***	23.0014*
	0.4213	0.0008		0.0557	0.5374	0.0700	0.0001
DI	1.645923	0.036294	4.743651	------	5.298446	0.434144	4.623892
	0.6490	0.9982	0.1916		0.1512	0.9331	0.3281
EXP01	6.668***	2.62633	21.9823*	17.17398*	--------	15.1570*	32.0661*
	0.0832	0.4529	0.0001	0.0007		0.0017	0.00001
IMP	8.8948**	9.6301**	2.902335	2.600274	6.994***	--------	17.3805*
	0.0307	0.0220	0.4069	0.4574	0.0721		0.0016

Note: Asterisks *, ** and *** denote statistical significant at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively; this system consists of 4 (four) co-integrating vectors; hence, a joint Wald test is conducted on the 4 (four) error-correction terms (ECTs). The estimated result is reported in the last column (ECT_{t-1} terms) of the Table.

The Wald test chi square of the explanatory variables (in first-differences) indicates the 'short-run' causal effects, whereas the 'long-run' causal relationship is implied through the significance or otherwise of the lagged 'group' error correction term (ECT terms) which contains the long-run information (Lee and Tan 2006). Table 5 shows the Granger-causality result

based on the VECM for the Nigerian models. The Wald test Chi Square (at various significance levels of one percent, five percent and ten percent), for the lag values of the independent variables indicated a short-run causal effect either running unidirectionally or bidirectionally between the variables. The joint Wald test conducted on the four (Nigeria) error-correction terms (ECTs), as reported in the last column (ECT terms) of Table 5, exemplified the burden of short-run endogenous adjustment (to long-run trend) to bring the system back to its long-run equilibrium (Lee and Tan 2006).

For clarity's sake, the summary of the results (Table 5) from all the models, at various levels of significant, was used to construct the lead-lag linkages for Nigeria. This is shown in Figure 1. In a deviation from previous studies (Ibrahim and Onokosi-Alliyu 2008; Ikiara 2003; Okejiri 2000), this study failed to confirm a short-run causal relationship between FDI and technology transfer in Nigeria during the study periods. Also, the study was unable to confirm whether technology transfers promote growth in Nigeria. This might be due to the low absorptive capacity and human capital development in Nigeria over the period (Heston *et al.* 2002; UNDP 2007). Although this study was unable to establish that FDI plays a crucial role in mediating technology transfers into Nigeria, domestic investment and trade impacted positively on technology transfer. However, FDI had a bidirectional significant influence on output and also on import of other goods and services, which might not be machinery and equipment. In addition, this analysis further revealed that, despite the positive impact of domestic investment on growth, FDI and trade, the reverse was the case for domestic investment.

Figure 1: Short-run lead-lag linkages summarized from VECMs for Nigeria Variables.
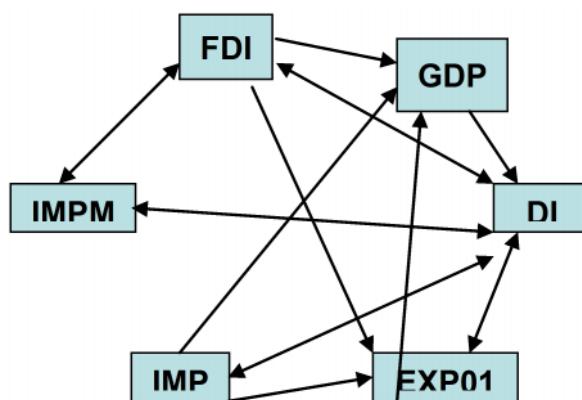
This general lack of inducement for domestic investment might be due to inconsistent government policies, poor infrastructural development, political instability and low human capital development (Ibrahim and Onokosi-Alliyu 2008; Ikiara 2003). The results of this study were similar to an earlier research by Okejiri (2000) and Akinlo (2004) on the impact of foreign direct investment (FDI) on economic growth in Nigeria. The ECM results of these studies showed that lagged foreign capital has a small, and not a statistically significant effect, on technology transfer. The three results seem to support the argument that extractive FDI might not be technology- or growth-enhancing as much as manufacturing FDI (Okejiri 2000). Finally, all the variables in the Nigerian system were adjusting to equilibrium in the long run, with the exception of domestic investment (DI), which failed to do the adjustment in the long run.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the long-run equilibrium relationships among the international factors and economic growth, as well as to assess the short-term impact of inward FDI, trade and economic growth on international technology transfer to Nigeria. Since the variables in the Nigerian system were I(1), and may possess some kind of long-run relationship, a multivariate co-integration technique developed by Johansen and Juselius (1990) was employed to investigate the long-run equilibrium relationships among the international factors and economic growth. The results of the multivariate co-integration analysis affirmed the existence of co-integrating vectors in the Nigerian systems, with four co-integrating vectors in the models. These results implied that the variables in the Nigerian models had a long-run equilibrium relationship with one another and were adjusting in the short-run via four identified channels (Lee and Tan 2006).

Unfortunately, the existence of co-integrating vectors (co-integration) in the systems of this country only presumed the presence or absence of Granger-causality; it does not indicate the direction of causality between the variables. Hence, the direction of the Granger-causality was detected through the vector error-correction model (VECM) derived from long-run co-integrating vectors (Granger 1969; Lee and Tan 2006). Hence, the Wald test Chi Square (at various significance levels of one percent, five percent and ten percent), for the lag values of the independent variables indicated a short-run causal effect either running unidirectionally or bidirectionally between the variables for the country. For instance, in a deviation from previous literature (Ibrahim and Onokosi-Alliyu 2008; Ikiara 2003; Okejiri 2000), this study was unable to confirm a short-run causal relationship between FDI and technology transfer in Nigeria. Also, the study was unable to confirm

whether technology transfers promote growth in Nigeria. Finally, all the variables in the Nigerian system were adjusting to equilibrium in the long run, with the exception of domestic investment (DI), which failed to do the adjustment in the long run.

Implications for Practice

To reap the full benefits of FDI and technology transfer, nations should understand the magnitude of technology transfer, such as its determinants and modes of transfer. Hence, host governments should reposition their existing policies and institutions, rather than merely attracting FDI and technology. Governments should focus additionally on effective transfer of technology, which includes the diffusion and generation of technology locally (Lee and Tan 2006). It is important for Nigerian policy makers to know that, contrary to expectations, trade and FDI may not lead to growth, rather they may increase both markets and economic risks. Consequently, adequate provision should be made for all risks associated with FDI and trade, since increased risk premium discourages investment due to enhanced and unbalanced competition in the new 'globalised world'.

According to Solow (1956), the most important determinant of growth is technological change. Hence, Nigeria should focus on the impact of policies on technological change, as well as the diffusion of knowledge from developed countries. Efforts should also be made to internalize knowledge transfers within the country. Based on corroborated findings from the literature, trade in intermediate goods is an important channel of the transmission of technology (Heston *et al.* 2002). Therefore, for policy makers, imports of components for assembly may become the easiest way to acquire high technology, since it makes it possible for them to enter new production lines characterized by strong global demand growth and potential productivity gains (Lemoine and Ünal-Kesenci 2004). Furthermore, it is important for policy makers to know that, taking part in the labour-intensive stages of production, due to their competitive advantage, does not automatically lead to the technological spillovers needed to move up the production chain and to ensure a sustainable trajectory of economic development (Lloyd 1996).

Finally, due to the insignificant impact of FDI on technology transfer and the inactive domestic investment, Nigeria should, as a matter of urgency, diversify from primary products-induced FDI to science and technology-induced FDI. The process technologies should also be upgraded through the modernization of production facilities in the form of new plants and machinery, as well as adaptations of imported technology and improvement of quality (Okejiri 2000). In general, the results of this study should be adopted with

care. The Wald tests Chi Square on VECM may be interpreted as within-sample causality tests since they indicate only the Granger-exogeneity of the dependent variable within the sample period. However, they do not provide information regarding the relative strength of the Granger-causal chain among the variables outside the sample period. This consideration is recommended as an area for future research studies.

Acknowledgements

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Of Fundamental Change and No Change: Pitfalls of Constitutionalism and Political Transformation in Uganda, 1995-2005

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Abstract

With Uganda's turbulent and traumatic post-independence political experience, the take-over of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) in 1986 ushered in a tide of unprecedented hope for political transformation and constitutionalism. NRM's ten-point programme, pledge for a 'fundamental change', climaxing in the formulation of a new constitution in 1995, encapsulated the state-social contract and hope for the new order. But ten years later, Uganda' political landscape and power architecture continued to show that political transformation and constitutionalism were still illusory. This article examines political development in Uganda during the first ten years under the new constitution and time of democratic reforms in Africa. The article shows that these years pointed to political reversals epitomised by the preponderance of abuse of human rights, state failures and loss of hope in the war-ravaged north, patrimonialism, autocratic tendencies, and manipulations which were reminiscent of the old dictatorships. The last straw came with the shocking amendment of the embryonic constitution to remove presidential term limits, which were entrenched as a lynch-pin for a smooth transfer of power. This was followed by the military siege of the High Court that crowned the reality that militarism remained the anchor of power in Uganda's body politic. The independence of the judiciary and legislature remained illusory, as together with the opposition they remained susceptible to bribery, manipulation, intimidation and repression. With an unpredictable constitutionalism and political terrain, the NRM's promise of a 'fundamental change' degenerated into 'no change'.

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Résumé

Avec l'expérience politique post-indépendance mouvementée et traumatisante de l'Ouganda, l'accession au pouvoir du Mouvement de Résistance Nationale (NRM) en 1986 a marqué la montée d'une vague d'espoir sans précédent de transformation politique et de constitutionnalisme. Le programme de gestion des ressources naturelles en dix points proposé par le NRM, qui a donné des gages d'un « changement fondamental » et qui a abouti à l'adoption d'une nouvelle constitution en 1995, a scellé le pacte Etat-Société et a été porteur d'espoir pour un nouvel ordre politique. Mais dix ans plus tard, dans quelle mesure l'Ouganda est-il sur la bonne voie vers la transformation politique dans les relations État-société et le constitutionnalisme? En conséquence, le présent document examine l'évolution politique en Ouganda pendant les dix premières années sous l'empire de la nouvelle constitution et une conjoncture de temps des réformes démocratiques en Afrique. Le document montre que ces années ont été le théâtre de bouleversements politiques incarnés par la prépondérance de l'abus de droit de l'homme, les défaillances de l'État et le désespoir dans le nord du pays ravagé par la guerre, la patrimonialisation du pouvoir, les dérives autocratiques et les manipulations qui rappelaient les anciennes dictatures. Le comble est venu avec le choquant tripatouillage de la constitution pourtant embryonnaire pour supprimer la limitation des mandats présidentiels, qui était le verrou qui garantissait un transfert en douceur du pouvoir. Cet événement a été suivi par le siège militaire de la Haute Cour qui a fini par convaincre que le militarisme est resté le propre du pouvoir politique en Ouganda. L'indépendance du pouvoir judiciaire et législatif restait illusoire, et avec l'opposition ces instituions restent en proie à la corruption, la manipulation, l'intimidation et la répression. Avec un constitutionnalisme et terrain politique imprévisible, la promesse du NRM d'un «changement fondamental» a dégénéré en un « statu quo politique ».

Introduction

In Uganda, the high expectations that came with independence gradually dissipated with the political turbulence that followed. The 1966/77 political imbroglio was followed by Idi Amin's coup and descent into bloody dictatorship during the 1970s; the liberation war and murderous transitional period of 1979 and the controversial 1980 elections and subsequent five year protracted guerrilla war. These adversely impacted on people's livelihoods, survival and rights. The NRM takeover in 1986 ushered in the euphoria of unprecedented hope for political transformation. The NRM's approach, which was couched in the pro-*wananchi* (people) revolutionary philosophy, generated a spontaneously felt state-people contract that was expressed as a 'Fundamental Change' from successive autocratic rule. This was crystallised in the formulation and promulgation of the new 1995 Constitution.

This article explores the course of Uganda's progress with political transformation during the first ten years under the new constitution, from 1995 to 2005. This was also the period that was marked as the 'third wave of democratisation' in Africa. The article shows that the hyped 'fundamental change' was absent for the war-ravaged Northern Uganda; reports of human rights violations were the order of the day; tell-tale signs of authoritarianism resurfaced; corruption and neo-patrimonialism escalated; militaristic and repression tendencies persisted; political pluralism/diversity was characteristically strangulated; old-time institutional and electoral manipulations recurred; and the last straw was the amendment of the embryonic constitution for political expediency of Museveni's rule *ad infinitum*. Such worrisome political antecedents approximated the old-time trends, signalling that NRM had veered off the course of 'fundamental change' back to 'no change', which coincidentally became President Yoweri Museveni's subsequent campaign slogan. The paper therefore shows that Uganda's rise from hopelessness to hope under the NRM was beset with significant reversals between 1995 and 2005. Subsequently, constitutionalism and political certainty remained a chimera.

Tandon reminds that a constitution is envisaged as '[A]n arrangement by which power is organised within a state so that its exercise is accountable to a set of laws beyond the reproach of those who exercise those powers' (Tandon 1994:225). Written constitutions were part of the western governance models and institutions that were grafted on traditional African systems. However, they became governance parameters for the complex political architecture of the new African state that was arbitrarily constructed at the expediency of colonial interests. Nation-building, constitutionalism and democracy remained paradoxical and superficial in post-colonial states like Uganda. In this article, we conceptualise political transformation *vis-à-vis* Uganda's previous dictatorships, while constitutionalism is conceptualised beyond a textual constitution *qua* constitution. From teleological conceptualisation, constitutionalism transcends textual and legalistic confines to encompass human worth, dignity, aspirations and interests (Katz 2000). There is a contradiction of having a constitution without constitutionalism (Okoth-Ogendo 1991). Constitutionalism encompasses legitimacy, democracy, participation and human rights as mirrored through institutions and organs of state and society.

Background to Governance and Constitutionalism Paradoxes

Uganda attained independence in 1962 after a gruelling constitution making process at Lancaster in the UK. From the process, an 'unholy' alliance emerged between Buganda's Mengo monarchists under a hastily formed party Kabaka Yekka (Only the King (KY) and Milton Obote's Uganda People's

Congress (UPC) to block the Catholic-dominated Democratic Party (DP). The UPC/KY alliance led Uganda to independence, with Buganda's King (Kabaka) doubling as President of Uganda and Obote as executive Prime Minister.

By 1966 the alliance had crumbled over the saga of the 'lost counties'[1] between Kabaka Mengo versus Obote's 'nation-building' project. This, spiralled into acrimony and the subsequent attack and exile of the Kabaka. Thereafter, Obote pursued repression against Buganda which included imposition of a state of emergency, abolition of kingdoms and enactment of the 1967 Republican Constitution through a non-consultative process. Members of Parliament (MPs) simply found the constitution circulated in their pigeon holes amidst tension. Obote was overthrown by Idi Amin in 1971, but a short-lived relief plummeted into an unprecedented eight year bloody military dictatorship characterised by the assault on civil institutions of governance; erratic rule by decree and wanton state murders. Meanwhile, the constitution remained in abeyance until the fall of Amin in 1979, after which it was restored and often amended and patched until the formulation of a new 1995 constitution.

The fall of Amin was followed by political contestations and turbulence under the UNLF regimes, ending with Paul Muwanga presiding over the 1980 elections and the controversial return of UPC to power. The second UPC regime was characterised by a simulacrum of phoney parliamentary democracy, repression, violation of human rights and constitutional amendments at the whims of narrow political expediency. Meanwhile, a costly five year guerrilla war led by Yoweri Museveni's NRM raged on and precipitated the 1985 General Tito Okello Lutwa-led coup against the UPC regime (Karugire 1980; Mutibwa 1992; Makubuya 1994).

Instability and violation of human rights continued unabated under Tito Okello's junta, until the NRM overran the regime in 1986. From 1966, Uganda's political landscape was, therefore, characterised by unconstitutional governance; strangulation of civil institutions of governance; totalitarianism, state repression and violation of human rights that included gruesome extra judicial murders.

The NRM Regime

The new Museveni and NRM regime projected a *sui generis* revolutionary orientation that seemed to constitute a watershed in the political architecture of Uganda (Museveni 1992; Museveni 1997). At his inauguration, Museveni stated that: 'No one should think that what is happening today is a mere change of guard: it is a fundamental change in the politics of our country'

(excerpts from Museveni's take-over speech, 1986). The NRM take-over was seen as a fundamental departure from misrule to political transformation, constitutionalism, rule of law and human rights. The contractual fundamentals enshrined in the Ten-point Programme and promise of a fundamental change that was already exhibited in the discipline of the triumphant rag-tag NRA guerrilla fighters instilled an unprecedented sense of relief and confidence. Ugandans envisioned the end to state-orchestrated wanton murders; the end of the culture of political violence, torture, arbitrary arrests, the repressive modus operandi, and above all, the opportunity to freely elect and peacefully change their leadership. It was considered a dawn of a new era. The exceptions were the people of Northern Uganda region, where the defeated armies re-grouped and waged an extended war led by Alice Lakwena and Joseph Kony.

Internationally, Museveni's conversion to neo-liberalism earned him Western acclaim of a 'unique visionary, charismatic leader' and *primus inter pares* of the 'new breed' of African leaders (Oloka-Onyango 2004; Kjaer 2004). The 'new breed' trio, namely Museveni, Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Melez Zenawi of Ethiopia, gave credence to the discourse of the 'third wave of democratisation' in Africa (Huntington 1991; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Linz and Stepan 1996). However, despite the resuscitation of liberal democracy with its procedural electoral systems and periodic elections, written constitutions and state institutions, countries like Uganda continued to display a discrepancy between democratic models versus realities. But to what extent was the NRM and Museveni a 'new breed' on Africa's or Uganda's political landscape? Did periodic elections and the textual formalism of the new constitution guarantee political and constitutional transformation (Hansen and Twaddle 1995).

The New Constitution

The new 1995 constitution was not made on a *tabula rasa*, but emanated out of a deeply rooted consciousness of a turbulent political past characterised by unlimited and costly abuse of powers. This time, the process of formulating the constitution involved wide consultation, participation and a specially elected Constituent Assembly (CA), hence 'a people's constitution' (Furley and Katarikawe 1997). Through a meticulous process guided by consensus, the delegates started with the preamble that succinctly reflect the tumultuous past as its point of departure.[2] There was a general desire to entrench specific parameters and mechanisms for the operation of government against the backdrop of daunting past experiences (Bazaara 2001:41-45; Nassali 2004). To ensure legitimacy and sustainability of the new constitution, the major task was to 'create viable political institutions that will ensure maximum consensus and orderly secession of government' (Odoki 2005:Chap.8).

Ever since the abrogation of the independence constitution in 1966, the executive had exercised arbitrary power through repression and extermination. Accordingly, the ultimate motif of the new constitution was the enshrinement of people's desire to restrain executive power. The new constitution sought to entrench a strong Bill of Rights and mechanisms for their enforcement and democracy-promoting and horizontal institutions for good and accountable governance. Furthermore, the new constitution reflected the need for popular representation and aspirations that transcended mere abstraction and documentary value of a constitution. But to what extent was the new constitution a guarantee for stability and transformation of state-society relations in Uganda? This paper examines the first ten years under the new constitution and pinpoints the reversals that reflected a lack of adherence to constitutionalism, both in its textual formalism and broader dynamism that reflected people's realities, fears, rights and aspirations.

In 2005, the NRM government fundamentally amended the constitution to satisfy the narrow power interests of the ruling elite, yet the population did not defend 'their' constitution. In this regard, Moehler's study noted that citizens who were active in the process of constitution-making were no more supportive of the constitution than those who stayed at home, and stressed the importance of the political elite in shaping the constitutional perceptions of the citizens (Moehler 2006). Had constitutionalism, therefore, permeated the state and the socio-political fabric of Ugandan society? We argue that Ugandans are not passive victims, but actors with agency, challenging misrule and un-constitutionalism. However, the character of the state and political machinations often shaped their strategies of engagement. In this case, the population did not have much faith in the legalistic character of the constitution as a guarantee of a new constitutional and political order in Uganda.

Contestation over the Right of Association and the Referendum

The first major constitutional problem revolved around the right of association that was entrenched in the new 1995 constitution. Since independence, the political space has been restrictive through one party dominance, repression and military dictatorships. Chapter Four of the Constitution spelt out human rights and freedoms which it categorized as fundamental and inherent for individuals, hence not granted by the State. Article 29:1 (e) specifically stated that every person shall have the right to: 'freedom of association which shall include the freedom to form and join associations or unions, including trade unions and political and other civic organizations' (*The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, 1995:Chapter 4). The NRM had singled out political parties for blame as the cause of polarization along ethnic and religious lines, which had allegedly exacerbated political turbulence in Uganda. Accordingly,

it had been grudgingly enshrined in the constitution that political parties had to remain in abeyance in order to enable the 'non-party' Movement system to consolidate an all-embracing political culture of national unity. This was tantamount to constitutional strangulation of diversity through a one-party-tight-jacket model, reminiscent of the post-independence nation-building legacy that was couched in the 'one nation' rhetoric.

Owing to internal and external pressure, the NRM sought to subject the right of association to a referendum. Contestations emerged over the legitimacy of the proposed referendum, as the right to associate was constitutional and inalienable, hence could not be subjected to the vote. Conversely, government argued that it was necessary to consult 'the people', who alone had the prerogative of deciding how they were to be governed. Subsequently, the Constitutional Court in Constitutional Petition No. 3 of 1999 nullified the referendum.

The nullification prompted Parliament to pass the first amendment to the 1995 Constitution entitled the Constitution (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2000. The import was to legitimize voting on the right to associate. In Constitutional Petition No. 7 of 2000 the Constitutional Amendment was challenged as unconstitutional. Technicalities were pointed out, for instance, that the Amendment was passed by Parliament without the required quorum. However, the Constitutional Court in a majority judgment of three to two dismissed Petition No. 7 which challenged the amendment, and maintained that the Constitutional Amendment Act No. 13 of 2000 had properly amended Articles 88, 89, 90, 97 and 257 of the 1995 Constitution (See Constitutional Petition No 7/2000). This Constitutional Court judgment was appealed against in Constitutional Appeal No. 1 of 2002 to the Supreme Court. Subsequently, on 29 January, 2004 the Supreme Court declared the Constitutional (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2000 as unconstitutional and accordingly struck it out as null and void (See SC Appeal Judgment in Const Appeal No. 1/2002).

President Museveni was reportedly annoyed with the Judges over nullifying the referendum and he was quoted as ridiculing the judiciary thus: 'the major work for the Judges is to settle chicken and goat theft cases but not determining the country's destiny' (Ssuuna, *The Monitor*, 30 June 2004; *The New Vision*, 30 June, 2004). This illustrated how the executive undermined the judiciary (International Bar Association 2007). It is noteworthy that the executive in Uganda continued to wield overwhelming formal and informal power and influence over the institutions and arms of government, which continued to undermine any checks and balances. Such influence and control inter alia came through powers to appoint heads of institutions like the judiciary,[3] the IGG, Auditor General, Director, Criminal Investigations Department (CID), Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Chairpersons of

Uganda Human Rights Commission and of Commissions of Inquiry. Owing to the executive's capacity to influence and manipulate the legislature, major and contentious amendments would be passed without much ado.

Accordingly, although the Supreme Court had declared the Constitutional (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2000 as unconstitutional, Parliament succeeded in passing the referendum law amidst stiff resistance from the opposition. The G6, an alliance of six major opposition parties comprising Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Democratic Party (DP), Conservative Party (CP), Justice Forum, The Free Movement (TFM), and the Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC) and some civil society organisations opposed the referendum. The opposition insisted that the referendum was an infringement of the constitutional and inalienable right of association. It thus vowed to boycott the referendum (*New Vision* 6 May 2005). They maintained that owing to its irrelevance, it was not justifiable to spend an estimated $13m (£7.4m) on the referendum (Masiga *HURINET*, 17 June 2005). Through their lawyers, the G6 sought an injunction against the plebiscite in the Supreme Court. The petitioners asked the Constitutional Court to block the referendum saying it was worthless, illegal, unconstitutional, too expensive and violated peoples' basic rights and freedom (*The New Vision* 21 June 2005).

Government was later accused of initiating the formation of hitherto unknown surrogate opposition parties with which it negotiated to legitimise the referendum. The new 'opposition' parties were often at variance with the common opposition stand, for instance, 30 of the parties registered to participate in the controversial referendum. This bolstered the Government's position that a national referendum had to be organised to decide whether to retain a No Party system or revert to a Multi-party political dispensation. On 12 July 2005, President Museveni himself launched a 'Yes' campaign in favour of the return to multi-party politics. Parliamentarians were allegedly bribed to support the 'Yes' vote. Alice Alaso (Soroti women MP) was quoted thus: '...we burst into the office and got them off-guard. They were giving out money in envelopes. When we asked him (Suleiman Madada) for our share, he refused to give us any money' (*The Daily Monitor* 21 July 2005).

Presumed Constitutional 'Deficiencies' and the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC)

In response to the Supreme Court ruling, the NRM leadership pressed for a review of the new Constitution under the pretext that it had several defects and areas of inadequacy. Government cited various complaints, for instance, Buganda's Mengo persistent demand for 'federo' (a federal system of government) and clarification of the functions of traditional leaders. The contentious 'federo' debate was used to showcase how the new constitution

had not addressed 'contentious' issues, thus the justification to review it. It was further advanced that government faced enormous internal and external pressure to open up political space, hence the need to review some articles in the constitution that pertained to political systems. Accordingly, by legal notice No. 1 of 2001, government established a Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) headed by Prof Fredrick Ssempebwa.

In the course of the CRC consultations, Cabinet submitted proposals which were canalised into the 2005 Omnibus Bill, which heaped together up to 120 articles of the new Constitution for amendment. This was notwithstanding the different modes of amending the specific articles as stipulated in the very 1995 constitution. In their submission, Cabinet proposed increasing the powers of the president over parliament, including the power to dissolve it in case of a stalemate. Additionally, Cabinet wanted Article 99 (on the executive authority of Uganda) to be amended to give the President powers to issue executive orders, which should have the force of law. Cabinet also sought to reduce powers of Parliament over the President's nominations to ministerial posts. The powers of the MPs to censure ministers were also curtailed under the Cabinet proposals. The most controversial proposal was to repeal Article 105 (2) of the new Constitution to remove the two five-year term limit on the office of the president. Cabinet argued that:

> The reason for removing the limit is to allow the people to decide the number of times a person may serve as President by their support or rejection at the polls in consonance with Article I of the Constitution, which provides that all power belongs to the people (omnibus Constitutional (Amendment) Bill 2005).

To sugar-coat the controversial proposals, Cabinet made proposals on articles 69 (on political systems), 70 (on the Movement political system), 71 (on the multiparty political system) and 72 (on the right to form political organisations). The intent was to open political space, which would be a lure for multi-party advocates in parliament to pass the Omnibus Bill off-guard and an appeasement to the pressing Western donors. Then Cabinet hoped to appease Buganda's monarchists by proposing a more nationally acceptable regional tier system as an alternative to their long-time demand for 'federo'. As the Omnibus Bill was intended to be passed expressly and holistically, Cabinet hoped to amend one of the most controversial articles in a disguised manner. The rationale of the Bill was to subsume the most contentious amendment proposals within the Bill, while carefully juxtaposing them with 'friendlier' proposals. Once passed, the Omnibus Bill would have enabled passing of the articles *en masse*, without meticulous and rigorous reflection on contentious articles such as 105 on the Presidential term limits.

First, both the Cabinet proposals and the President being the appointing authority of the CRC raised concern about conflict of interests and the independence of the CRC (Ngozi 2003:31-38). Secondly, the NRM's National Executive Committee (NEC) rather preposterously claimed that Article 105 (2) of the Constitution that restricted the president's tenure to two five-year terms, alleging that it had been 'contentious', yet it had neither been tested nor was it raised in the Commission's consultations. Cabinet further proposed to reduce the powers of horizontal institutions like the ombudsman, the Inspector General of Government (IGG), and also proposed scrapping the Uganda Human Rights Commission (see Cabinet Proposals, *The Monitor*, 26 September 2003). The NRM Cabinet's proposals intended to re-create presidential omnipotence which was the very cause of Uganda's post-independence political turbulence and the gross abuses of power and violations of human right. Fundamental principles that were enshrined in the constitution, particularly on checks and balances and protection of human rights were being undermined by the very government that initiated the formulation of a new constitution for 'fundamental change'.

As it emerged, the *raison d'être* for establishing the CRC was to serve the unconstitutional interests of the NRM government as it realised constitutional encumbrances to its omnipotence. In December 2003, the CRC presented two reports, a major and a minority report, which pointed to earlier public suspicions of a division among the Commissioners. The CRC schism was precipitated by the nature of the Omnibus Bill, particularly the disguise of scrapping the presidential term limits, which was beyond the original intent of the CRC. Some members of Parliament challenged the Omnibus Bill, with some like Miria Matembe, Ben Wacha and Abdu Katuntu taking it up to the Constitutional Court. Consequently, government formally withdrew the Bill on 7th April 2005 before the Court passed a verdict. However, government changed its strategy, and owing to the power of influence and control of the executive, the presidential term limits were willy-nilly scrapped as presented below.

Amending the Presidential Term Limit

Article 105 of the new constitution had clearly ring-fenced the five-year term limits for the office of a President, owing to Uganda's experience of personality cult presidents and totalitarianism. The Article 105, 1 & 2 succinctly stated thus:

(1)   A person elected President under this Constitution shall, subject to clause (3) of this article, hold office for a term of five years.

(2)   A person shall not be elected under this Constitution to hold office as President for more than two terms as prescribed by this article.

Repeal of Article 105 (2) so as to give the president a third term (*kisanja*) and open-ended tenure was the most controversial and contentious amendment of Uganda's young constitution. The *kisanja* amendment proposal generated heated debates, protests, despondency and a deep sense of betrayal. Conversely, advocates of *kisanja* and open-ended tenure harped on the need for Museveni's continued stewardship and his 'progressive and visionary leadership' for the transformation of Uganda and for unity in East Africa (see *Sunday Vision*, 6 February 2005). To opponents, Museveni, the celebrated revolutionary fighter of past dictatorships, architect of the new constitution and on record for identifying Africa's problem being leaders overstaying in power (Museveni 1989) was back-tracking to manipulate the constitution. But the proponents of lifting the term limits espoused the concept of a constitution as a 'living tree' that grows and adapts to contemporary dynamics, rather than that 'cast in stone' of textual rigidities like executive term limits that were not even in the Magna Carta. Bunya West MP Willian Kiwapama, for instance, reported that 'his people' saw in President Museveni a 'redeemer', hence the need to waive the restrictive term limits. Opponents like Betty Among (MP Apac women) retorted that MPs needed to transcend the simplistic reasoning of their rural constituents and contemplate why term limits were enshrined in the constitution (*The New Vision* 10 February 2005:5). Advocates replied that *wanainchi* (citizens) should exercise their constitutional power to retain or change a leader, provided there were regular 'free and fair elections'. Museveni reiterated that: 'The issues of who leads Uganda is up to the people in regular elections' (*The Daily Monitor* 4 July 2005).

As earlier noted, the post-independence period had witnessed executive totalitarianism, misuse and abuse of unlimited power. Consequently, consensus emerged for a universally elected president, with reduced or limited powers and an explicit two-term restriction (Odoki 2005:173). Unlimited rule was still vivid from the Idi Amin era concept of a 'Life President'. After a two-day workshop on the Constitution Amendment Bill, 2005, a consortium of about 90 local NGOs opposed lifting of the presidential term limits. One of their leaders noted thus: 'It is to ignore the lives lost and persons displaced through misrule ... Power that is unchecked is fatal' (Masiga 7 March 2005). The former American Ambassador to Uganda pointed out that:

> Charismatic and affable, Museveni is regarded as one of the most influential leaders in Africa. However, his thirst for power and quest for a controversial third presidential term may return Uganda to its dictatorial past ... Many observers see Museveni's efforts to amend the constitution as a re-run of a common problem that afflicted many African leaders – an unwillingness to follow Constitutional norms and give up power. Museveni's reluctance to

move aside may also be motivated by a desire to protect those around him, including his son and half brother, from charges of corruption for alleged involvement in illegal activities (Carson Johnnie *Boston Globe*, 1 May 2005).

Museveni's wife responded to Carson's comments thus: '… serving Uganda is not a bed of roses and believe me, my family has paid a big price for our homeland that we all love so much ... Museveni does not need a job. It is Uganda that needs liberation, and he and other Ugandan patriots are willing to give all the sacrifice it will take to eradicate fascism and bring about economic liberation' (*The New Vision* 13 May 2005). Concern about Museveni's 'Life Presidency' was echoed in neighbouring Tanzania, where Moshi urban MP Philemon Ndesamburo was quoted thus: 'Tanzania should not co-operate with an undemocratic country that wants to have a president for life ... We are respected the world over as a democratic country that upholds the principles of democracy and good governance. We should protect this honour at all costs if it means quitting E.A.C.' (Juma *The Guardian*, www.ipp.co.tz/ipp/guardian/2005/07/02/43483.html; see *The Daily Monitor*, 6 July 2005; Karamagi *The Monitor*, 12 July 2005).

Periodic constitutional changes pointed to arbitrary political expediency for short-term interests, thus sowing seeds of future contestation. Parliamentary debate on the constitutional amendment was preceded by an amendment in rules of procedure that substituted secret with open voting, which some believed was intended to manipulate and intimidate MPs to tow the NRM line (*Sunday Vision*, 9 January 2005:7). This was followed by allegations of bribery which presumably compromised MPs and weakened Parliament as an independent institution. It was reported that over 200 MPs were each given a five million 'facilitation' allowance. Bribery and patron-clientalism became the hallmark of the Museveni regime. The 'facilitation' was, however, given outside the premises of parliament and to only those MPs who supported government position. Colonel Kahinda Otafiire was quoted as having said: '... yes, I received the money, I drank some of it because it was facilitation, I ... used the rest to fuel my car to my constituency' (*The Monitor* 11 January 2005).

Apart from weakness through alleged bribery, there were views that the government took advantage of special interest groups who owed their position in Parliament to the NRM. Army and women representatives were particularly singled out as often voting for government positions (MP Ken Lukyamuzi, *The New Vision*, 24 January 2005). Some women NGOs were reported to have expressed support for the third term project, with Kampala women MP Margaret Zziwa announcing that: 'without Museveni, we women cannot exist' (*The New Vision* 1 February 2005). However, the support of women

cannot be generalised as some women in Museveni's own home district of Mbarara were reported to have advised him to respect the constitution and step down (*The New Vision* 24 January 2005). The Third-Term controversy led a sizeable number of legislators to form an anti-third term pressure group, the Parliamentary Advocacy Forum (PAFO). This was followed by the widening of cracks within the inner circle of NRM leadership. Prominent long-term ('historical') NRM leaders, notably Augustine Ruzindana, Eriya Kategaya and Jabel Bidandi Ssali either resigned or were purged through 'Baleke Bagende' (good riddance) reshuffles and were replaced by new Movement enthusiasts. PAFO's endeavours internally to mobilise against the third term were stifled by intimidation and repression. Nonetheless, some MPs presented the government White Paper to their electorate, and some Districts like Nebbi were reported to have rejected the removal of presidential terms (*The New Vision* 5 January 2005:7).

Parliamentary contestations over the removal of presidential term limits were bolstered by internal civil society and external pressures. On 23 March 2005, opposition groups organised a protest against the Third Term Bill, appealing to donor countries to exert pressure on the NRM government, which was accused of attempting to establish a 'dictatorial presidential monarchy'. Foreign criticism mounted and Ugandans in the Diaspora organised conferences and demonstrations against lifting presidential term limits. There were conferences in London, Sweden (27 August 2005) and North America (*The Daily Monitor* 27 September 2005). The US warned that: 'Democratisation could suffer a setback if the NRM succeeds in removing presidential term limits from the constitution' (US State Department, Report, 2004/2005). The US Ambassador to Uganda, Jimmy Kolker, reportedly pointed out that President Bush had advised President Museveni about the Third Term and the need for a peaceful political transition in Uganda.

While appearing on Andrew Mwenda live talk show on 93.3 KFM on Thursday 7 July 2005, the US Ambassador was quoted as having said: 'I was at the meeting and I am comforted in what I say that peaceful transition is important to term limits because I know what my president believes and I know what he said'. The Ambassador added that he had offered his own advice to the president whenever asked, ending that: 'I don't broadcast that advice over the radio. But I agree that Africa's problem is leaders hanging on to power' (*The Daily Monitor* 12 July 2005). The Ambassador's comments were vehemently opposed by Prime Minister Apolo Nsibambi (*The New Vision* 13 July 2005). The Commonwealth Secretary General Don Mckinnon, equally pointed to the respect the Commonwealth accorded to term limits (*The New Vision* 19 February 2005).

Political Party Operations

The eventual opening of political space was a protracted process whose landmark was the November 2004 Constitutional Court ruling against some sections of the Political Parties and Organisations Act (PPOA). The Court pinpointed the unconstitutional infringement of some PPOA sections on fundamental civil and political rights, for instance, freedom of association and assembly. With the opening, new political parties emerged. The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), a merger of the Parliamentary anti-third term group (PAFO) and Dr Kiiza Besigye's Reform Agenda that contested the 2001 presidential elections, was the most prominent of the new parties. Traditional parties like DP and UPC considered FDC as a credible and trusted party, and forged a common working relationship with it under the G6 framework. Establishment of grassroots networks and infrastructure was not smooth for parties like the FDC. The NRM had an elaborate village to District level Local Council system that combined administrative functions with championing grassroots Movement interests. This was overseen by political appointees like Chief Administration Officials (CAO), security operatives and Movement cadres. Additionally, the police served the establishment, and para-military units like the Kalangala Action Plan were reminiscent of the old-time UPC's National Security Agency (NASA). This elaborate apparatus aimed at weakening competing political parties through a combination of indirect and direct strategies like co-option, harassment, sabotage, repression or even elimination. Claims of sabotage were made, for instance, in Gulu, Hoima, Masindi and Kisoro (*The New Vision* 9 August 2005; *The New Vision* 27 June 2005; *The New Vision* 18 July 2005).

Human Rights

The Amin government's flagrant human rights violations were followed by the second UPC government's actions, of which the gruesome Luwero Triangle murders were still vivid in people's minds. In their wide consultations, the Constitutional Commission tells us that one of the issues on which people were largely unanimous was the need to protect and promote human rights (Odoki 2005:173). One of the greatest achievements of the NRM was some degree of discipline in the armed forces, especially in the Southern belt of the country. This achievement was viewed favourably when contrasted with the magnitude of human rights violations by the previous regimes. However, some significant weaknesses under the NRM were beginning to pile up.

Taking 2004 as a case study, the year was characterised by reports of violations of human rights in un-gazetted places of detention ('Safe Houses'), which were operated by state security agencies. There were reports of torture

and arbitrary arrests of political opponents and suspects of an alleged rebel group, the People's Redemption Army (PRA) (Human Rights Watch *Report* April 2004; *Amnesty International Report* 2005; Human Rights Watch *Report* April 2009). In addition to the Army, agencies that were reported to be in the lead in violating human rights included The Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI); Internal Security Organisation (ISO); District Security Organisations (DISO); Joint Anti-Terrorism Task Force (JAT) an arm of CMI; Violent Crime Crack Unit (VCCU) and the Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID). JAT's Kololo-based 'Safe House' was singled out as one of the most notorious torture chambers. For Ugandans, mention of torture chambers ruptured the healing wounds that had for decades been inflicted by pre-NRM dictatorships. The Human Rights Watch reported continuation of abuses that included beating with electric cables, tying hands and feet behind the victim (*kandoya*), piling detainees in underground halls, inflicting injury to genitals and denying suspects medical care. It was reported that common criminals and political opponents, particularly of FDC's alleged People's Redemption Army (PRA) rebel group were the major victims of torture (*Human Rights Watch* May 2005). HRW reported that four people died of torture by JAT. For instance, Hamza Tayebwa was repeatedly punched in the chest and as a result died at Mulago Hospital. The report further said that the whereabouts of five people last seen in the Unit's custody was unknown (Human Rights Watch *Report* April 2009). However, the army spokesman, Felix Kulayigye, accused HRW of trying to tarnish the image of the Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF).

Human rights violations were more pronounced during the election period, especially hotly contested elections between President Museveni and Col. Kiiza Besigye. Para-military organisations like the Kalangala Action Plan (KAP), a pro-Museveni youth militia group under Major Roland Kakoza Mutale, was one of the controversial and notorious state security agencies. In July 2000, the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) tribunal charged Mutale and found him guilty of torture and illegal imprisonment. On 3 March 2001, Presidential Protection Unit (PPU) soldiers shot live bullets as supporters of President Museveni and Dr Besigye clashed, killing Vincent Beronda in Rukungiri District. On 12 January 2001, two men were allegedly killed in two separate villages in the east while putting up posters for presidential candidate Besigye. In February 2001, four Besigye supporters were killed by a truck driven by an UPDF solder. On 11 April 2001, a Local Defence Unit operative allegedly shot dead two people at Rwenkuba sub-county, Burahya, Kabarole District.

On 20 July, 2002, Patrick Mamenero and his father were arrested on accusations of having connections with a renegade UPDF officer, Col. Samson Mande, who had purportedly formed the shadowy PRA rebel group. Mamenero was reportedly tortured by the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI) operatives (Bagala *The Monitor* 28 June 2009). Mamenero died. On 15 February 2006, Lt. Ramathan Magara opened fire on FDC supporters at Bulange, Mengo and killed two people. There was persistent pressure through local and international exposure leading to some improvement or possibly concealment of abuses during the second half of 2005. The 'sensitive' thus classified as 'confidential' findings by Parliamentary Commissions added to the Uganda Human Rights Commission's (UHRC) vigilance to pressurise government. In one case, for instance, the UHRC ordered the Attorney General to pay USh. 40 million as compensation to Mr Idris Kasekende who was illegally detained for 125 days and tortured by the police (*The Monitor* 21 January 2005).

The IDP Camps and Human Rights

From the perspective of human rights as basic need, entitlements and capabilities, the population of the war-ravaged northern Uganda districts of Pader, Gulu, Kitgum and Lira considered the NRM government as a failure. The situation had prompted 50 International Aid Agencies to appeal to the United Nations to protect the civilians. The Deputy Director of Save the Children Fund in Uganda aptly stated thus: 'The UN Security Council must take firm action and challenge the Ugandan government to protect its own people. If the government cannot do this, then the Security Council must agree to a resolution which commits the international community to protect the millions suffering in sub-Saharan Africa's longest-running war' (Reinstein John IRINnews.org, 11 November 2005).

The government established Internally Displaced Person's Camps (IDCs) in which to protect civilians from Joseph Kony's Lord Resistance Army (LRA) rebels. However, there was insufficient protection and cases of laxity in the protection of the camps leading to occasional attacks and continued insecurity (Mamdani *The New Vision* 5 December 2005). Apart from continued insecurity, long stays in IDCs under appalling conditions due to the scarcity of basic necessities compounded despair and destitution, as people's whole livelihood had been disrupted (Finnstrom 2005 a&b; Ojwee Nahaman IRINnews.org 11 November 2005). Hunger, congestion and perceived governmental failure to provide services like health care, had horrific consequences, with an estimated 1,000 excess civilian deaths per week, with curable malaria as the leading killer (Ministry of Health *Report* July 2005:ii). Worse still, some undisciplined elements within UPDF were accused

of committing abuses, which led to a sense of betrayal and hatred of IDP 'confinement' among the population. A Catholic Missionary in Kitgum enlightened the public regarding the despair in the IDCs as follows:

> Life in the camps is such a miserable experience. The quality of life is zero. Now we are receiving reports from Pabbo camp of three suicides a week. Suicide was extremely rare among the Acholi people. Now when people start taking their lives, then they have lost hope (Rodriguez Carlos IRINnews.org 11 November 2005).

> The Uganda Government, however, strongly denied the findings of human rights organisations, accusing them of degenerating into propaganda mouthpieces for the opposition during the run-up to the 2006 elections (UG, 'Press Statement', Minister of Defence, 23 September 2005). Nonetheless, the US-based Human Rights Watch in particular stood by its findings (*Human Rights Watch* 30 September 2005).

Arrest of Opposition Leaders

It was during the time of competitive elections that most human rights abuses took place. Politics became a zero-sum game, as ruling political elites strove to stay in power, and used the state machinery to strangle competition. The year 2005, for instance, was the eve of elections, and opposition politicians faced a gruelling struggle. During 2005, there were continued arrests and delayed trials of people associated with the opposition on allegations of being connected to the rebels of the PRA.

The most high-profile arrest was of Kiiza Besigye, leader of the FDC. The return of Kiiza Besigye on 26 October 2005 won the parliamentary commendation of the NRM as a politically mature government that exercised principled reconciliation (*The Daily Monitor* 26 October 2006). However, Besigye was later arrested at Busega near Kampala, which action drew internal and external protests. Internally, the arrest sparked off public riots of significant magnitude in Kampala, which spread up-country, especially in the Northern Uganda Town of Arua and Besigye's birth place of Rukungiri. The turmoil prompted the police and army to deploy heavily to supress the riots (*The Daily Monitor* and *The New Vision*, 15 November 2005). The arrest at the height of the campaign was largely seen as politically motivated; intended to block Besigye from competing with Museveni for the presidency. Although the Electoral Commission ruled that Besigye was eligible for nomination while in prison, on 7 December 2005, the Attorney General issued a directive to the Electoral Commission against the nomination of Besigye (*The Daily Monitor* 10 December 10 2005:3). Owing to the absence of a legal bar, the government rescinded its stay on the nomination and Besigye was nominated in custody.

While Besigye's arrest generated pressure and was considered a political boomerang that forced the government to yield to his release, his politically unknown co-accused 'rebels' remained in custody and were denied bail. In April 2005, two Members of Parliament of the opposition FDC, namely, Okumu Reagan (Aswa County) and Ocula Michael (Kilak County) were arrested for allegedly murdering Alfred Bongomin, a Local Council[3] Chairman of Pabbo, Gulu District on 12 February 2002. The army had earlier intimidated the two MPs when they visited Pader District in Northern Uganda. Their lawyer, opposition colleagues and leading human rights activists maintained that the charges were politically motivated (*The Daily Monitor* 21 April 2005; Human Rights Watch 27 April 2005). Prominent opposition leaders complained of harassment, including allegations of tapping their phone calls; constant surveillance by security agents; plans to use housemaids to poison them, and drivers planting incriminating seditious material in their vehicles (*The Daily Monitor* 25 July 2005). G6 leaders demanded that government expedite the inquiry into the reportedly over 1,000 political detainees in jail (*The New Vision*, 6 May 2005).

Some top army officers who had shown a tendency to oppose the lifting of presidential term limits were also threatened. Prominent among these was Army MP Brigadier Henry Tumukunde, who was forced to resign from Parliament, incarcerated, and charged with 'spreading harmful propaganda' by the General Court Martial. There was a ban against the army's involvement in politics, which contradicted their continued representation in parliament. Although some senior army officers like Major Roland Kakoza Mutale and Brigadier Kasiryegwanga had been openly involved in politics in favour of the president, they had neither been prosecuted nor reprimanded. On this note, Besigye pointed out the double standards in the application of army policies and regulations (Mutaizibwa *The Monitor* on-line, 20 June 2005; Cummins Scott 22 June 2005).

The Judiciary and Separation of Powers

After wide consultation, the Constitutional Commission noted a consensus among people in favour of a constitution that protected the independence of the judiciary as a guardian of basic human rights and constitutionalism. Consensus also emerged on the need for constitutional entrenchment of the principle of separation of powers and mechanisms of checks and balances with regard to the judiciary, executive and legislative arms of government (Odoki 2005:174).

As the year 2005 came to a close, the judiciary grappled with the challenge of handling high-profile political cases. Before Besigye's return from exile, President Museveni reportedly wrote a confidential circular to Cabinet,

drawing attention to outstanding criminal cases against Besigye. However, some sections of the public perceived the circular as imputing criminality, thus *prima facie* evidence of the president's intent on imprisoning him. This was aggravated by the take-over of the case by the Military General Court Martial (GCM), although the case was already before the High Court. It was believed that as a retired solder, Besigye was a civilian, hence within the jurisdiction of the High Court. A parallel trial in a Military Court, it was asserted, bordered on double jeopardy. The insistence on trying Besigye in the GCM was seen as intended to serve the purpose of circumventing civil courts that could by law grant him bail, which would enable him to challenge Museveni for the presidency. Besigye's legal team challenged the legality of the GCM and its concurrent trial, and managed to obtain an injunction, pending the ruling of the Constitutional Court (*The New Vision* 3 December 2005). Museveni's fervent defence of the GCM to handle the case tended to give credence to speculations of his interference in the judicial process (*The New Vision* 30 November 2005). In one incidence, Besigye was intercepted on his way to the High Court and forcefully taken to the GCM at Makindye for a parallel trial. During the trial, the GCM Chairman, General Elly Tumwine, sentenced Besigye's defence lawyers to military detention for contempt of his Military Court and ordered the mainly Western diplomats out of the Court Martial (*The New Vision* 25th. November 2005). Meanwhile, President Museveni continued to castigate and warn diplomats for their continued meddling in Uganda's 'internal affairs'.

On 16 November 2005, there was what was described as an infamous siege of the High Court by armed men dressed in black ('Black Mambas') from a reportedly special Urban Hit Squad unit of Military Intelligence. It was reported that as 14 suspected PRA rebels were being granted bail, the 'Black Mambas' took position and tried to force their way into court cells, allegedly to wrest the suspects back into detention. This epitomised the powerlessness of the judiciary *vis-à-vis* state security functionaries, which drew international and local condemnation (*The Daily Monitor* 17 and 18 November 2005:1; *The New Vision* 17 and 18 November 2005). The Principle Judge, Justice James Ogoola, unequivocally described the events as 'a day of infamy' and the incident as 'naked rape, defilement, desecration and a horrendous onslaught' on the Judiciary.

The blatant affront to the judicial arm of the state pointed to the weakness of institutions and of the vulnerability of justice, hallmarks of the Amin dictatorship when Chief Justice Benedict Kiwanuka was kidnapped from his chambers in 1972. The incident compelled Justice Lugayizi to withdraw from handling Besigye's treason case (*The New Vision* and *The Daily Monitor* 19 November 2005). The Uganda Law Society condemned military interference

in the independence of the judiciary and demanded the resignation of the Attorney General, who ignored the demand (*The Daily Monitor* 29 November 2005). Not surprisingly, the UPDF spokesperson, Major Felix Kulayigye, justified the widely condemned act as follows: 'The UPDF had a legitimate and legal right to re-arrest them and have them answer the charges under the UPDF Act' (*The Daily Monitor* 17 and 18 November 2005). Although Besigye was later granted bail by the High Court Principle Judge, he was forcefully taken back to prison by order of the General Court Martial (*The Daily Monitor* and *The New Vision* 30 November 2005). There were also allegations by FDC leaders of bribery of senior judges for the sake of denying Besigye bail so as to eliminate him from the presidential race (*The New Vision* 31 December 2005).

The Police and Security Agencies

During the Constitutional Commission consultations, consensus emerged about the need for a professional police force to be largely responsible for internal security, and for intelligence agencies to be regulated by law and accountable for their actions. A general view also prevailed that the army should be under civilian control. Its duty was to defend and protect the constitution and democratic institutions, and its main responsibility should be to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Uganda (Odoki 2005:174-175). During 2005, Kalangala Action Plan (KAP) under Kakoza Mutale, remained a controversial state security agency. KAP was formed by a group of NRM functionaries and gained notoriety for its intimidation and repression of the opposition during the 2001 presidential elections under the guise of 'ensuring sanity'. KAP operated under the cloak of an NGO, and for further camouflage and legitimacy, mutated into a 'Civic Education for Development Organisation' (CEDO) (Karamagi *The Monitor* 3 May 2005). Paramilitary groups like KAP continued to be a threat to a smooth political transition in Uganda.

The image of the police force had been slowly improving, but increasingly it now became seen as a militarised and repressive instrument of the regime. After their siege of the High Court, some members of the Military Police Hit Squad Unit were pictured dressed in police uniform (*The Daily Monitor* 25 November 2005). This seemed to confirm allegations that state security agencies sometimes disguised themselves as regular police officers to legitimise their repressive operations. The continued appointment of soldiers to head the police force raised concern among opposition Members of Parliament (*The Daily Monitor* 26 October 2005).

Freedom of the Press and Speech

Compared to other regimes in Uganda, the Movement government can be credited with an improvement in the freedom of the press. The year 2005 witnessed relative improvement in this respect, but amidst threats of closing some media outlets 'for endangering regional security' and reporting 'lies' about the government. In the Press Freedom Survey of 2005, Uganda was rated 13th as regards freedom of the press among 48 sub-Saharan countries. This improvement was against a backdrop of struggle, the turning point of which was the February 2004 Supreme Court Judgement, which ruled the offence of 'publication of false news' as void and unconstitutional. Ever since 1997, a number of journalists had been charged and prosecuted for this offence, contrary to Section 50 of the Penal Code Act. Although the Supreme Court annulled the offence, in August 2005 the government arrested and charged journalist Andrew Mwenda and suspended the licence of KFM Radio, alleging the broadcasting of 'seditious news'. It was alleged that while on his talk show, Mwenda portrayed the Ugandan government as being responsible for the death of Southern Sudan leader and Sudan Vice President Dr John Garang through its carelessness.

With the agitation that followed the arrest of FDC's Besigye, government slammed a ban on public rallies, demonstrations, assemblies, seminars, talk shows and media debates related to his trial (*The New Vision* 23 November 2005:1-2). While government maintained that the measure was taken in the interest of social order and the security of people, many saw it as gagging the public. On 18 November 2005, over 20 police and state intelligence operatives searched the *Daily Monitor* offices, which was suspected of being the source of posters soliciting for contributions to the Dr Besigye Human Rights Fund. Government maintained that such fundraising was illegal. Meanwhile, government operatives sustained threats to the press and media, particularly *The Daily Monitor*, which was construed to be anti-establishment. Accordingly, Luzira prison officials were reportedly censoring newspapers sent to Besigye, especially *The Daily Monitor*, thus denying him the right to uncensored information (*The Daily Monitor* 23 November 2005:3).

Conclusion

In addition to a sense of security, the political hope the NRM government gave Ugandans was the formulation of a new constitution that would presumably transform constitutionalism, state society relations and human rights in Uganda. Constitutionalism encompasses the whole spectrum of good governance which Uganda had lacked for a long time. This article has assessed constitutionalism during the first decade of the new 1995 Ugandan

constitution. During this time, the political landscape was freer relative to previous regimes. However, there were continuities with the past, some of which were in different forms and magnitude. Hence constitutionalism remained elusive, leaving many Ugandans in suspense and with a sense of pessimism. Within the first ten years, the new constitution had undergone reviews and amendments aimed at serving the narrow interests of the ruling elites. The constitutional amendment process, particularly regarding the removal of the untested presidential term limits, was a chilling awakening to the capricious realities of Ugandan politics. The ten years were characterised by corruption, a poor human rights record with continued reports of abuse, shattered livelihoods for the people of Northern Uganda, a struggling press, a harassed opposition, a manipulated constitutional amendment process, and interference in the judicial system. On the whole, meaningful constitutionalism was absent, as civil institutions of the state remained weak and civil society continued to be vulnerable to state manipulation and repression. Meaningful transformation of the Ugandan political landscape was work in progress that needed specifically to address asymmetrical power structures so as to deepen democratic rule and enforce checks and balances. Society's agency will be vital for bringing about meaningful political transformation and constitutionalism.

Notes

1. During colonisation, the British rewarded Buganda with the Bunyoro Kingdom counties of Buyaga and Bugangeizi in return for collaboration with the authorities and as punishment for Bunyoro's resistance. Against Buganda's will, Prime Minister Milton Obote implemented the order in council that recommended a referendum for resolving the thorny problem of the 'lost counties', which wrecked the UPC and Buganda's Mengo KY alliance, spiralling into the 1966 Kabaka Crisis, the subsequent abrogation of the independence constitution and kingdoms and imposition of a state of emergency in Buganda until the 1971 Idi Amin coup.

2. The preamble started: WE THE PEOPLE OF UGANDA: Recalling our history which has been characterised by political and constitutional instability; Recognising our struggles against the forces of tyranny, oppression and exploitation; Committed to building a better future by establishing a socio-economic and political order through a popular and durable national constitution ... Do Hereby, in and through this Constituent Assembly solemnly adopt, enact and give to ourselves and our posterity, this Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, this 22nd day of September, in the year 1995 ('Preamble', Uganda Constitution, 1995).

3. Supreme Court Judge George Kanyeihamba has clearly pointed out the executive's influence over the judiciary through appointments (*The Daily Monitor* 10 October 2009). The President also enjoyed great influence over the ruling MPs in parliament, where very few of his appointments have not been approved.

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Développement de l'orpaillage et mutations dans les villages aurifères du sud-est du Sénégal

Bakary Doucouré*

Résumé

Dans le sud-est du Sénégal, en l'occurrence la région de Kédougou, le développement croissant de l'orpaillage à partir des années 2000 a entraîné de nombreuses mutations dans les villages aurifères et les zones d'orpaillage. Celles-ci sont à la fois d'ordre social, démographique, politique, économique et environnemental. Cet article est centré sur l'analyse de ces mutations ainsi que de leurs multiples implications sur la vie des individus, des groupes et des communautés, sur l'environnement, sur les micro-économies et sur l'organisation sociopolitique des villages et des zones concernés. Il montre en définitive que, jusqu'ici, l'orpaillage a plutôt donné lieu à un développement problématique conduisant vers un phénomène de « phagédénisme multidimensionnel », c'est-à-dire la tendance à l'extension, au développement et à l'aggravation des problèmes sur le plan social, économique, environnemental, etc.

Abstract

In south-eastern Senegal, namely the Kedougou region, the increasing development of gold panning from the 2000s has led to many changes in auriferous villages and gold panning areas. These changes are of social, demographic, political, economic and environmental nature. This paper focuses on the analysis of changes and their multiple implications on the lives of individuals, groups and communities, as well as the environment, micro-economies and the socio-political organization of villages and areas concerned. It ultimately shows that so far gold panning has rather resulted in a problematic development leading to the "multidimensional phagedena" phenomenon, that is to say the tendency to spreading, deepening and worsening problems at social, economic, environmental levels, etc.

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Introduction

Le sud-est du Sénégal, anciennement dénommé Sénégal oriental, comprend actuellement les régions administratives de Tambacounda et de Kédougou. Cette partie du Sénégal a toujours été considérée comme la principale zone minière du pays du fait des différentes ressources dont elle regorge : du fer, du marbre et de l'or notamment. Toutefois, avec l'avènement de la 24e réforme administrative qui a érigé le département de Kédougou[1] en région, c'est désormais cette dernière qui cristallise le plus la problématique de l'exploitation minière.

Si l'on prend en compte l'ensemble des minerais existants, les potentialités minières de la région de Kédougou sont estimées à plusieurs millions de tonnes. En 2009, Fall *et al*. mentionnaient dans une étude : 800 millions de tonnes de fer dans les massifs de Koudékourou, Kouroudiako et Karakaéne, 345 545 tonnes déjà prouvées et 1 067 148 tonnes estimées de marbre à Ibel, Ndébou et Bandafassi, et, enfin, 50 tonnes d'or uniquement dans les sites de Sabodala et Kérékounda.

L'exploitation de l'or reste une activité ancienne, et même séculaire, dans la région de Kédougou, comme en témoignent de nombreux témoignages, récits d'habitants, et travaux de recherche (Mintech International 2004). Mais, pendant plusieurs siècles, l'exploitation de l'or a été exclusivement réalisée de manière artisanale, au sein de communautés plus ou moins petites, et essentiellement en dehors des périodes de culture comme la saison sèche. De ce fait, on peut dire que si cette forme traditionnelle d'exploitation aboutissait à la production de faibles quantités d'or par rapport aux potentialités existantes, elle demeurait aussi moins néfaste pour l'environnement naturel.

Aujourd'hui, partout dans la région de Kédougou, l'exploitation minière et aurifère, en particulier, a pris un autre visage, quel que soit le niveau (artisanal, semi-mécanisé ou industriel), et surtout un rythme plus soutenu et plus accéléré. De ce fait, l'exploitation aurifère, en l'occurrence, est à l'origine de nombreuses mutations dans la région, et particulièrement dans les villages aurifères étudiés.

Cette analyse des mutations dues au développement de l'orpaillage s'appuie sur une démarche d'enquête ayant combiné trois approches de collecte de données : l'enquête quantitative, l'enquête qualitative et l'observation de courte durée. La collecte des données s'est faite dans plusieurs villages, en l'occurrence Bantako, Tinkoto, Kanouméring, Kabatéguinda et Tomboronkoto. Toutefois, pour ce qui est de l'analyse que nous présentons ici, nous ferons état principalement des données issues de l'enquête qualitative et de nos observations, à l'exception de quelques résultats de l'enquête quantitative.

Après avoir établi un état des lieux de la situation de l'exploitation minière dans la région de Kédougou, nous mettrons en exergue les principales mutations engendrées par le développement de l'orpaillage traditionnel à travers l'exemple de quelques villages aurifères de la région.

La situation minière de Kédougou : quels enjeux et quelles problématiques pour les populations ?

L'analyse de la situation minière de Kédougou en 2011 permet de recenser plusieurs sociétés minières et sociétés sous-traitantes. Pour les premières, leurs activités vont principalement de l'exploration à l'exploitation. De ce fait, plusieurs projets d'exploration et/ou d'exploitationsont actuellement en cours sur différents sites de la région, dont celles que nous présentons ci-dessous.

Concernant la zone de Sabodala tout d'abord, il y a les sociétés SGO (ou TGO) et OROMIN. La société SGO est titulaire d'un permis d'exploitation. Les réserves d'or prouvées dans sa zone d'exploitation sont estimées à 68 tonnes et son investissement estimé à 226 millions de dollars US. Elle a officiellement débuté sa production en mars 2009. Quant à la société canadienne OROMIN, également présente dans la zone de Sabodala, elle a un permis d'exploration et d'exploitation. Le potentiel en cours d'évaluation par cette société était estimé à plus de 90 tonnes d'or en 2009.

Dans la zone de Massawa, il y a un projet d'exploration et d'exploitation de l'or avec la société sud-africaine Randgold. La société est toujours en phase d'exploration et le potentiel en cours d'évaluation dans son secteur est estimé à plus de 90 tonnes. En 2009, elle a démarré une étude de faisabilité et le début de l'exploitation est prévu en 2012.

Dans la « fenêtre Kédougou-Kéniéba », plus d'une dizaine de sociétés minières de nationalités différentes et en activité y ont été recensées par le PASMI. De nombreux sites actifs d'orpaillage traditionnel y sont par ailleurs identifiés. Plusieurs de ces sites d'orpaillage traditionnel sont inclus dans les différents périmètres accordés aux sociétés minières nationales ou étrangères.

Parmi les sociétés minières identifiées dans la région au cours de ces dernières décennies, il y a : Axmin (société britannique), Joint-Venture Rocamco (Sénégal), Kansala Resources Ltd (Sénégal), Nafpec (Sénégal), RSW (Canada), Sengold (Sénégal), Sored Mines (Sénégal), Watic (Sénégal), Bassari Ressources, Anmercosa (Afrique du sud), Samax Hansa (Angleterre), Ashanti Goldfields (Ghana), Agem Iamgold (filiale sénégalaise d'IAMGOLD qui est canadienne), etc. Cependant, certaines d'entre elles ont toutefois quitté le Sénégal dans les années 90, suite à l'effondrement du cours mondial de l'or. I. Greig (2006:17), pour sa part, s'interrogeant sur les enjeux de l'exploitation minière pour les collectivités locales dans le sud-est du Sénégal,

a recensé de nombreuses sociétés semi-industrielles d'exploitation de l'or : CCIA, Dakar Gueye Générale (communément appelée Gueye et frères), LIBIDOR, EMIS, WOUROUS, SODATEC et TERIYA. Mais aux sociétés semi-industrielles déjà mentionnées, on peut également ajouter : GIE DIONDA, MG TFI, SIBS et GIE JOBS.

En plus de l'or, on recense d'autres projets d'exploration et d'exploitation minière portant sur le fer et le marbre. Il en est ainsi du projet d'exploitation du fer de la Falémé (MIFERSO) détenu par la société Arcelor Mittal. Ce projet porte sur des réserves de fer estimées à 700 millions de tonnes. Il doit être accompagné d'un investissement de 2,2 milliards de dollars US destinés à la construction d'une mine, d'un chemin de fer, d'un port et d'une aciérie.

Quant au projet d'exploitation du marbre dans la zone de Ndébou, Bandafassi et Ibel, il est accordé à la société SEGIMAR-NSMTP. Les réserves actuelles sont estimées à 25 millions de mètres cubes de différentes variétés de marbre, à savoir : blanc, noir, gris, rosé-vert, bleu-rubané, etc. Plusieurs tests destinés à l'exploitation sont actuellement en cours.

A ces données concernant principalement l'exploitation minière industrielle, on relève, d'après Alvarez et Heemskerk (2008), que 8 000 à 9 000 personnes environ travaillent dans l'orpaillage traditionnel au Sénégal, en plus de tous ceux dont les activités économiques sont directement ou indirectement liées à cette activité d'exploitation artisanale de l'or. Par ailleurs, si les seules ressources aurifères prouvées par les sociétés minières sont estimées à plus de 300 tonnes, l'analyse de Alvarez et Heemskerk (*ibid.*) révèle que le secteur artisanal de l'or (c'est-à-dire l'orpaillage traditionnel) dans la région de Kédougou produit annuellement plus d'une tonne d'or. De ce fait, comme le note à juste titre Feierensen (2009:6),

> L'exploitation artisanale de l'or est un secteur important de l'économie locale et régionale, et influence considérablement la société au niveau écologique, social et économique. Le développement et l'expansion d'un secteur de mines artisanales apportent un potentiel pour une amélioration sociale et économique qui, par des effets de synergies, peut entraîner un développement économique dans la région. Toutefois, les dommages irréparables pour l'homme et son environnement peuvent apparaître à l'avenir, d'autant plus si les impacts de l'exploitation restent incontrôlés et si la société devient mono-structurelle, contribuant ainsi à intensifier les problèmes.

Partant de là, on relève que les enjeux liés à l'exploitation minière en général et aurifère sont multiples au sein des villages aurifères du sud-est sénégalais. Ces deniers peuvent être définis comme des villages au sein desquels l'activité d'orpaillage constitue l'une des principales activités socioéconomiques. A ce titre, il convient de dégager deux types de villages aurifères. D'une part, les

villages aurifères principaux qui polarisent souvent un ou plusieurs sites miniers, ce qui engendre un accroissement démographique. D'autre part, les villages aurifères secondaires qui ne polarisent pas de site minier pour l'essentiel, mais dont une partie considérable des habitants exerce l'orpaillage dans des localités voisines et vit de cette pratique. Au total, le nombre de villages aurifères dans la région de Kédougou est estimé à plus de soixante-dix.

L'organisation sociale et politique dans les villages aurifères

La pratique de l'orpaillage repose sur une organisation sociale qui vise à maintenir un équilibre au sein des communautés villageoises en général, en particulier entre les différents groupes qui participent à l'exploitation artisanale des ressources aurifères.

L'organisation sociale dans les villages aurifères s'entend ici aussi bien du point de vue de la structuration interne que de celui des rapports et des règles qui régissent les différents groupes et acteurs. Les villages aurifères, qu'ils soient principaux ou secondaires, constituent des ensembles caractérisés par deux espaces au moins : l'espace dédié à la vie communautaire, d'une part, et le *dioura,* d'autre part, correspondant au site d'orpaillage traditionnel. Loin d'être antagoniques, ces deux espaces sont au contraire fortement liés. De ce fait, toute légitimité sociale obtenue dans l'un des espaces est reconnue dans l'autre. Les règles, les statuts et les hiérarchies qui régissent l'espace professionnel sont établis dans l'espace communautaire, et l'ordre social communautaire trouve sa légitimité dans l'espace professionnel que représente le site d'orpaillage.

Pendant longtemps, l'organisation sociale dans les villages aurifères du Niokolo était principalement caractérisée par l'existence de chefferies locales et de groupes quasi monolithiques et plutôt restreints. Par ailleurs, on y relevait une division du travail basée à la fois sur l'appartenance à un groupe social défini et sur le sexe. Mais, avec le développement de l'orpaillage traditionnel dans la plupart de ces villages, les principaux aspects de l'organisation sociale dans les villages aurifères vont subir de nombreuses mutations. Les changements induits par le développement de l'orpaillage sur l'organisation sociale sont perceptibles à travers l'émergence de nouvelles autorités, l'apparition de nouvelles formes de regroupement communautaire, etc.

Autorités traditionnelles et autorités conjoncturelles

L'autorité traditionnelle dans les villages du Niokolo, qu'ils soient aurifères ou non, a longtemps été incarnée par quelques chefferies auxquelles étaient associées des familles. La fonction de chef de village était l'apanage exclusif de ces familles, tel étant le cas à Bantako par exemple. De ce fait, on peut dire que l'organisation sociopolitique était structurée autour de l'autorité

politique de ces familles de chefs ou chefferies, de leurs courtisans et alliés, des familles maraboutiques qui détenaient l'autorité religieuse, et du groupe des castés formé notamment par les griots (*diâlô* en malinlé), les forgerons (*noumô*), les cordonniers (*garangué*). À Bantako où les familles Keita constituaient les anciennes chefferies, on s'aperçoit que leur histoire est faite d'alliances. Parmi les quatre lignées ou généalogies de Keita présentes à Bantako, à savoir *Mansabalaya*, *Youkhodiya*, *Guindicounda* et *Djikoy*, celle des *Mansabalaya* est considérée comme la première chefferie. Au fil des temps, il y aura une union entre les Keita *mansabalaya* et les Keita *youkhodiya*, puis entre ces deux premiers groupes généalogiques et les Keita de *guindicounda*. Quant aux Keita de *Djikoy*, ils demeurent les cousins à plaisanterie (*sanakho* en malinké) des autres groupes généalogiques de Keita et ont pris sous leur couvert les familles Danfakha.

Aujourd'hui, avec le passé colonial du Sénégal et l'instauration d'une République fondée sur des principes démocratiques, le système des chefferies a disparu et la fonction de chef s'est démocratisée. Tous les natifs du village ont théoriquement le droit de postuler à la fonction de chef de village, qui s'acquiert désormais soit par un consensus, soit par un mode de désignation élective (vote). On relève cependant que le chef actuel tout comme le précédent sont issus des familles Keita. Ce constat traduit l'existence encore d'un compromis communautaire et l'attachement à certains ordres traditionnels, en dépit des évolutions sociopolitiques.

Quant à l'autorité maraboutique dans le village de Bantako, elle est encore entre les mains des Diakhaby venus du Fouta-Djallon.Ces derniers ont largement contribué à l'islamisation d'une partie des populations du Niokolo. Aujourd'hui encore, ils détiennent l'imamat dans le village de Bantako. Elhadj Sankoun Diakhaby, le père de l'actuel imam, a islamisé une partie des populations du Bas-Niokolo dont fait partie Bantako. Un de ses fils, l'actuel imam, continue jusqu'à présent d'enseigner le Saint Coran aux enfants du village, le soir autour d'un feu dans le domicile familial. Il compte actuellement une soixante de disciples environ.

Ainsi donc, traditionnellement, il existait deux principaux types d'autorités dans le village : l'une, politique, correspondant à celle du chef de village qui était aussi le chef de la terre, et l'autre, religieuse, qui était exercée par l'imam. Ces deux fonctions existent toujours. Mais l'on peut dire que, pour ce qui concerne l'autorité politique incarnée par le chef de village, celle-ci a connu une réduction de ses pouvoirs dans certains domaines, tandis que le développement de l'orpaillage en a accru d'autres. En effet, avec la loi 96-07 du 22 mars 1996 sur la décentralisation au Sénégal et l'existence des conseils ruraux au sein des communautés rurales, l'Etat a procédé au transfert de

neuf compétences aux collectivités locales (régions, communes et communautés rurales), dont la gestion et l'utilisation du domaine national de l'Etat. Ce qui signifie qu'au sein des villages par exemple, ce qui relevait des pouvoirs du chef de village en termes de gestion et d'utilisation de la terre doit désormais se faire en collaboration et avec la décision finale du Conseil rural. Le chef de village ne peut plus, à lui seul, attribuer définitivement une terre et décider ainsi de son utilisation sans en référer au Conseil rural qui a autorité sur tout ce qui concerne le domaine national. Cependant, le développement de l'orpaillage ayant entraîné un boom démographique dans certains villages comme Bantako, cela a fortement accru le pouvoir d'influence de son chef tant auprès des habitants que des autorités administratives et politiques locales.

Mais, outre le renforcement du pouvoir d'influence du chef de village au niveau local, le développement de l'orpaillage a entraîné l'émergence d'un nouveau groupe d'autorités que nous appelons ici les autorités conjoncturelles. Celles-ci peuvent être considérées comme telles dans la mesure où leur légitimité et leur existence se justifient exclusivement par la pratique de l'orpaillage dans le village. C'est dans cette catégorie des nouvelles autorités ou des autorités conjoncturelles, que l'on retrouve les chefs des sites d'orpaillage (*diourakountigui*), homme et femme, les responsables de la sécurité du site d'orpaillage et du village (*tombouloumas*), les assistants-tombouloumas chargés de veiller au respect des consignes d'extinction des feux et celles relatives à la circulation, ainsi que les gardiens du site d'orpaillage. Les pouvoirs attachés à ces autorités conjoncturelles sont donc moins durables que ceux des autorités traditionnelles, et leur disparition est prévisible avec la fin de l'orpaillage traditionnel dans ces zones.

Les remodelages de l'espace associatif

Les mutations au sein des villages aurifères au plan de l'organisation sociale (ou communautaire) s'appréhendent également à travers les remodelages de l'espace associatif. De quelques associations de jeunes et groupements de promotion féminine (GPF) qui constituaient jadis l'essentiel du tissu associatif en milieu rural, on assiste désormais de plus en plus à la création de nouvelles formes associatives telles que les groupements d'intérêt économique (GIE) s'appuyant sur le secteur de l'orpaillage. C'est ainsi qu'à Bantako par exemple, on a pu recenser deux GIE exerçant dans le secteur aurifère : il s'agit du GIE « *walignima* » (signifiant *bienfait* en malinké) et le GIE « sitokoto » (signifiant *sous le fromager* en malinké). A Tomboronkoto également, il a été recensé un GIE constitué dans le but d'obtenir un permis d'exploitation d'une petite mine (soit une exploitation semi-industrielle). Ces quelques cas de GIE

montrent que le développement de l'orpaillage crée, dans les villages aurifères, des dynamiques associatives à base professionnelle et à finalité économique. Toutefois, il convient de mentionner que ce type de dynamiques reste encore à une faible échelle et qu'il se pose parfois la question de la viabilité de ces GIE, compte tenu notamment du statut informel de certains d'entre eux et du caractère souvent transitoire de l'exploitation artisanale de l'or dans la plupart des villages aurifères.

Outre les dynamiques associatives mentionnées ci-dessus, il existe aussi d'autres dynamiques associatives d'ordre confessionnel et d'ordre ethnique (ou national) fortement liées au boom démographique engendré par le développement de l'orpaillage. Dans le registre des dynamiques confessionnelles, et confrériques plus précisément, on peut mentionner par exemple la création et l'existence d'une *dahira* mouride à Bantako. Il s'agit là d'une association religieuse permettant à ses membres de se retrouver régulièrement, de consolider leur fraternité confrérique, de développer des relations de solidarité, mais aussi et surtout de renforcer leur foi et leur attachement confessionnel.

En définitive, on se rend compte, en analysant les dynamiques associatives dans un contexte de développement de l'orpaillage, que la diversité ethnique et nationale n'efface pas les particularités socioculturelles. Bien au contraire, loin de conduire à une uniformisation des valeurs et pratiques culturelles, cette diversité ethnico-culturelle pousse à l'affirmation et à la réaffirmation des identités spécifiques, quoique de manière collective.

Les mutations économiques

Nous évoquerons les multiples impacts, dont la baisse des activités agricoles, le développement de l'informel rural et de l'émergence des nombreux petits métiers.

Une forte baisse des activités agricoles

Situé en zone de piémonts du massif du Fouta-Djallon, à l'instar d'une partie de la région de Kédougou, le village de Bantako se trouve également dans un bassin versant du fleuve Gambie. Le village se situe de ce fait doublement à proximité du fleuve Gambie et dans une zone où la pluviométrie annuelle varie entre 1000 et 1300 mm/an (de juin à octobre). A l'instar d'une grande partie de la région de Kédougou et du bassin versant dont fait partie le village, la zone de Bantako est dotée d'importantes ressources floristiques, faunistiques et hydrauliques. Aussi la notion d'agriculture s'entend-elle ici dans son acception la plus large, prenant ainsi en compte non seulement les activités de culture, mais également l'élevage, la cueillette et la pêche.

Le village de Bantako est, pour sa part, entouré de plusieurs terroirs que sont: Daladjan à l'ouest, Fadoumara à l'est, Sarésoutou au nord et Sidjoli au sud. La plupart de ces terroirs sont propices à la pratique de l'agriculture, selon les populations autochtones, du fait notamment de la fertilité des sols, de la disponibilité des terres arables, de la bonne connaissance des techniques culturales, de l'existence d'une force de travail ainsi que de magasins de stockage des produits agricoles. Des terres sont mises en jachère durant plusieurs années (4 à 6 ans) et la pratique de l'agriculture ne nécessite pas forcément l'utilisation d'engrais, ce qui contribue à baisser les coûts. La pratique de l'agriculture, pluviale essentiellement, peut s'effectuer sur différents types de sols (argileux, latéritique, sablonneux), tout comme il est possible d'y cultiver une variété de spéculations, à savoir le riz, le maïs, le mil, le manioc, l'arachide, le coton. Par ailleurs, le village de Bantako et ses terroirs environnants offrent la possibilité de mener des activités de maraîchage, d'arboriculture fruitière (vergers) et de cueillette (fruits sauvages).

Cependant, malgré les atouts et les potentialités du village dans le domaine de l'agriculture, on relève une forte baisse des activités agricoles liée au développement de l'orpaillage et qui se traduit par l'inexploitation des terres agricoles et l'absence d'aménagements agricoles. Cette conséquence de l'orpaillage sur les activités agricoles est au demeurant renforcée par les feux de brousse et la transhumance des éleveurs dénommés « Aga » qui causent d'énormes dégâts aux cultures et à la végétation. Ainsi sur un échantillon aléatoire de 25 ménages enquêtés, 92 pour cent d'entre eux indique que l'orpaillage constitue actuellement leur principale source de revenus, contre 4 pour cent pour l'agriculture et 4 pour cent pour le commerce. Cette désaffection de l'agriculture apparaît également dans la très faible proportion de ménages disposant de terrains agricoles : en effet, seul 24 pour cent des ménages dispose de terrains agricoles (champs, vergers) contre 76 pour cent qui déclarent ne pas en disposer. Evidemment, même si le taux élevé de ménages ne disposant pas de terrains agricoles s'explique par la proportion importante d'allochtones, ce taux indique également le faible intérêt pour l'agriculture des ménages dont la présence s'explique principalement par la pratique de l'orpaillage. Par ailleurs, dans la mesure où l'agriculture est entendue ici dans son sens le plus général, c'est-à-dire prenant en compte l'élevage, ce constat de l'affaiblissement des activités agricoles s'effectue aussi au sein du cheptel : peu de ménages en disposent, en plus de la petite taille de celui-ci, quel que soit le type de cheptel considéré (bovins, ovins, caprins, chevaux, ânes, etc.).

La dynamisation du marché du travail local

S'il y a une conséquence bien visible de l'orpaillage à Bantako, il s'agit bien de la multiplication des petits métiers dans le secteur informel. Ces derniers peuvent être regroupés en onze types, bien que cette typologie ne soit ni exhaustive ni exclusive. Il s'agit notamment :

- des métiers du transport collectif ;
- des métiers du commerce (sur place et ambulant) ;
- des métiers de la restauration (gargotes, dibiteries, etc.) ;
- des métiers de l'esthétique et des services aux personnes qui regroupent le plus grand nombre de spécialistes (les coiffeurs, les lingères, les vendeurs d'eau, les cordonniers, les photographes, les bijoutiers, les chargeurs de batterie, les tailleurs, etc.) ;
- des métiers du spectacle (dancing, orchestres musicaux) ;
- des métiers des nouvelles technologies (salles de jeux et vidéos-clubs) ;
- des métiers du bâtiment ;
- des métiers de l'entrepreneuriat semi-industriel ;
- des métiers de la location (comme les loueurs de charriots);
- des métiers de l'électromécanique (mécaniciens) :
- des métiers du bois ou l'ébénisterie ;
- des métiers de l'orpaillage (pileurs manuels, laveurs, concasseurs, ramasseurs de sable).

De manière générale, l'analyse des métiers recensés à Bantako et des qualifications acquises dans ce cadre montre que ceux-ci sont souvent difficiles à valoriser dans le secteur formel de l'emploi. Ce qui, par conséquent, réduit l'impact des avantages professionnels liés à ces petits métiers informels.

La multiplication des services fournis aux habitants de Bantako avec le développement de l'orpaillage est un fait évident, qui peut se mesurer facilement à travers les nouveaux métiers. L'analyse de ces services montre cependant qu'il s'agit très largement de services provenant de l'informel privé. Ce qui signifie que les services relevant du secteur structuré public (Etat) ou privé (entreprises privées formelles et ONG), qu'ils soient de nature technique, administrative, coopérative ou associative, sont quasiment absents de Bantako.

Du côté du secteur structuré (ou formel) public par exemple, on ne relève que la présence permanente d'une école primaire et d'une case de santé non fonctionnelle. Les services techniques et administratifs des organes centraux ou décentralisés de l'Etat tels que les services des Eaux et Forêts, les services vétérinaires, le service régional des mines et de la géologie, etc., n'effectuent que quelques passages souvent irréguliers, voire très rares, dans le village. Quant aux structures privées (comme la SODEFITEX) et aux principales

ONG présentes dans la zone (GADEC, AFRICARE, WULA NAAFA, AFRICARE, WORLD VISION, CARITAS, LA LUMIERE, TOSTAN, etc.), elles développent encore très peu de programmes et d'actions à Bantako. Cependant, des actions de sensibilisation dans les domaines de l'environnement, de la santé et l'alphabétisation menées sporadiquement par quelques structures sont notées çà et là au sein du village : c'est le cas par exemple de l'ONG AWA sur les IST et le VIH sida.

Cette faible présence du secteur formel privé et public constitue un handicap majeur pour le village. Elle compromet et réduit les possibilités d'un développement rationnel, planifié et maîtrisé du village, tout en favorisant l'exacerbation de certaines vulnérabilités d'ordre social, sanitaire, et environnemental notamment.

La multiplication des infrastructures : forces et faiblesses

L'observation et l'identification participative des principales infrastructures du village montrent la création de nouvelles infrastructures, et la réhabilitation d'anciennes infrastructures telles que la case de santé primaire remplacée par un poste de santé en cours de construction.

Avant le développement de l'orpaillage filonien au sein du village, les principales infrastructures que comptait celui-ci se résumaient à une case de santé devenue non fonctionnelle, une mosquée, une école coranique, un terrain de football, deux forages, un abattoir (de bétail), un marché, une place publique. L'arrivée progressive d'orpailleurs à partir de 2006 a permis de renforcer et d'améliorer le tissu infrastructurel du village. Ainsi, outre les infrastructures déjà existantes, on recense en 2011 :

- la construction d'un poste de santé primaire pour remplacer la case de santé non fonctionnelle ;
- un garage de transport en commun dont la capacité a été accrue, ce qui a entraîné sa délocalisation à la périphérie du village ;
- la multiplication des boutiques et des officines ;
- le renforcement et l'expansion spatiale du marché ;
- la multiplication des rues commerçantes ;
- la multiplication des bars et des restaurants ;
- l'existence de vidéos-clubs et de salles de jeux ;
- l'existence d'une boîte de nuit (dancing) et des salles de fêtes temporaires ;
- la multiplication des boucheries et des dibiteries ;
- l'existence d'unités semi-industrielles telles que les broyeuses mécaniques et les moulins à céréales ;
- la multiplication des salons de coiffures et des studios de photographie.

Toutefois, lorsque l'on analyse ces infrastructures, deux caractéristiques se dégagent. D'une part, ces infrastructures sont essentiellement de nature socioéconomique et culturelle (commerce, alimentation et restauration, éducation, loisirs, etc.), et de nature hydraulique (forages). A l'inverse, l'orpaillage a encore peu favorisé le développement des infrastructures administratives, des infrastructures de communication (en l'occurrence les routes), bref, le développement des infrastructures publiques telles que l'éclairage public et l'électrification du village. De ce fait, malgré l'amélioration des services fournis, beaucoup d'autres services nécessitent encore de se rendre à l'extérieur du village, notamment au centre urbain de Kédougou, ce qui justifie par ailleurs les voyages fréquents et quotidiens des habitants du village, pour des questions d'ordre administratif, médical ou sanitaire, etc. Concernant les infrastructures routières, on relève que si le village de Bantako est relié par différentes pistes à plusieurs villages et que son accès reste plutôt facile durant la saison sèche, il en est autrement au cours de l'hivernage. L'accès au village pendant la saison des pluies est rendue difficile à cause de l'absence d'une voie goudronnée menant jusqu'au village. La route nationale (RN 7) qui le relie à Kédougou et au chef-lieu de communauté rurale, Tomboronkoto, se situe à 7 km environ.

D'autre part, la grande majorité des infrastructures créées avec le développement de l'orpaillage sont des installations de nature temporaire, voire précaire, d'où leur faible intérêt à long terme pour les populations autochtones en l'occurrence. Ce caractère doublement temporaire et précaire de l'essentiel des nouvelles infrastructures pousse à prévoir leur disparition, ou du moins leur forte réduction, avec l'affaiblissement et le déclin de l'orpaillage dans le village. Les communautés d'orpailleurs, en effet, loin d'être des populations sédentaires, sont au contraire des communautés très mobiles se déplaçant au gré de leurs trouvailles ou de leurs espoirs de trouvailles d'or dans les différentes localités.

L'orpaillage, l'environnement et les ressources naturelles

Les métamorphoses de l'espace domestique et communautaire

L'environnement s'entend ici aussi bien dans ses dimensions domestique et publique que dans sa dimension naturelle. Avec le développement de l'orpaillage, l'habitat villageois se métamorphose tant au plan interne et privé que dans l'espace public et communautaire.

Au niveau interne et privé, la démographie familiale se densifie du fait de l'accueil de nouveaux arrivants, notamment des allochtones. En effet, la plupart des autochtones ont autorisé à des nouveaux arrivants la construction de leur hutte ou case dans l'enceinte même de leur concession. Quant à une

partie des autochtones, c'est-à-dire des natifs du village, ils n'hésitent pas à remplacer leurs anciennes cases en banco par des bâtiments en béton, suivant l'importance de leurs gains dans l'orpaillage. Les métamorphoses de l'espace domestique se poursuivent jusqu'à la professionnalisation de celui-ci. En effet, les propriétaires des concessions donnant sur des axes stratégiques et bien fréquentés acceptent la transformation d'une partie de celles-ci en boutiques, magasins, et autres locaux commerciaux, ce qui entraîne progressivement le développement du phénomène de location, même si ces espaces domestiques érigés en locaux commerciaux sont parfois prêtés tout simplement. En définitive, Bantako compte aujourd'hui de nombreuses rues et ruelles commerçantes, où des boutiques jouxtent des gargotes, des ateliers, des salons en tout genre, etc.

Du point de vue de l'espace habité au sein du village, on constate une très forte extension de celui-ci. Du nord au sud, de l'est à l'ouest, l'espace habité à Bantako s'étend continuellement, au point qu'il est difficile d'en fixer ses limites. Cet habitat reste cependant précaire, caractérisé dans sa grande majorité par des habitations sous forme de huttes et de cases en bambou et en crintin. Ainsi, cette précarité de l'habitat indique le caractère passager de leurs occupants. L'installation définitive dans le village n'est nullement l'objectif visé par la grande majorité des chercheurs d'or. Ils sont prompts à abandonner un site pour un autre dès que commencent à s'estomper les ressources dans l'un, alors que de nouvelles potentialités sont découvertes ailleurs. Par conséquent, les itinéraires migratoires de nombreux orpailleurs trouvent des points communs, soit des sites fréquentés au cours de la même période ou presque.

Ces métamorphoses de l'espace privé et public sont toutes liées au boom démographique, et rendent nécessaire et obligatoire le réaménagement de ces espaces. Un exemple fort illustratif de ces cas de réaménagement de l'espace public communautaire par exemple reste le déplacement du garage de transport public de la grande place du village à la périphérie de celui-ci, du fait de l'accroissement du nombre de véhicules.

Deux cartographies participatives du village ont été élaborées au cours de l'étude. Avec l'aide des habitants, notamment les autochtones, nous avons tenté de reconstituer la situation de Bantako avant 2006 et en 2011. Il faut noter que jusqu'en 2006, les impacts de l'orpaillage dans le village restaient encore très faibles et peu visibles. A l'inverse, après 2006, la situation évoluera au point d'aboutir à la métamorphose du village en 2010/2011 tant sur le plan démographique que sur le plan spatial.

La cartographie de Bantako avant 2006 montre un village encore faiblement peuplé. La principale zone d'habitation était comprise entre la place du marché, la place du village et la rue menant vers « Fatakouloudala ». A l'inverse, toute la partie située à l'est de la rue principale était constituée d'enclos et de champs.

Carte 1 : Cartographie de Bantako avant 2006
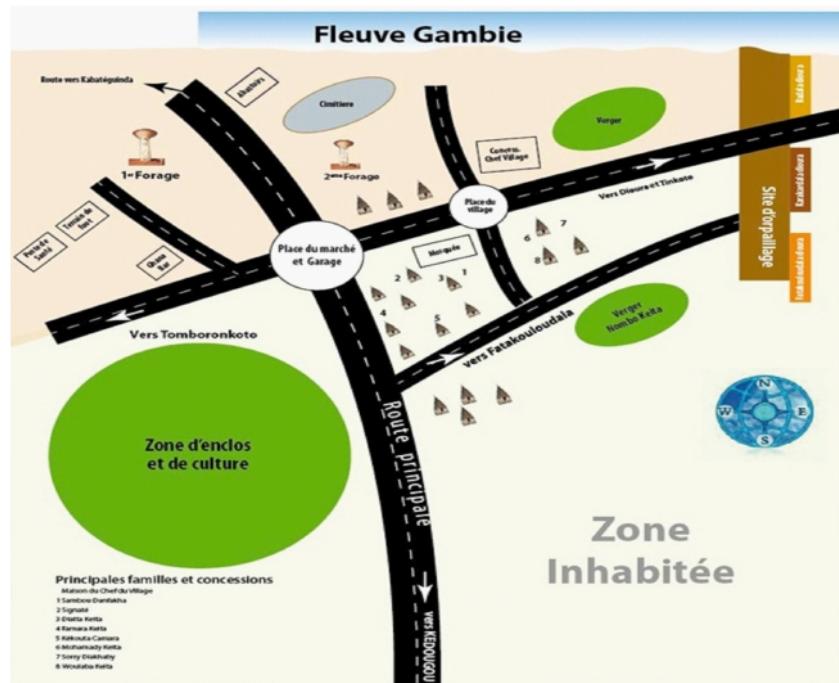
La métamorphose observée en 2011 reste, quant à elle, le résultat d'un changement progressif à partir de 2006, où le village fait face à l'arrivée continue de flux de migrants nationaux et étrangers. Cet accroissement démographique du village se manifeste en 2011 par une très forte expansion géographique, la disparition de la zone d'enclos et de culture située à proximité des premières zones d'habitations, mais aussi par la délocalisation du garage vers la sortie du village en direction de Kédougou. Par ailleurs, la rue principale du village s'est partiellement muée en rue commerçante, tandis que le triangle formé par la place du village, le second forage et le « Ghana bar » a vu la multiplication de cantines, de commerces et d'officines en tout genre.

De manière générale, l'accroissement démographique provoqué par le développement de l'orpaillage a entraîné une détérioration des cadres de vie domestique et public, d'une part, et du cadre naturel, d'autre part. En effet, bien que les revenus tirés de l'orpaillage permettent à une partie des autochtones d'améliorer leur habitat en construisant de nouveaux bâtiments, remplaçant ainsi les cases et les huttes des concessions, bon nombre de natifs du village vivent encore dans leurs cases d'antan.

Carte 2 : Cartographie de Bantako en 2011
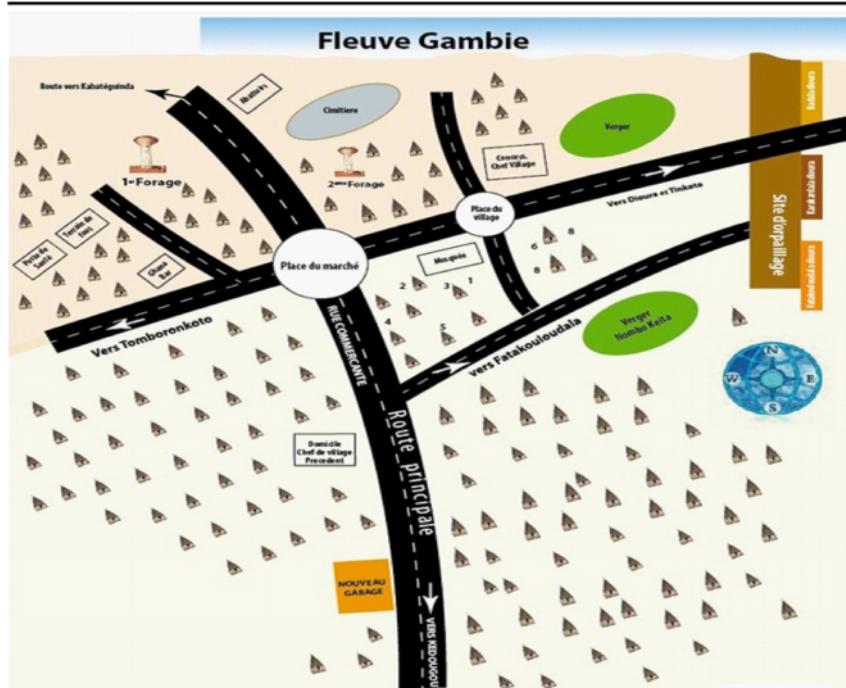
La montée en puissance des problèmes d'assainissement

Quant à l'accroissement démographique de ces dernières années, il a provoqué et accru l'insalubrité dans la plupart des concessions, des rues et dans les environs du village. Ce qui pousse à affirmer que dans l'ensemble, le développement de l'orpaillage à Bantako et l'accroissement démographique qui lui est inhérent ont entraîné une faible amélioration des cadres de vie domestique et public.

Plusieurs indicateurs montrent, de manière générale, les faibles impacts de l'orpaillage sur l'amélioration des cadres de vie domestique et public. On peut citer :

- l'insalubrité dans bon nombre de concessions qui se manifeste par la présence d'ordures ménagères dans les cours et les arrière-cours et qui proviennent de la consommation des ménages et des individus ;
- l'absence de WC (ou latrines) dans de nombreuses concessions ;
- les ruissellements des eaux de douches du fait de l'absence de fosses ;
- la présence des eaux usées dans les rues (voie publique) ;
- la forte présence d'ordures sur la voie publique ainsi que des dépôts d'ordures (décharges) dans les environs immédiats du village.

L'analyse des ordures ménagères présentes dans les concessions, sur la voie publique et dans les décharges montre qu'il s'agit, pour l'essentiel, de bouteilles plastiques, de sachets en plastique, d'emballages métalliques tels que les canettes de boisson et les pots de conserve vides, du papier et des cartons, des piles usagées, ainsi que de quelques restes alimentaires et des carcasses d'animaux. Aussi peut-on conclure qu'une grande partie des ordures ménagères produites avec l'accroissement démographique du village correspond à des déchets non biodégradables, renforçant ainsi leur nocivité pour l'environnement. Malgré l'acuité des problèmes d'assainissement et d'insalubrité dans le village, il n'a toutefois été relevé aucun dispositif pour la prise en charge de ces questions, ni même des initiatives communautaires pour favoriser l'amélioration des cadres de vie domestique et public et atténuer les impacts négatifs de l'accroissement démographique à ces deux niveaux. Il relève là de la responsabilité des autorités, aussi bien traditionnelles (chef de village, imam) et conjoncturelles (chef du site d'orpaillage, *tombouloumas*, etc.) de prendre des dispositions et d'instaurer des règles nouvelles permettant une amélioration sensible et une préservation du cadre de vie communautaire dans son ensemble, et domestique en particulier.

Aux problèmes d'assainissement, il convient également d'ajouter les pollutions sonores et atmosphériques. Celles-ci sont occasionnées par des facteurs multiples parmi lesquels : le broyage manuel ou mécanique du minerai, les émissions dues aux motos et aux véhicules.

Les pressions sur les ressources hydrauliques

Concernant les ressources hydrauliques tout d'abord, les pressions dues à l'orpaillage sont surtout observées au sein du village. Avec l'accroissement de la population villageoise, les besoins en consommation d'eau ont simultanément augmenté, que ce soit l'eau de boisson ou l'eau destinée aux autres besoins domestiques (toilettes, linge, etc.). Ces pressions sur les ressources hydrauliques s'effectuent essentiellement à deux niveaux : celui des forages et celui du fleuve Gambie situé à proximité du village. Si l'eau des forages est principalement utilisée pour boire en ce sens qu'elle est saine et potable, l'eau du fleuve, quant à elle, est à usages multiples et sert à la fois :

- aux besoins domestiques (linges, toilettes, etc.) ;
- aux besoins du secteur du bâtiment (moulage de briques, construction, etc.) ;
- aux systèmes de refroidissement des moteurs des machines à broyer, etc. ;
- aux besoins directement liés à l'activité d'orpaillage (lavage du minerai) ; et même, dans certains cas,
- aux besoins de boisson en cas de pénurie ou de problèmes techniques dans les forages, ou de manque d'argent pour acheter l'eau du forage.

Une autre cause de pression sur les ressources hydrauliques, outre l'accroissement démographique, est celle directement liée à l'activité d'orpaillage. En effet, le procédé d'exploitation artisanale de l'or est composé de deux principales phases successives, la phase d'extraction et la phase de traitement du minerai. Si la première phase, à savoir celle de l'extraction, nécessite en réalité peu de ressources hydrauliques, la seconde, quant à elle, ne peut aboutir à la récupération des paillettes d'or sans l'utilisation d'eau, qui au demeurant peut être estimée à des quantités importantes. En réalité, après l'étape de concassage et de broyage (mécanique ou manuel) du minerai, tout le reste de la phase de traitement (en l'occurrence l'étape de lavage) nécessite l'utilisation de l'eau pour arriver à la récupération des paillettes d'or. Or, à Bantako, avec l'atout que constitue la proximité du fleuve, une grande partie de l'eau utilisée pour le lavage du minerai provient directement de celui-ci.

A Bantako, les indicateurs de la pression accrue sur les ressources hydrauliques peuvent facilement être repérés dans les deux forages que compte le village. Le premier indicateur est révélé par les horaires d'ouverture des forages. Avant l'accroissement démographique du village lié au développement de l'orpaillage, les forages étaient fonctionnels de 7 heures du matin à 17 heures de l'après-midi. Désormais, il y a un élargissement des horaires d'ouverture qui s'étalent maintenant de 5 heures à 20 heures du soir. Le second indicateur de pression sur les ressources hydrauliques est le projet de construction d'un troisième forage, notamment au sud du village, afin de faciliter le ravitaillement en eau d'une partie de la population qui se retrouve éloignée des principaux points de ravitaillement avec l'extension géographique du village. En effet, le fleuve tout comme les deux forages sont tous situés au nord du village.

Les pressions sur les ressources faunistiques et floristiques

Les pressions sur les ressources faunistiques s'exercent principalement à travers l'augmentation du braconnage, qui vise ainsi à satisfaire les besoins en viande des flux croissants de migrants dans le village. Dans la zone de Bantako, ce sont les populations de biches et de phacochères qui sont les plus victimes des braconniers.

Quant aux ressources floristiques ou végétales, les pressions qu'elles subissent s'observent notamment à travers la dégradation d'une partie des ressources existantes ainsi que les menaces sur les espèces végétales protégées telles que le vène (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) et le rônier (*Borassus aethiopum*). Le vène est utilisé pour la fabrication des piquets de sécurisation des mines artisanales du fait de sa solidité et de sa haute capacité de résistance, tandis que le rônier est utilisé pour la fabrication de vin local (appelé « *bandji* »), et enfin le bambou pour la fabrication du crintin (sorte de clôture).

Enfin, on note que la sécurisation des mines artisanales n'est pas la seule cause de la dégradation des ressources végétales. Le boom démographique entraîne le développement de l'habitat. De ce fait, se développent dans le domaine de l'habitat et même dans d'autres secteurs (alimentation, services aux ménages par exemple) des métiers liés à l'exploitation des ressources végétales. Ainsi, les fabricants de crintin s'attaquent aux populations de bambou, tandis que les fabricants de vin local (« *bandji* ») déciment la population de rôniers et les fabricants de charbon de bois entraînent l'abattage de plusieurs espèces d'arbres. En effet, la fabrication du charbon de bois nécessite, pour sa part, l'utilisation d'importantes quantités de bois.

Le non-respect de la législation en matière de coupe de bois, de redevances et de taxes liées à l'exploitation forestière est caractéristique des zones d'orpaillage artisanal, ce qui suscite de nombreuses tensions entre les communautés d'orpailleurs artisanaux et les agents de l'administration forestière (service des eaux et forêts en l'occurrence).

En définitive, l'abandon des sites d'orpaillage traditionnel crée des « sites orphelins », soit des sites non réhabilités, comme le montre par ailleurs le point suivant sur la dégradation des sols et des sous-sols.

La dégradation des sols, du sous-sol et les risques pour le bétail

L'exploitation artisanale de l'or, filonien en l'occurrence, aboutit au fonçage manuel de mines artisanales souterraines et laisse souvent derrière elle des puits miniers à ciel ouvert. L'absence de réhabilitation du site, de remblayage des mines artisanales en particulier, contribue à la dégradation des sols et à la défiguration du paysage naturel des villages aurifères.

L'extension du site d'orpaillage tout comme celle de l'espace habité au sein du village réduisent les zones de culture pour les habitants, mais aussi les zones de pâturage pour le bétail. De ce fait, le développement du site contribue à repousser une partie des activités agricoles dans des zones plus lointaines, en empiétant sur les champs ou en phagocytant une partie des terres arables, ce qui crée indirectement un impact négatif sur la productivité agricole, et potentiellement sur la sécurité alimentaire des ménages autochtones. Mais l'absence de réhabilitation des mines artisanales est également une cause d'accidents pour les animaux, domestiques et sauvages, en pâturage ou en errance, qui se retrouvent pris au piège dans les mines abandonnées ou en activité. Enfin, le fonçage des mines artisanales et le développement du site d'orpaillage bouleversent l'écosystème du site d'orpaillage dans toute son étendue, entraînant ainsi la diminution ou la raréfaction de certaines espèces végétales et animales aux alentours du village.

L'absence de latrines dans bon nombre de concessions fait que l'environnement sert également de lieu d'aisance. Or l'utilisation plus ou

moins importante de cet environnement immédiat comme lieu d'aisance entraîne corrélativement sa pollution, ce qui réduit par conséquent les possibilités d'utilisation, par les populations, d'une partie des ressources végétales et floristiques présentes dans l'environnement naturel immédiat du village.

Conclusion

On observe dans les villages aurifères du sud-est du Sénégal un ensemble de mutations d'ordre social, politique et économique. Celles-ci contribuent à la transformation progressive des rapports de genre et des rapports intergénérationnels.

Le développement de l'orpaillage traditionnel dans un certain nombre de villages aurifères a accru l'autonomie économique et financière des habitants, en l'occurrence les jeunes et les femmes. De ce fait, la dépendance vis-à-vis des aînés et des hommes est moindre. En effet, le développement de l'orpaillage traditionnel donne plus de chances d'accéder aux facteurs de production que dans l'économie agricole traditionnelle. L'obtention d'une mine artisanale (appelée *daman* en malinké) nécessite moins de procédures que l'obtention de terres à vocation agricole. Lorsqu'un nouveau site minier traditionnel (*dioura* en malinké) est ouvert, il suffit à toute personne désireuse d'exploiter, d'identifier un emplacement pour sa mine et qu'elle fera ensuite homologuer par le chef du site minier traditionnel (diourakountigui) ou par l'un des ses adjoints (appelés *tombouloumas*). Ainsi, au sein d'un ménage, les membres peuvent disposer individuellement de leur mine. Or, dans l'économie agricole traditionnelle, l'essentiel des terres à vocation agricole tout comme les autres facteurs de production demeuraient la propriété du chef de ménage. Cette situation renforçait le pouvoir de ce dernier sur le reste du ménage. Le développement de l'orpaillage permet désormais aux membres du ménage de disposer de revenus individuels en exploitant une mine artisanale, avec une indépendance vis-à-vis du chef de ménage et sans la nécessaire collaboration des autres membres du ménage.

Pour ce qui est des femmes, la nouvelle source de revenus que constitue l'orpaillage leur permet de réduire leur dépendance vis-à-vis des hommes en général et de leurs époux en particulier. A défaut d'exploiter leur propre mine, les femmes ont la possibilité d'intervenir à différentes étapes du processus d'exploitation artisanale de l'or dans les villages aurifères et d'accroître ainsi leurs revenus. En outre, le renforcement de l'informel privé rural résultant du boom démographique suscité par le développement de l'orpaillage permet aux femmes de développer parallèlement d'autres activités génératrices de revenus. Ainsi, le renforcement du pouvoir économique des femmes contribue au rééquilibrage des rapports de genre.

Enfin, dans les principaux villages aurifères, le boom démographique résultant du développement de l'orpaillage entraîne un affaiblissement du contrôle communautaire, en particulier celui des aînés sur les jeunes et celui des hommes sur les femmes.

Si l'analyse des villages aurifères du sud-est du Sénégal devait se poser en termes de développement ou de problèmes, il convient de dire qu'elle ne saurait être exclusivement ni l'un ni l'autre. C'est pour cette raison qu'on préférera parler de développement problématique. Cette notion de développement problématique illustre le fait que l'orpaillage entraîne certes quelques améliorations dans les villages concernés, mais il draine simultanément de nombreux problèmes. En posant la question de l'orpaillage en tant que problème, on est amené à assimiler l'évolution des difficultés, des vulnérabilités et des inconvénients à un phénomène qu'on qualifiera de « phagédénisme social ». C'est un concept suggéré par l'analyse des problèmes soulevés par l'orpaillage traditionnel. En effet, la notion de phagédénisme est une notion médicale désignant l'extension en surface, donc visible, et en profondeur (c'est-à-dire non implicite) d'une plaie ou encore d'un chancre. En appliquant cette notion à l'analyse socio-anthropologique en particulier, et en sciences sociales de manière générale, on parlerait ainsi de phagédénisme social (voire économique) pour désigner l'extension, le développement, l'aggravation de certains problèmes sociaux. Cette utilisation du concept pourrait même s'étendre jusqu'à désigner la perte ou le déclin de certaines valeurs fondamentales d'une société ou d'une communauté. Mais la notion de phagédénisme social pourrait également désigner tout simplement la tendance à l'extension, au développement et à l'aggravation des problèmes sociaux en question.

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Note

1. Anciennement rattaché à la région de Tambacounda.

Sous-information et sous-développement en Afrique : éléments de recherche corrélationnelle

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Résumé

Un nouveau problème de développement en Afrique est la question relative à l'accès à l'information et à la compréhension de son importance. Faute d'équipements adéquats de TIC, l'accès à l'information n'est pas facile en Afrique pour la plupart de ses habitants. Par ailleurs, pour diverses raisons, l'importance même de l'information dans les pratiques socioéconomiques n'est pas toujours perçue à sa juste valeur. Pourtant de nos jours, au Sud comme au Nord, les activités humaines auraient du mal à fonctionner efficacement sans des ressources informationnelles suffisantes. Ainsi, tout pays ou continent qui souffrirait longtemps d'un apport insuffisant d'information s'exposerait à ce qu'on pourrait appeler, par analogie, une *hypoinformationose*[1] aux conséquences graves sur son processus de développement socioéconomique. Malgré la cristallisation d'une telle réalité, les indicateurs technico-économiques montrent que l'Afrique enregistre une faiblesse notable en matière de production et de consommation d'information. Dans cette optique, cet article vise à contribuer significativement à l'amélioration de la compréhension du rôle et de l'importance de l'information dans les activités humaines contemporaines. Pour y parvenir, les approches analytique et opérationnelle seront mises à contribution.

Abstract

A new problem of development in Africa is the question linked to the access to information and to the understanding of its importance. For lack of adequate ICTs equipments, access to information in Africa is not easy for many of its inhabitants. Moreover, for various reasons, the even importance of information in socioeconomic practices is not always fully appreciated in Africa. But, nowadays, as well in the South as in the North, human activities would struggle to function effectively without

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information resources in sufficient quantity. Thus, today, any country or continent which would suffer for long time from insufficient information provision might be prone to what we could possibly call, by analogy, *hypoinformationosis* which consequences are severe on its socioeconomic development process. Despite the crystallization of such a reality, technical and economical indicators show that Africa is very deficient in matter of information production and consumption. In this view, this article aims at contributing to the improvement of the understanding of information role in present human activities. To achieve this, we will use the analytical and operational approaches.

Introduction

L'observation de la structure et du fonctionnement de l'économie mondiale montre que l'information est devenue une sorte de vitamine indispensable au bon fonctionnement du système des activités humaines. Elle apparaît aussi comme un combustible (une énergie) qui alimente ce système. La réorganisation des activités autour de la production et de la consommation intensives d'information est à l'origine de cette tendance. L'Afrique demeure cependant en marge de cette dynamique globale, comme c'est souvent le cas dans bien d'autres domaines. En effet, contrairement aux apparences, ce continent se singularise par une sévère carence informationnelle (sous-information) qui se manifeste aussi bien au plan structurel que géographique. Plusieurs facteurs, allant de l'ignorance des vertus de l'information à la faiblesse des équipements en TIC en passant par l'analphabétisme expliquent cette situation. Tout cela a pour conséquence de contribuer à la sclérose de son développement. Pour autant, l'on peut remédier à ce mal insidieux. À condition, bien sûr, qu'une « thérapie » adaptée, en l'occurrence une prise en compte des vertus de développement liées à l'information ainsi que la mise en place d'une politique volontariste en matière d'infrastructures informationnelles, soit entreprise dans ce sens. C'est justement ce que propose l'approche opérationnelle dans la dernière partie de l'étude. Mais bien avant, un protocole de recherche énonce, dans la première partie, le déroulement scientifique de la recherche. Par ailleurs, l'élaboration d'un cadre analytique et spéculatif permet, dans la deuxième partie, de rechercher les manifestations, les causes et les conséquences de cette carence.

Protocole de recherche

Cette section énonce et décrit les opérations scientifiques mises en œuvre pour réaliser l'étude. Elle consiste donc à définir l'objet de l'étude, à en justifier le choix du cadre spatial et à expliquer la méthodologie adoptée pour mobiliser les connaissances.

L'information (au sens large)[2] et les technologies qui la véhiculent, en l'occurrence les Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC), sont l'objet principal de l'étude. Celle-ci vise à comprendre pourquoi, à un moment où l'information est devenue un facteur capital de production dans les activités humaines et donc dans le développement, les Africains semblent en ignorer l'importance et y ont par ailleurs insuffisamment accès. En fait, de façon implicite, l'étude cherche à mettre en évidence une corrélation entre information et développement : un pays où les populations ont davantage conscience du rôle de l'information productive[3] et y ont plus facilement accès aurait plus de chance de se développer qu'un autre où on ignore son importance et où son accès y est difficile, et inversement.

L'Afrique constitue le cadre spatial de cette étude. Elle a été choisie parce qu'au regard des autres continents, elle accuse un retard évident dans le processus en cours de révolution informationnelle. Nous aurions pu confiner l'étude dans un cadre spatial plus restreint (la Côte d'Ivoire, par exemple). Mais nous avons plutôt décidé de l'élargir à l'ensemble du continent africain parce que les données statistiques et l'observation montrent clairement que le problème qui est abordé ici transcende les frontières nationales. C'est en effet une préoccupation panafricaine, quoique certaines réalités sur le continent puissent parfois varier d'un pays à l'autre. La population cible est donc l'ensemble des Africains qui, à des degrés divers, ont recours à l'information. Il s'agit ici d'analyser leurs rapports à l'information, ce produit de plus en plus déterminant dans le fonctionnement des activités et de la société.

Du point de vue de la méthode proprement dite, la recherche, en raison de la nature du sujet traité, est en partie fondée sur le raisonnement théorique. Toutefois, celui-ci n'étant jamais suffisant pour convaincre, et partant du principe que toute spéculation tire sa validité entre la réflexion théorique et les faits, la recherche s'appuie aussi sur l'observation et les faits (économiques, sociaux et techniques) liés au contexte géographique étudié et ceux des autres contextes. Par conséquent, nous avons pris en compte, dans l'analyse qui va suivre, un indicateur technico-économique performant, à savoir l'indice de développement des TIC. Développé par l'Union Internationale des Télécommunications (UIT), l'indice de développement des TIC est un indicateur visant à caractériser le niveau de développement des TIC dans chaque pays du monde. Les données de cet indice (regroupées dans un tableau) sont très enrichissantes pour notre analyse dans la mesure où elles montrent la carence généralisée en équipements TIC des pays africains. En outre, les analyses se fondent sur une loi économique bien éprouvée dans le domaine des TIC et du développement économique. Il s'agit de la Courbe (ou Loi) dite de Jipp, établie en 1963, qui montre qu'il existe une corrélation parfaite entre le produit intérieur brut (PIB) d'un pays et sa télédensité

téléphonique. En raison de sa pertinence, cette loi est aujourd'hui extensible à l'ensemble du secteur des TIC. Toujours au titre des observations et faits, la carte mondiale de répartition de l'accès à l'Internet apporte aussi des preuves concrètes du retard considérable de l'Afrique en matière de TIC à un moment où la richesse des nations se fonde de plus en plus sur la puissance de leurs dispositifs numériques. L'étude est aussi confortée par des travaux antérieurs relatifs à l'information et à ses liens avec le développement. À cet égard, les travaux pionniers de deux chercheurs américains, Fritz Machlup (1962, 1979, 1984) et Uri Marc Porat (1977), sur le rôle de l'information dans les activités économiques et sociales ont considérablement aidé à formaliser nos réflexions personnelles sur le sujet. Par ailleurs, ceux de leur compatriote, le sociologue et futurologue Alvin Toffler (1970, 1980, 1991), ont été particulièrement utiles pour comprendre les enjeux contemporains de l'information. Les travaux de Toffler nous ont ainsi permis d'apprendre que de toutes les formes de pouvoirs (richesse, domination, savoir), l'information (au sens de savoir, de connaissances) est le principal pouvoir au XXIe siècle.

De façon pragmatique, l'étude a aussi envisagé une approche opérationnelle visant à proposer un ensemble de solutions pratiques pour traiter la carence informationnelle de l'Afrique. A titre illustratif, deux cartes, un tableau et un schéma serviront à étayer la démonstration.

Approche analytique de la recherche : l'insuffisance informationnelle en Afrique

Chercher à comprendre et à expliquer une question aussi complexe que celle de l'information et de ses relations au développement nécessite de recourir à l'analyse et à la pensée spéculative. Cette section de l'étude est donc consacrée au cadre analytique et spéculatif envisagé à partir d'un constat, celui de la carence informationnelle de l'Afrique supposée être un frein à son développement. Dans cette logique, et s'inspirant des recherches et méthodes en sciences biomédicales, l'étude traite des manifestations de la carence informationnelle en Afrique, de ses causes et de ses conséquences.

Un constat : l'Afrique souffre d'une carence informationnelle
Les signes qui permettent de déceler la carence en information se présentent essentiellement sous deux formes, l'une structurelle, l'autre géographique.

La difficulté structurelle à trouver des informations productives en Afrique
En dépit de la cristallisation du phénomène de société de l'information qui suppose que l'information est désormais aisément accessible à tous, la réalité est que celle-ci constitue encore un produit assez rare en Afrique. Il est généralement difficile de trouver de l'information productive en Afrique. Qu'il

s'agisse par exemple de trouver de l'information pour s'orienter correctement dans une grande ville ou dans une petite ville que l'on découvre pour la première fois, ou qu'il s'agisse d'en trouver à des fins d'instruction, de recherche scientifique ou encore à des fins socioéconomiques ou touristiques, la démarche s'apparente parfois à une véritable épreuve. Ainsi, sauf dans quelques pays à forte tradition touristique (Maroc, Tunisie, Kenya, Afrique du Sud), l'on trouve rarement des plans de villes ou des dépliants à usage touristique dans la plupart des pays africains. En outre, les centres ou les halls d'information à l'intention des populations (demandeurs d'emploi, salariés, jeunes, etc.) sont généralement des structures inexistantes. Pourtant, que l'on veuille s'informer sur un emploi, trouver une formation, choisir un métier, voire créer son entreprise, les centres d'information, quand ils existent, sont le moyen approprié à ces objectifs.

Dans de nombreuses universités du continent, les bibliothèques, ces lieux par excellence d'acquisition du savoir, n'existent que de nom. La plupart sont effet dépourvues d'ouvrages. La conséquence en est qu'il est dorénavant difficile aux étudiants, enseignants, chercheurs et autres usagers de trouver des éléments de connaissances à partir de ces structures. L'Internet pourrait, dans une certaine mesure, remédier à la carence des bibliothèques physiques. Mais sa situation est tout aussi déplorable dans maintes universités : insuffisance criante d'ordinateurs, absence ou interruptions récurrentes de connexion. Pour les étudiants, il résulte de tous ces dysfonctionnements une diminution progressive du patrimoine intellectuel plutôt qu'une montée en puissance de celle-ci.

À la dimension structurelle de la carence s'ajoute une autre, celle-là d'ordre géographique.

L'inégale répartition géographique des infrastructures de production et de diffusion de l'information en Afrique

Pour qu'une grande partie de la population ait convenablement accès à l'information, il faut que celle-ci soit géographiquement bien diffusée sur les territoires. Or on constate qu'en Afrique, l'accessibilité spatiale aux réseaux de télécommunications qui permettent de diffuser l'information est très discriminée au sein de la plupart des pays. Les zones rurales et les villes éloignées des capitales sont généralement défavorisées en termes d'accès aux TIC. C'est le cas par exemple de l'accès à l'Internet en Côte d'Ivoire où on remarque une nette inégalité dans la couverture réseau entre le sud et le nord du pays. La figure 1, ci-dessous, en est une illustration. Dans de nombreux pays africains, l'accès au téléphone (fixe ou portable), à la télévision et même à la radiodiffusion sonore obéit à ce même schéma discriminatoire, malgré les efforts des États de réduire la fracture numérique. Cette situation n'est

cependant pas spécifique au seul cas des moyens de télécommunications. On le sait, d'une façon générale, en Afrique, seules les grandes villes (les capitales notamment) sont relativement bien pourvues en infrastructures diverses de développement (centres de soins de santé, adduction d'eau potable, électricité, etc.).

Concernant précisément le secteur global des télécommunications, cette inégale répartition géographique influe évidemment sur le nombre d'usagers, limité parfois à celui des grandes villes. C'est une situation qui trouve en partie son explication dans l'insuffisance même des moyens de production et de diffusion de l'information. Comment parvenir à distribuer de façon homogène quelque chose qui n'existe qu'en très faible quantité ? Toutefois, de façon analytique, la répartition discriminée des équipements et services s'explique aussi par l'absence de véritables politiques d'aménagement numérique du territoire dont le but est justement de corriger ou de prévenir ces formes de ségrégation spatiale dans l'accès aux ressources informationnelles (Loukou 2012). Quand elles existent, ces politiques manquent parfois de cohérence et, par conséquent, d'efficacité.

Carte 1 : Localités de Côte d'Ivoire desservies en Internet WIMAX par l'opérateur MTN-CI, en 2012
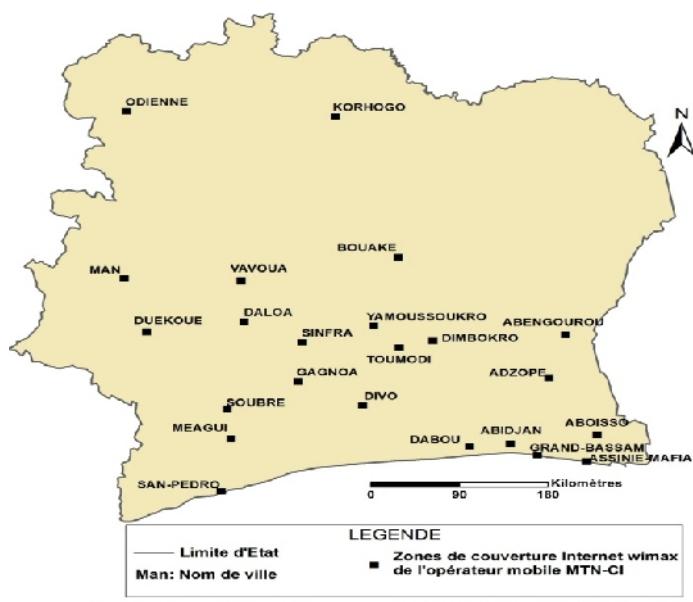
Les causes de la carence informationnelle

Elles sont multiples : méconnaissance des vertus réelles de l'information, analphabétisme, pesanteurs culturelles et politiques, faiblesse des infrastructures de production d'information, etc.

La méconnaissance des vertus de développement liées à l'information

Les vertus qui se rattachent à l'information (au sens de savoir) ne sont pas toujours perçues à leur juste valeur dans l'Afrique contemporaine, si bien que les dirigeants investissent peu dans sa production et sa transmission. Pourtant, selon Boulding, cité par Cronin (1997:11), « L'information est à la connaissance ce que le revenu est au capital ». Ce qui suggère qu'il est nécessaire d'investir dans l'information pour espérer en retirer des bénéfices en termes de connaissances qui sont aujourd'hui un vrai combustible de développement. Investir dans l'information suppose qu'il faut au préalable investir dans le secteur de l'éducation qui constitue en fait le véritable socle de tout développement, dans la mesure où la principale matière première d'un pays est en réalité son potentiel humain (en termes de qualité de formation des citoyens). Quoique l'éducation soit, il est vrai, un secteur intrinsèquement non approprié à des mesures directes de rendement pécuniaire, les retombées économiques et sociales d'investissements judicieux s'y rapportant rejaillissent sur tous les autres secteurs et permettent de les dynamiser et ainsi de créer les conditions du développement. En effet, c'est par l'éducation que l'on acquiert les connaissances. Or en Afrique, les systèmes éducatifs se caractérisent par un ensemble de facteurs défavorables : indigence des structures de formation (salles de classe manquant parfois de tables-bancs ; bibliothèques, laboratoires et salles informatiques très insuffisamment équipés) ; démotivation des personnels enseignants liée aux conditions pénibles de travail et aux salaires généralement peu attractifs, etc.

L'analphabétisme ainsi que les pesanteurs culturelles et politiques

L'analphabétisme, l'oralité, la tradition du secret (toujours tenace en Afrique mais inopportunément utilisée) ainsi que les pesanteurs politiques sont autant de freins à la production dynamique et au partage de l'information et des connaissances en Afrique.

Une frange importante de la population africaine ne sait ni lire ni écrire. Dans ces conditions, comment peut-elle profiter sans intermédiaires (parfois malhonnêtes) des bienfaits de la société de l'information ? En outre, pour ces personnes défavorisées, la mémoire humaine (à la capacité de rétention limitée) est le principal support de stockage de l'information, et l'oralité son unique mode de restitution.

Au chapitre culturel, une pesanteur marquante réside dans le fait que la plupart des sociétés contemporaines africaines continuent d'entretenir inopportunément le secret, voire le mythe autour de l'information. Il est vrai qu'à la réflexion, une telle attitude peut donner à penser que ces sociétés connaissent, à l'égale des sociétés ancestrales, la valeur stratégique et le pouvoir de l'information. Mais en réalité, ce ne semble pas être le cas. Et c'est là tout le paradoxe. Dans des sociétés africaines complexes et, de surcroît, structurellement et fonctionnellement perturbées (influence occidentale), il n'y a pas à s'étonner outre mesure de cette étrangeté. Ici l'utilisation stratégique de l'information se confond avec son utilisation mystérieuse, alors que les deux formes d'utilisation ne sont pas identiques. Cette pratique, sans doute liée au mode d'organisation des sociétés traditionnelles africaines, témoigne cependant de ce que l'on avait perçu, dans l'Afrique antique, le pouvoir et le caractère éminemment stratégiques de l'information. Le mythe autour de l'information, dans laquelle se singularisent les Africains, trouve aussi son explication dans le caractère immatériel même de l'information. En rapport avec leurs productions culturelles ou avec leur imaginaire, les Africains redoutent tout ce qui n'a pas de matérialité. Or justement, l'information est immatérielle et, comme l'ombre, est semblable, dans l'inconscient collectif des Africains, à un fantôme, à un esprit dont il convient de se méfier. On ne la propage pas sans précaution.

Bien évidemment, dans des contextes variés de vive compétition, on peut parfaitement comprendre que certaines personnes ou des structures cherchent à garder stratégiquement une information qu'elles estiment capitale. Mais quand la rétention de l'information n'obéit pas à une telle logique, elle devient inutile, voire nuisible, car limitant la transmission des connaissances.

Au plan politique, conscients du pouvoir et des enjeux de pouvoir de l'information ainsi que de ses vecteurs qu'ils redoutent, les dirigeants africains ont généralement tendance à contrôler les médias ou à organiser le monopole de l'information sur ceux-ci, de sorte que finalement l'information n'est pas facilement accessible. Cette attitude démontre au demeurant le rôle éminemment important de l'information dans les formes de gouvernance.

Les causes fonctionnelles, culturelles et politiques qui viennent d'être analysées n'expliquent pas, elles seules, la gravité de la carence informationnelle du continent. Il y a bien une insuffisance d'apport liée à la faiblesse des infrastructures de réseaux et de production d'information.

La faiblesse des infrastructures de Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC) en Afrique : une situation qui s'oppose à la production d'information et au développement du continent

Pour être produite, traitée, diffusée et consommée partout et au moment voulu, l'information a besoin d'infrastructures adéquates et suffisantes de

réseaux de télématiques. Or, à l'instar des autres moyens de communication comme le transport aérien, maritime, ferroviaire et routier, le secteur des réseaux de télécommunications d'Afrique reste encore médiocre à différents égards. Qu'il s'agisse de la téléphonie (malgré les remarquables performances enregistrées dans le secteur du mobile cellulaire) ou qu'il s'agisse de la télévision, de la radiodiffusion sonore ou de l'Internet, les carences sont partout criantes : insuffisance ou obsolescence des équipements, bande passante faible, réseaux de couverture peu étendu, intermittence des signaux, etc.

L'indice de développement des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication, plus couramment désigné en anglais sous le sigle IDI pour ICTs Development Index, permet de mieux apprécier cette faiblesse infrastructurelle. L'IDI est un indice composite visant à caractériser le développement des TIC de chaque pays. Il est calculé et publié par l'Union Internationale des Télécommunications (UIT) sur la base d'indicateurs caractérisant les TIC. L'IDI est un outil standard que les chercheurs, les gouvernements, les opérateurs, les agences de développement, etc. peuvent utiliser pour mesurer la fracture numérique et comparer les performances des TIC entre les pays. Arithmétiquement, l'IDI est une valeur repère (présentée sur une échelle de 0 à 10) composée de trois sous-indices et de onze indicateurs :

- le sous-indice accès aux TIC représente le niveau de préparation de la mise en œuvre des TIC. Il comprend cinq indicateurs caractérisant les infrastructures et les accès ;
- le sous-indice usage des TIC représente le niveau d'utilisation effective des TIC. Il comprend trois indicateurs ;
- le sous-indice des compétences en TIC représente le niveau de la capacité ou des compétences dans les TIC. Il comprend trois indicateurs indirects (ou approximatifs).

Sur la base des indices de 2012 et 2013, on se rend compte que la plupart des pays africains ont des indices très faibles, comme l'indique le tableau ci-dessous qui ne recense que les seuls pays africains dans le classement mondial.

Ce tableau montre qu'en 2013, le premier pays africain dans le classement mondial, l'Ile Maurice, ne se situe qu'au 70e rang pour un indice de 5,22. Presque toutes les vingt dernières places sont occupées par des pays africains avec des indices inférieurs à 2. Certes, on constate une sensible amélioration de l'IDI du continent entre 2012 et 2013, mais d'une façon générale, l'Afrique enregistre toujours le plus faible indice si on considère les grands ensembles géographiques: Afrique (2,31) ; pays en développement (3,84) ; monde (4,77) ; pays développés (7,20).

Tableau 1 : Indice de développement des TIC (IDI) des pays africains (2013 et 2012)

Pays	Rang mondial en 2013	Valeur de l'IDI en 2013	Rang mondial en 2012	Valeur de l'IDI en 2012	Pays	Rang mondial en 2013	Valeur de l'IDI en 2013	Rang mondial en 2012	Valeur de l'IDI en 2012
Maurice	70	5,22	72	4,96	Mali	143	2,04	147	1,86
Seychelles	75	4,97	76	4,70	Zambie	144	2,02	143	1,97
Egypte	89	4,45	87	4,28	Ouganda	146	1,94	144	1,90
Afr. du Sud	90	4,42	89	4,19	Mauritanie	147	1,91	145	1,90
Cap-Vert	93	4,30	104	3,86	Rwanda	148	1,86	151	1,74
Maroc	96	4,27	92	4,09	Benin	149	1,84	149	1,75
Tunisie	99	4,23	96	4,07	Côte d'Ivoire	151	1,80	150	1,74
Botswana	104	4,01	100	3,94	Tanzanie	152	1,76	152	1,72
Ghana	113	3,46	115	3,29	Liberia	153	1,70	154	1,57
Algérie	114	3,42	114	3,30	Guinée-Bissau	154	1,67	153	1,60
Namibie	117	3,24	118	3,08	Burkina Faso	156	1,56	160	1,35
Zimbabwe	121	2,89	123	2,68	R.D. Congo	157	1,56	157	1,47
Soudan	122	2,88	121	2,69	Malawi	158	1,52	156	1,50
Kenya	124	2,79	124	2,62	Mozambique	159	1,52	159	1,40
Gabon	126	2,66	125	2,61	Madagascar	160	1,42	158	1,43
Swaziland	128	2,60	128	2,43	Guinée	161	1,42	161	1,31
Sénégal	130	2,46	133	2,20	Ethiopie	162	1,31	162	1,24
Lesotho	132	2,36	131	2,22	Erythrée	163	1,20	163	1,18
Nigeria	133	2,35	135	2,14	Tchad	164	1,11	164	1,09
Gambie	135	2,31	136	2,12	Niger	165	1,03	165	0,97
Congo	137	2,24	137	2,09	R.C.Africaine	166	0,96	199	0,93
Angola	139	2,17	139	2,06	Continent africain	dernier	2,31	dernier	2,18
Cameroun	140	2,10	142	1,98					
Djibouti	141	2,08	140	2,01					

Source : Union Internationale des Télécommunications (Rapport 2014 « Mesurer la société de l'information »)

Il est à relever qu'au moins les dix premiers pays africains de ce classement de l'IDI sont aussi ceux qui ont les IDH (indice de développement humain)[4] les plus élevés du continent (même si le classement de l'IDH n'est pas rigoureusement identique à celui de l'IDI). De même, une quinzaine au moins des vingt pays africains ayant les IDI les plus faibles sont également ceux qui ont les IDH les plus faibles. Toutefois, on peut se demander lequel de ces deux indices influe sur l'autre. Y a-t-il véritablement une corrélation ou s'agit-il plutôt d'une simple co-occurrence (apparition simultanée de deux phénomènes)[5] ?

La Loi de Jipp semble apporter une réponse satisfaisante à ces interrogations à travers un mécanisme de corrélation statistique. En effet, indépendamment de l'IDI, la Loi (ou Courbe) de Jipp est aussi un moyen pertinent non seulement pour évaluer les faiblesses en infrastructures de TIC en Afrique, mais aussi pour chercher à établir la corrélation entre les TIC et le développement. En 1963, alors ingénieur à la division marketing de la firme Siemens, Auguste Jipp, dans

une étude intitulée *« Richesse des nations et densité téléphonique »*, montrait l'existence d'une corrélation entre la densité téléphonique et l'accroissement du produit intérieur brut (PIB) par habitant. L'étude de Jipp indique surtout que la télédensité et la richesse suivent ensemble la même croissance. Suite à cette publication, un groupe autonome spécialisé de l'UIT fut cré en 1964 avec, pour mission, de quantifier les interactions entre télécommunications et développement économique. Ainsi, il a été calculé qu'à l'échelle mondiale, une augmentation de 1000 dollars américains du PNB par tête d'habitant est associée à une augmentation de 2,4 de la télédensité. On estime que d'une manière générale ce rapport se renforce alors que la richesse augmente. Ce constat est interprété comme étant la preuve de l'existence d'un rapport de causalité agissant dans deux directions: l'amélioration des réseaux, systèmes et services de communication génère une croissance économique qui, à son tour, déclenche un besoin d'une meilleure infrastructure des instruments de communication. Depuis lors, on admet qu'il y a une corrélation indiscutable entre la dynamique du secteur global des télécommunications et le développement humain. Au demeurant, l'intention de Jipp ne se limitait pas à corréler la richesse avec la densité téléphonique. Le but, plus large, était de créer un modèle pouvant contribuer à l'établissement de critères pour l'investissement dans les différents types de réseaux de télécommunications existants ou futurs. Dans cette perspective, et de façon analogue au cas de la téléphonie fixe, on admet qu'il existe une corrélation entre le nombre de serveurs Internet, d'ordinateurs, etc., et le niveau de développement des pays.

Dans le cas spécifique de l'Afrique, le développement fulgurant de la téléphonie mobile cellulaire sur le continent (avec des télédensités théoriquement supérieures à 100 pour cent dans certains pays) cache la réalité de la situation globale des TIC. Cette réalité se traduit plutôt par une insuffisance criante en ordinateurs, en serveurs Internet, en téléphonie fixe, que révèlent les faibles niveaux d'indice de développement des TIC (IDI). Cette réalité se traduit aussi, dans beaucoup de pays ou de régions, par des difficultés d'accès à la télévision, voire à la radiodiffusion sonore. En tout état de cause, ces différentes carences font que beaucoup d'individus et de structures (universités, administrations, entreprises) ne peuvent pas s'insérer convenablement dans la société de l'information et en bénéficier correctement. A titre d'illustration, la carte mondiale du pourcentage d'internautes par pays (en rapport avec les populations) en 2012 indique que c'est en Afrique que l'on enregistre les plus faibles taux (figure 2, ci-après).

Figure 2 : Carte mondiale de la pénétration de l'Internet en 2012
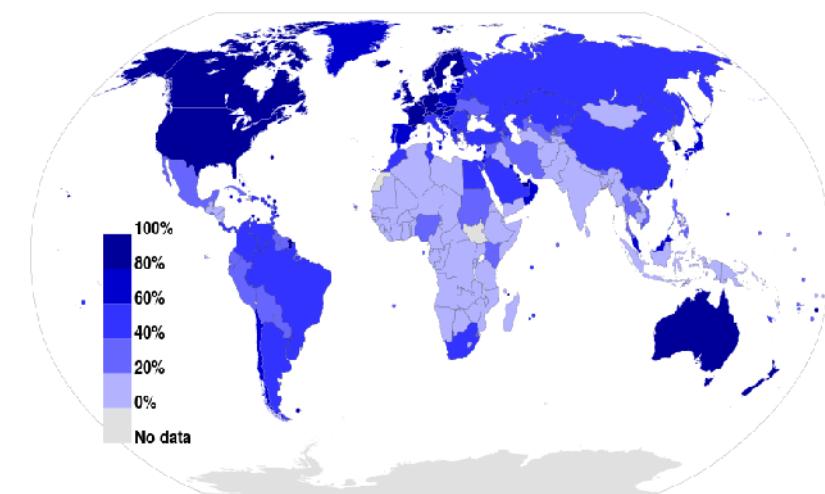
Source: Creative Commons, http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/

De par sa nature spécifique, l'information est un concept qui ne se laisse pas aisément appréhender et moins encore quantifier. Aussi est-il statistiquement difficile de dire avec précision la part de l'Afrique dans la production mondiale d'information. Néanmoins, du fait qu'elle soit insuffisamment équipée en infrastructures de capture et de traitement, l'Afrique ne peut produire qu'une part très faible du volume mondial d'information, comme c'est du reste généralement le cas pour maints autres types de productions. En outre, le peu d'information qu'elle produit répond rarement aux besoins de ses populations. De sorte que celles-ci sont généralement obligées de se tourner vers l'extérieur pour leurs besoins en information, quelle que soit la nature de celle-ci (actualités ; connaissances ; données économiques, sociales et financières ; divertissements). Pourtant, dans une société du savoir, la production d'information adaptée aux besoins des populations locales est fondamentale si l'on veut éviter de perpétuer la dépendance sous toutes ses formes (économique, technologique, scientifique et culturelle).

A l'ère de la société du savoir, la carence informationnelle est facteur potentiel de sous-développement

C'est désormais une réalité de plus en plus admise que la société et l'économie mondiales traversent une profonde transformation induite par l'utilisation intensive d'information et de connaissances dans les différentes activités humaines. Toutefois, dans le cas spécifique de l'Afrique, le problème qui se

pose est que ce continent est dans la société de l'information sans véritablement être dans la société du savoir et de la créativité. Aussi sa situation actuelle de continent sous-développé se joue-t-elle en partie à ces différences anodines mais fondamentales. Si l'information est une condition nécessaire du développement, le savoir et plus encore l'imagination créative en sont des conditions indispensables. L'acquisition du savoir passe par l'éducation, l'instruction et la formation de qualité. Or les systèmes éducatifs qui devraient permettre d'y parvenir sont généralement défaillants en Afrique.

Évoquant le rôle du savoir dans le développement, le futurologue Alvin Toffler fait justement la remarque suivante :

> C'est la pénurie de savoir économiquement pertinent qui constitue la carence la plus aiguë des pays les moins avancés. La voie du développement et de la puissance économique au XXIe siècle ne passe plus par l'exploitation des matières premières et de la force de travail, mais par les performances de l'esprit humain, Toffler (1991:470).

Pour sa part, soulignant l'importance de l'information, à la faveur du premier sommet (en 1999) de l'African Development Forum sur le thème « The Challenge to Africa of Globalisation and the Information Age » (L'Afrique face au défi de la mondialisation et de l'ère de l'information), Noah Samara, fondateur du réseau de télécommunications par satellite, World Space, a eu cette remarque pertinente :

> Si vous regardez ce qu'il y a derrière la prospérité des nations, vous trouverez l'information ; derrière la pauvreté des nations, vous trouverez l'absence d'information. Si l'on veut un développement durable, une société civile saine et une véritable production intellectuelle, l'information est véritablement ce qui est nécessaire à tous les besoins. (http://www.uneca.org/adf99/1025address_noah_samara.htm), dernière consultation, le 15 août 2012.

Ces deux citations résument bien toute la dialectique de l'articulation entre carence informationnelle et sous-développement, qui est la pensée dominante du présent article.

Les modèles actuels de construction du développement socioéconomique s'inscrivent dans de vastes changements de société, à savoir le passage de la société industrielle à la société de l'information ; la transition de l'économie fondée sur la matière brute à l'économie fondée sur la matière cérébrale (le savoir et la créativité). Ceci est d'autant vrai qu'en dépit de ses immenses ressources naturelles, l'Afrique demeure le continent le plus en retard de développement. Il apparaît donc certain que les simples matières brutes ne suffisent plus à générer du développement. Aussi un déficit de savoir et d'imagination ne saurait-il être simplement compensé par une abondance de

matières brutes. La nouvelle richesse des nations, c'est leur potentiel humain qui se décline en information, en savoir, en imagination, en créativité. C'est dans ces domaines qu'il convient d'investir fortement, intelligemment et patiemment. Il s'agit, pour tout dire, de l'éducation, de la formation et de l'ensemble des ressources humaines et technologiques qui permettent d'assurer ces éléments d'information, de savoir et de connaissances indispensables aux individus, aux entreprises et aux administrations. Dans un tel contexte, il s'avère impérieux pour les pays africains de faire efficacement face à leurs insuffisances en matière d'infrastructures de production d'information.

La section qui suit aborde cette question de façon pragmatique.

Approche opérationnelle de la recherche : comment traiter la carence informationnelle

Comme toute forme de carence, l'insuffisance informationnelle peut se traiter. À condition bien entendu que le traitement approprié soit appliqué. À commencer, en l'espèce, par la reconnaissance des vertus de l'information. Ensuite, et de façon opérationnelle, il convient de généraliser l'accès des populations aux outils de production et de consommation de l'information.

Les vertus de développement liées à l'information

Nos observations empiriques nous permettent d'avancer que dans la vie de tous les jours, l'information possède au moins trois principales vertus (ou propriétés). Elle se présente à la fois comme le carburant (énergie), la vitamine et l'ADN (acide désoxyribonucléique) des activités socioéconomiques. À notre avis, connaître et admettre ces trois vertus sont un préalable au traitement efficace de la carence dont souffre l'Afrique. C'est pourquoi nous nous attachons à décrire, ci-dessous, ces trois propriétés identifiées de l'information.

L'information, carburant (énergie) du système des activités humaines

Au sens propre, un carburant est un combustible qui alimente un moteur thermique en transformant l'énergie chimique en énergie mécanique pour faire fonctionner une machine. En considérant que l'information fait fonctionner les activités, elle est assimilable à une sorte de carburant, également pourvoyeur d'énergie qu'on peut qualifier d'énergie intellectuelle.

De même qu'une crise pétrolière est généralement source de perturbations majeures dans le fonctionnement de nombreux secteurs d'activités (transports, industries, agro-industries, etc.), de même une crise informationnelle peut aujourd'hui sérieusement perturber le fonctionnement de divers secteurs d'activités. Supposons que les réseaux télématiques dont dépendent aujourd'hui les banques, les assurances, les agences de voyage, les services

aéroportuaires, les universités et centres de recherches, les services administratifs en réseaux, certains hôpitaux et cliniques, etc. soient sérieusement perturbés et incapables pendant un moment de transmettre les données (les informations). Au mieux, ces différents services fonctionneraient au ralenti, au pire, ils ne fonctionneraient même pas, le temps de rétablir les connexions. De telles perturbations engendrent généralement de lourdes conséquences sur les activités. Une façon encore plus pertinente d'apprécier le parallèle entre carburant fossile et « carburant intellectuel » est la suivante: supposons plutôt que, mécaniquement, ces réseaux télématiques fonctionnent correctement, mais que pour des raisons diverses ils ne sont pas alimentés en données (informations). Dans ce cas de figure, tout comme le moteur thermique privé de gasoil ou d'essence ne fonctionnerait pas, ces systèmes privés d'information ne fonctionneraient pas non plus. Dans le premier exemple comme dans le deuxième, notre vie moderne fortement dépendante de ces systèmes serait un véritable cauchemar : files humaines interminables dans les services, perte considérable de temps, ralentissement des activités, perte de productivité, énervements, stress, déprime, voire révoltes dans certains cas, etc. C'est pourquoi il est fondamental de reconnaître le rôle de l'information dans les activités humaines et de prendre conscience de sa carence éventuelle, car la méconnaissance ou la négligence de ceux-ci peuvent aboutir à de sérieux dysfonctionnements dans les activités (voir tableau de classification de l'information, ci-dessous).

Quoiqu'il soit toujours difficile d'évaluer scientifiquement l'impact de l'information, les travaux précurseurs de chercheurs comme Fritz Machlup (1962) et Marc Uri Porat (1977) ont cependant mis en évidence son importance capitale dans toutes les activités humaines. Aussi, de même que les carburants fossiles et l'électricité sont stratégiques dans l'économie de nombreux secteurs d'activités, de même l'information est-elle devenue une ressource stratégique pour tous les secteurs d'activités humaines.

L'information, vitamine du savoir, de l'imagination et du développement
La vitamine se définit comme étant une substance organique indispensable à la croissance et au bon fonctionnement de l'organisme. Les biochimistes estiment qu'un apport insuffisant ou une absence de vitamine provoquent respectivement une hypovitaminose (carence bénigne) ou une avitaminose (carence sévère) qui sont la cause de diverses maladies (scorbut, béribéri, rachitisme, etc.). Ils estiment qu'à l'inverse, un apport excessif de certains types de vitamines provoque une hypervitaminose, très toxique pour l'organisme.

Dans les activités humaines, l'information (qui peut à certains égards se définir comme étant une substance immatérielle) se comporte exactement

comme la vitamine, d'où l'analogie que nous essayons ici d'établir. De la même façon que les carences vitaminiques représentent chez certaines espèces vivantes des désordres fréquents, sources de morbidité et de mortalité, de la même façon, les carences informationnelles représentent des troubles susceptibles de provoquer de graves dysfonctionnements psychosociaux et du système des activités économiques, et, ainsi, de constituer un frein au développement. Imaginons simplement que nous soyons privés pendant une durée plus ou moins longue de télévision, de radio, de journaux, d'Internet. Rien que pour l'impossibilité d'être informés de ce qui se passe chez nous ou ailleurs dans le monde nous serions profondément attristés, frustrés, stressés, voire déprimés pour certains. S'agissant de l'éducation et de la formation ou à l'échelle des entreprises, des administrations et des États, l'information est un élément catalyseur des idées, des stratégies, des décisions, des actions et donc du développement.

À l'instar des vitamines, c'est généralement dans les épisodes de suspicion ou de carence avérée que l'on réalise l'importance de l'information dans les activités. En fait, une façon pragmatique d'évaluer le rôle réel de l'information (et des TIC qui en sont les vecteurs) dans le développement est d'imaginer la conséquence de leur absence plus ou moins prolongée dans les circonstances et les multiples activités où nous avons la nécessité et l'habitude d'en faire usage.

Tableau de classification de l'information

Types d'information	Secteurs (sources) de production	Conséquences de la carence
Information D (*Data* = Données)	activités économiques, financières, sociales, administratives, militaires ; Internet	sclérose des différentes activités : manque de performance et de compétitivité ; dépendance ; sous-développement
Information E (*Entertainment* = Divertissement)	musique, TV, jeux, sports, radio, cinéma, Internet	ennui ; lassitude ; absence de délassement ; baisse de performance ; dépendance ; sous-développement
Information K (*Knowledge* = Connaissances, savoirs)	éducation, recherche, Internet, bibliothèques, formation professionnelle, apprentissage	sclérose des mentalités : ignorance ; retard technologique, scientifique, économique et culturel ; dépendance ; sous-développement
Information N (*News* = Actualités)	TV, radio, Internet, presse écrite, etc.	ignorance ; stress ; déprime ; tristesse ; dépendance ; absence de démocratie ; mauvaise gouvernance ; désinformation ; sous-développement

Source : Auteur, 2014

Il est utile de préciser que la conception du tableau de classification de l'information (ci-dessus) résulte de nos propres réflexions et analyses, quoiqu'elle s'inspire, pour partie, des travaux de Fritz Machlup et de Marc Uri Porat sur l'information, et, pour autre partie, de la taxonomie médicale sur les vitamines.

Variation des besoins en information des individus, des structures et des États

De même que les besoins en vitamine varient suivant plusieurs critères (âge, taille, sexe, activités musculaires, état de santé, zone géographique de résidence, etc.), de même les besoins en information et le type d'information souhaitée pour un individu varient également suivant certains critères : l'âge, le sexe, le domaine d'activité, l'endroit où l'on réside, le niveau social, le statut social, les projets de société, le style de vie, le niveau intellectuel, la culture, l'éducation, etc. Pour un pays, le niveau de développement ; les stratégies, visions et objectifs de développement ; la structure de l'économie ; l'environnement politique (national comme international), etc. sont autant de critères importants à prendre en compte dans la détermination des besoins d'informations nécessaires au fonctionnement correct du système des activités. Par exemple, c'est leur niveau élevé de développement, la structure actuelle de leurs économies ainsi que leurs visions à court, moyen ou long termes du développement qui expliquent que les pays développés ont manifestement un besoin plus accru en information de types **D** et **K,** alors que les pays en développement semblent plus portés sur les informations de types **E** et **N**. Il est important de comprendre ces mécanismes, apparemment anodins, si l'on veut pouvoir produire l'information appropriée et nécessaire qui se transformera en connaissances et en savoir au service du développement.

Difficulté à quantifier l'apport en information des individus, des structures et des États

Si l'on sait, en science de l'informatique, quantifier l'information (bits, kilobits, mégabits, gigabits, térabits, etc.), il est en revanche encore scientifiquement impossible de dire que tel individu, telle structure, tel pays ont besoin de telle quantité d'informations de type **D** (Data), **E** (Entertainment), **K** (Knowledge) ou **N** (News) pour leur satisfaction. Selon Cronin (1997:11), il n'existe pas d'étalon auquel se référer pour quantifier ou évaluer l'information. Par quantifier l'information, Cronin fait probablement allusion à l'apport quantitatif nécessaire d'information dont aurait besoin un individu ou une structure. Plus encore, en parlant d'impossibilité de quantifier l'information, Cronin

veut très vraisemblablement dire qu'il n'existe pas d'unité de mesure pour la connaissance. Dès lors, il apparaît difficile d'établir un référentiel d'apport optimal d'information. Dans ces conditions, on ne peut donc pas connaître la quantité moyenne d'information dont un individu, une structure ou un pays auraient besoin à un moment donné. Une chose est cependant certaine : l'Afrique souffre d'*hypoinformationos*e **D** et **K,** c'est-à-dire d'une carence en données et en connaissances, ce qui n'est pas le cas des informations de types **E** et **N**, généralement plus faciles à obtenir.

L'information et ses vecteurs (les TIC), ADN de la vie économique et sociale

L'information (notamment sous sa forme numérique) peut être considérée comme l'ADN de la vie socioéconomique moderne. L'ADN est une molécule que l'on retrouve dans toutes les cellules vivantes. Il assure le contrôle de l'activité des cellules de toute espèce vivante. De façon quasi similaire, l'information, qui est désormais au cœur de la plupart de nos activités quotidiennes, rythme celles-ci et en modifie la structure et le fonctionnement. La similitude ne réside pas seulement entre information et ADN en raison de leur mode de traitement identique : codage, duplication, réplication, transcription, etc. Elle est extensible aux Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication elles-mêmes, vecteurs de l'information. En effet, tout comme l'ADN, les TIC ont les propriétés diverses de produire, de traiter, de contenir, de dupliquer, de modifier et de transmettre l'information (de façon identique si l'on le désire).

La découverte de l'ADN, de sa structure et de sa fonction a profondément modifié les connaissances sur l'être humain et la manière dont on peut faire mieux vivre celui-ci. Une connaissance plus accrue, en Afrique, de l'information, de ses vertus et de son rôle pourrait tout autant permettre de mieux construire le développement socioéconomique à l'ère de la société de l'information. Nous espérons que des études ultérieures plus affinées, sur cette question, permettront d'y parvenir.

Indépendamment de la reconnaissance des vertus de l'information, la généralisation de l'accès des populations aux outils de production et de consommation de l'information est aussi un facteur indispensable dans le traitement de l'insuffisance informationnelle.

Généraliser l'accès des populations aux TIC

Le succès de la généralisation de l'accès des Africains aux outils de production, de transmission et de consommation de l'information passe par deux principales approches.

**Figure 3 : Représentation de l'équivalence de l'information
(sous forme numérique) au carburant, à la vitamine et à l'ADN**
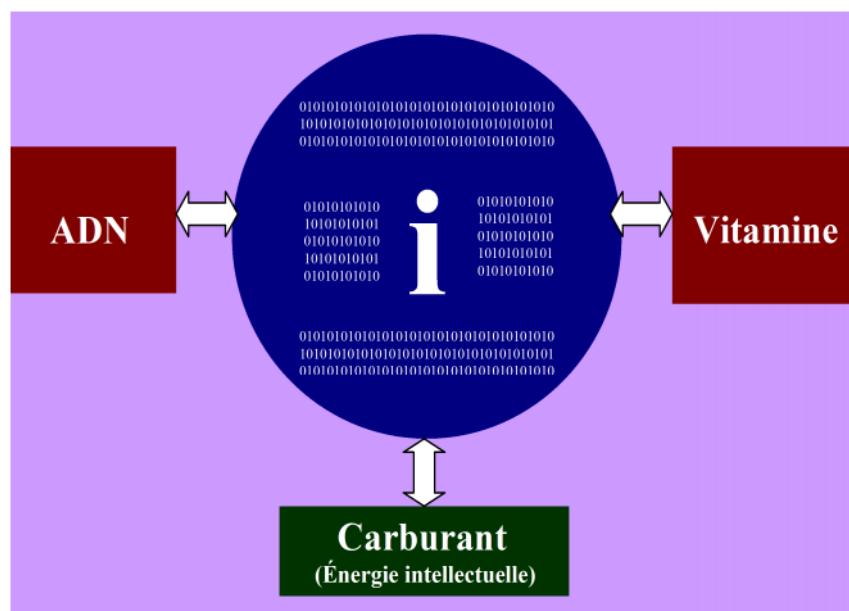
Schéma de l'auteur, 2014

Favoriser l'accès à l'ordinateur et aux autres terminaux numériques
Plus maniable et ergonomique, l'ordinateur reste encore le terminal
incontournable des autoroutes de l'information, même si les tablettes
numériques et les téléphones mobiles de dernière génération permettent de
plus en plus d'y circuler aisément. En raison toutefois de son coût encore
prohibitif en Afrique et de son mode d'utilisation relativement complexe pour
certaines personnes, il demeure dans l'esprit de bien des Africains un
instrument économiquement et techniquement difficile d'accès. Néanmoins,
la généralisation[5] de cet outil en Afrique peut s'accélérer si les autorités
compétentes considèrent la démarche s'y rapportant comme un véritable
projet de société guidé par le contexte d'universalisation du numérique. Dans
cette perspective, un effort de sensibilisation pour l'adoption d'une culture
et d'une philosophie de l'information comme produit de consommation
courante, et des TIC comme outils familiers, est également une approche à
favoriser.

Pour peu que la majorité des citoyens sache lire et écrire, demain la maîtrise
des fonctionnalités élémentaires de l'ordinateur et d'autres terminaux numériques
pourrait être identique à celle de l'automobile, aujourd'hui. Songeons en effet

que des centaines de millions de personnes à travers le monde parviennent à conduire une voiture sans pour autant rien savoir de la technologie et de la science qui régissent son auto-mobilité. Le principal, pour ces personnes, c'est que l'engin fonctionne et joue le rôle qu'elles en attendent. L'utilisation de l'ordinateur devra obéir à la même logique. S'il est vrai que la conduite d'une automobile ne nécessite pas de savoir lire et écrire (ce qui en facilite et généralise l'usage), l'utilisation d'un ordinateur n'exige pas en revanche un permis de cliquer. C'est là déjà un avantage considérable pour tous dans la quête de vulgarisation de cet outil indispensable dans le contexte numérique.

À côté de ces mesures, la mise en œuvre d'infrastructures de réseaux et services suffisantes et appropriées de diffusion de l'information est également une action à mener.

Rendre disponibles, à moindre coût, les infrastructures de réseaux et services de diffusion de l'information

De nos jours, les Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication sont capitales pour l'acheminement des flux considérables d'information générée à travers le monde. La mondialisation des échanges et la prééminence des flux d'information numérique dans la plupart des activités humaines sont les deux facteurs qui ont véritablement consacré l'importance des TIC. Grâce aux réseaux et systèmes multimédia à haut débit, il est aujourd'hui possible, avec une facilité toujours croissante, d'acheminer en quelques secondes, entre les points les plus extrêmes de la Terre, des flux énormes d'informations numérisées (données, voix, sons, images) dont ont besoin les entreprises, les administrations, les organisations et les particuliers. Il va de soi que pour accomplir quotidiennement de telles prouesses, la mise en place de réseaux et systèmes efficients s'avère un préalable. Or l'Afrique, d'une façon générale, reste particulièrement sous-équipée en ces matières comme en bien d'autres. De notre point de vue, ce continent, qui a manqué l'ère de la Révolution industrielle (avec les conséquences négatives que cela a engendrées sur son processus de développement), ne devrait pas manquer celle de la Révolution informationnelle en cours, sous prétexte qu'il aurait d'autres priorités à satisfaire d'abord. Dans cette optique, une mutualisation des infrastructures lourdes au niveau continental ou sous-régional, par la fédération des projets et de leurs coûts, serait une bonne solution pour des économies faibles comme celles des pays africains. Certes, quelques initiatives louables ont déjà été entreprises dans ce sens avec, notamment, les projets communs de câble sous-marin à fibres optiques (SAT-3 / WASC) et de satellite (RASCOM). Il convient toutefois de reconnaître que les résultats sont pour l'instant peu probants dans un cas comme dans l'autre, ce qui suppose probablement une réorientation des modalités techniques et opérationnelles de la mise en œuvre de ces projets.

Conclusion

La question de l'information et de ses vecteurs en Afrique apparaît assez ambiguë à divers égards. D'abord, on parle partout de société de l'information et pourtant on constate une réelle insuffisance d'information productive en Afrique. Ensuite, on a le sentiment d'être submergé par les TIC alors qu'en réalité très peu d'Africains y ont accès. Enfin, en dépit de la réalité criante d'une fracture numérique, on peut remarquer que les populations pauvres ont beaucoup plus de chance d'accéder aux TIC qu'elles ne le peuvent pour d'autres types de moyens de communication pourtant bien antérieurs. Cela s'explique par une relative facilité opérationnelle de leur mise en œuvre, mais aussi par la forte pression (demande) émanant de ces populations. Dans toute cette ambiguïté, une chose reste cependant claire: par rapport aux autres continents, l'Afrique demeure fortement carentielle en matière de production et de consommation d'information. Le diagnostic fondé sur l'observation, les données statistiques et cartographiques ainsi que la réflexion et l'analyse de la question montrent que la sous-information est à considérer comme une des causes subtiles du sous-développement de l'Afrique à côté d'autres causes bien plus évidentes telles que les incessantes guerres civiles ici et là, la mauvaise gouvernance et les pandémies (VIH/SIDA, paludisme, fièvre à virus Ebola, etc.) qui freinent les investissements.

Plus qu'un besoin social (à l'instar de l'électricité et des moyens traditionnels de communication créés par l'espèce humaine pour améliorer son mode de vie), l'information s'assimile en fait à un besoin biologique comme la respiration, l'eau, la nourriture et les vitamines générées par la nature. L'information est donc nécessaire et indispensable à la survie de notre civilisation communicationnelle, comme le sont les vitamines et les oligoéléments pour le bon fonctionnement et la croissance des espèces vivantes. Pour être capable de modifier la structure et le fonctionnement des activités et des sociétés, elle a la propriété fondamentale de l'ADN. Pour alimenter les activités en leur servant d'énergie, elle a la valeur stratégique du pétrole. À ces égards, la carence avérée du continent en ressources informationnelles mérite d'être considérée avec la même gravité que les carences vitaminiques du corps humain ou avec la même attention que les crises énergétiques, et ainsi de bénéficier d'un traitement équivalent. Car une société trop carentielle en information, en savoir, en imagination créatrice devient facilement un milieu propice au développement insidieux de nombreuses anomalies (absence de démocratie, dictature, mauvaise gouvernance, obscurantisme, sous-développement, etc.) qui s'opposent au progrès de l'humanité. L'expérience montre que c'est un principe qui opère avec une certitude quasi mathématique. C'est pourquoi, prônant le progrès par le savoir,

la présente étude préconise en définitive l'ingénierie de l'information ainsi que sa promotion et sa large diffusion, à travers leurs vecteurs (les TIC), comme une recommandation thérapeutique au mal de sous-développement de l'Afrique. En effet, dans un contexte de fortes transformations sociales et économiques influencées par les outils numériques, les modèles actuels en matière de développement nous éclairent de mieux en mieux sur l'articulation productive entre information et développement.

Notes

1. Nous avons forgé ce néologisme par analogie à hypovitaminose, terme médical qui fait référence à une insuffisance de vitamine, substance organique nécessaire au bon fonctionnement de l'organisme. Dans cette perspective, l'*hypoinformationose* est donc la résultante d'une carence en information.

2. Au sens de l'économie des réseaux et des services, et à la suite de Machlup et de Porat, l'information concerne à la fois les nouvelles ayant trait à l'actualité (*news*) ; les données relatives aux activités économiques, financières ou sociales (*data*) ; les œuvres de distraction (*entertainment).* Dans ce sens, l'information concerne surtout le savoir et les connaissances (*knowledge*).

3. On entend par information productive toute information nécessaire à la prise d'une bonne décision.

4. L'indice de développement humain (IDH) est un indice statistique composite, créé par le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (PNUD) en 1990. Il sert à évaluer le niveau de développement humain des pays du monde. L'IDH est un indice sans unité, compris entre 0 (exécrable) et 1 (excellent), calculé par la moyenne de trois indices quantifiant respectivement la santé / longévité ; le savoir ou niveau d'éducation ; le niveau de vie.

5. En Côte d'Ivoire, le projet « un citoyen, un ordinateur + une connexion Internet » lancé le 19 février 2015 semble répondre à cette préoccupation.

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Histoire et mémoire de Gorée dans la traite atlantique : paramnésie de localisation

Pape Chérif Bertrand Bassène[1*]

Résumé

La controverse de « *Gorée et l'esclavage : mythes et réalités* » a eu deux effets. Elle a nourri un certain négationnisme mémoriel de Gorée tandis que sur le plan scientifique souvent confiné dans les universités, les chercheurs ont essayé d'étudier le rapport entre histoire et mémoire dans la perception du passé de l'île[2] C'est dans ce sens que cette réflexion propose de resituer la thématique de Gorée et l'esclavage dans le contexte historique de la Concession du Sénégal. C'est là un préalable à la compréhension du rôle à la fois historique mais aussi symbolique (mémoriel à travers la Maison des Esclaves) de Gorée et la traite atlantique. En démontrant comment Gorée est devenue un centre important de transit pour l'esclavage, on peut désormais mieux expliquer pourquoi le discours de mémoire tant critiqué de la Maison des esclaves, loin de créer un mythe de Gorée, essaie plutôt de quantifier symboliquement la souffrance.

Abstract

The controversy of "Gorée and slavery: Myths and Realities" had two effects. It actually fuelled a denial of the memory of Gorée while in the scientific ambit which is often the preserve of universities; researchers have tried to study the relationship between history and memory in the perception of the island's past. In this respect, this reflection proposes to relocate the theme of Gorée and slavery in the historical context of the Concession of Senegal. This is a prerequisite to understanding of both historical and symbolic (memorial through the Slave House) role of Gorée Island and the Atlantic slave trade. After demonstrating how Gorée has become a major slave transit point, we can now better explain why the much-criticized remembrance speech of the Slave House far from creating a Gorée Island myth rather attempts to symbolically give a weight to suffering.

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Mise en contexte de notre démarche

En 2006, le Sénégal célébrait, avec la France, « la première journée des mémoires de la traite négrière, de l'esclavage et de leurs abolitions ». Cette journée commémorative française entendait marquer la volonté de la France de participer à la construction d'une mémoire partagée de l'esclavage avec le Sénégal et, au-delà, avec l'Afrique tout entière[3] à Gorée. Une volonté politique de commémorer conjointement ce passé douloureux[4] qui sera altérée par une controverse sur le choix de l'Ile et, plus particulièrement, son rôle dans la traite atlantique qui aurait valu à la France, ancienne puissance détentrice, de reconnaître l'esclavage et la traite négrière comme crime contre l'humanité[5].

Mais au-delà de ce qui apparaissait comme une polémique médiatique, on pouvait retracer l'histoire d'un vieux débat universitaire sur la traite négrière. Débat qui portait plus particulièrement sur la quantification des phénomènes démographiques engendrés par le nombre de « Nègres » (au sens historique et culturel du terme) qui ont été ponctionnés de l'Afrique et sur l'évaluation des conséquences dans le contexte global de l'évolution des formations sociales africaines à l'ère du capitalisme mercantiliste (Bathily 1986).

C'est dans les années 1950 qu'une première génération de chercheurs allait préfigurer la problématique des statistiques de la traite négrière qui allait s'enrichir avec l'arrivée de jeunes chercheurs comme Boubacar Barry, Philippe Curtin et autres Abdoulaye Bathily dans les années 1970-1980.

Longtemps confinée à l'université loin du « tumulte qu'affectionne la presse » (Samb 2000:51-66), la discussion devenait un débat public africain dans les années 1990, sous l'effet combiné de la médiatisation des politiques commémoratives et dans un contexte de développement de la presse et d'Internet. En août 1995 par exemple, un commentaire de l'historien P. Curtin sur H-Net Africa, qui avait comme titre « Goree and the Atlantic Slave Trade », parlait de mystification (« hoax »), allait se retrouver dans la presse.

Dans un texte du quotidien Le Monde du 27 décembre 1996, on voyait le titre : « Le mythe de la « Maison des Esclaves » qui résiste à la réalité » (De Roux 1996). Le sujet devint alors une question politique : « Esclavage : la thèse qui choque Dakar ». Selon l'hebdomadaire suisse, L'Hebdo, un article du Monde a déclenché une affaire d'État, la très touristique « Maison des Esclaves » serait l'objet d'un « révisionnisme » (Duarte 1997). Et c'est suite à l'ampleur de cette « Polémique sénégalaise autour de la maison des esclaves », selon le quotidien français La Croix (Boyer 1997) qu'il sera organisé un séminaire sur l'Ile de Gorée en 1997 sous la thématique de « Gorée dans la traite atlantique »[6].

Tout semble indiquer que le sens du symbole culturel de la Maison des Esclaves est subjectivement amalgamé à la problématique historique de Gorée

dans la traite atlantique. Conséquemment, les différentes rencontres scientifiques qui suivirent ne purent ôter le doute sur une certaine idée faisant de « Gorée, la plus importante escroquerie mémorielle de l'histoire » et véhiculée à la veille des événements commémoratifs de l'esclavage et de la traite négrière.[7] Dès lors, cette modeste contribution cherche à faire le distinguo ; saisir comment Gorée est apparue comme un centre important dans le système atlantique.

La problématique du souvenir géographique par l'histoire – souvenir exact, mais mal localisé dans l'espace (comme dans le temps par ailleurs) – ou singulièrement de la paramnésie de localisation de Gorée est, nous semble-t-il, un préalable à la compréhension du choix de l'île (ou de la Maison des Esclaves) comme lieu de mémoire. Enrichir la réflexion sur l'histoire de la géographie de la Concession du Sénégal partant du rôle de Gorée dans celle-ci devrait permettre de mieux outiller la compréhension du rôle attribué à la Maison des Esclaves.[8] Pour cela, nous proposons de répondre ici à deux questions : Quelles sont les limites de la concession française du Sénégal ? Et quel rôle jouait l'île de Gorée dans cette concession ?

La concession du Sénégal dans le monde atlantique

La présence française sur l'île du fleuve Sénégal, qui allait porter le nom de Saint-Louis, était liée à l'histoire du droit des colonies des comptoirs qui n'avaient pas besoin d'une emprise directe sur le territoire où il se serait ainsi établi. Au moyen d'une concession, qui faisait dire que les chefs locaux auraient cédé en toute propriété et souveraineté à sa Majesté le Roi d'un tel pouvoir dans le système atlantique, ne serait-ce qu'un littoral, le pouvoir colonisateur s'acquérait alors un droit exclusif sur tout territoire dans lequel les indigènes devenaient des sujets sans droit.[9]

C'est ainsi que la France durant la traite négrière (jusqu'à à la veille de la colonisation par annexion) a pu s'octroyer une vaste organisation impérialiste qui prenait comme base la Concession du Sénégal dont les limites avaient été fixées par les lettres patentes du Roi de France de 1696 et qui va au nord, du Cap Blanc au sud à l'embouchure de la Sierra Leone (Delcourt 1952).

En outre, dans la Concession, il n'importait pas au colonisateur de contrôler directement la terre, mais de se servir de mercenaires où d'influencer les institutions sociopolitiques locales qui allaient vite être attirées par le système atlantique. Aussi loin que son idéologie pourrait être véhiculée, ici, la « Guerre du Nègre », on pourrait alors concevoir l'étendue de son nouveau territoire. C'est dans ce contexte qu'il faut imaginer la notion de Concession du Sénégal qui est liée à l'histoire de l'exclusivisme colonial français. C'est une expression géographique dont les limites se mesurent, comme nous allons le voir, aux ambitions des pouvoirs coloniaux.

Son existence juridique participe d'un acte de présence similaire à ce que l'on trouve dans les œuvres imaginaires de la « *Robinsonnade* », une sorte de contrat avec des pouvoirs locaux par lequel un pouvoir impérialiste confère à des particuliers, moyennant l'assujettissement à certaines charges et obligations, des droits ou avantages spéciaux sur le domaine qu'il s'est approprié et souvent à l'encontre du droit indigène.[10]

Ainsi, dans le contexte de la traite négrière, les armateurs agissant au nom de la France pouvaient aller jusqu'en Sierra Leone et, en contrepartie, devaient introduire leurs Noirs « aux colonies françaises et non ailleurs » (Delcourt 1958).

Une telle matérialité historique fait qu'il est pratiquement impossible d'étudier la question des statistiques de la traite négrière en se focalisant sur une zone géographique donnée, elle-même incluse dans la Concession. La recherche sur la traite négrière en Sénégambie consiste à s'intéresser à un espace géographique spécifique plus petit que celui de la Concession du Sénégal. Il y a ainsi le risque de confondre la Sénégambie et la Concession du Sénégal, de donner des résultats globaux ou de commettre des omissions liées au fait que toutes les traites acheminées vers cette partie dite la Sénégambie pouvaient provenir de partout dans la Concession du Sénégal.

D'ailleurs, à titre utilitaire, il nous semble qu'il serait utile de nous intéresser à ce qui fait la différence entre la Concession du Sénégal et la province de la Sénégambie. Il s'agit singulièrement de parler rapidement de la concurrence sur les côtes ouest-africaines qui a conduit à l'invention, à partir du 18e siècle, du toponyme Sénégambie.

En effet, entre la Sierra Leone et le Cap Blanc (ou vice-versa), au moins trois puissances européennes y avaient des intérêts et chacune avec son poste principal d'orientation géographique – Gorée étant bien évidemment celui de la France le plus convoité par toutes les puissances négrières –. Conséquemment, différentes appellations ont été adoptées pour matérialiser cette présence. Par exemple, pour s'être plus intéressé à l'espace allant de la Gambie à la Sierra Leone, les Anglais, qui s'orientaient ainsi vers le nord (La Gambie), ont utilisé le toponyme de Northern Rivers.

Or, au sein de ces Northern Rivers, se trouvaient les Portugais qui avaient surtout une présence commerciale ancienne allant du *Cap Bojador* au *Cap de Serra Leone.* Ils pouvaient s'appuyer sur les *lançados* qui rendaient impossible la rivalité « avec le commerce portugais implanté sur la côte depuis deux siècles » (Delcourt 1984) ; sauf qu'ils ne défendaient plus que leurs propres intérêts commerciaux face à un pays dont la présence maritime était invisible et souvent écorchée par des compagnies rivales comme celles françaises. Ainsi, sous l'administrateur André Brüe, la *Compagnie du Sénégal* avait envoyé une escadre de Gorée afin de se montrer dissuasif devant lesdits

Portugais dont il qualifia la force de résistance maritime de « rodomontade ridicule de la part d'un ennemi » qu'il pouvait réduire en poussière (Durand 1802:110).

Les Français avaient donc une certaine emprise dans la Guinée exploitant des *Lançados* prêts à traiter avec tout le monde et en Gambie où ils pouvaient acheter plus de « Nègres » encore, les deux régions faisant partie des dépendances de Gorée dans la Concession du Sénégal où se faisait la traite des compagnies commerciales françaises qui opéraient « en ordre dispersé du Cap-Blanc au Sénégal, du Sénégal à la Gambie, de la Gambie à la Sierra Leone » (Delcourt 1984).

Comme on peut le constater, ce qu'on pourrait appeler la traite dans la Sénégambie ne concerne que le binôme Sénégal-Gambie et dans un court temps historique allant de 1758 à 1783. C'est quand les Anglais occupèrent Saint-Louis en 1758 qu'ils allaient alors utiliser l'expression « Province of Senegambia » (Aw 2000) pour singulariser cet espace par rapport à leur situation septentrionale en Sierra Leone qui avait favorisé, comme nous l'évoquions précédemment, l'appellation des Northern Rivers (Cormier-Salem 1999). D'ailleurs, le toponyme « Northern Rivers » a survécu à celui « Province of Senegambia », qui témoignait d'une poussée anglaise hors de leurs zones d'influences. Ainsi, la notion de Sénégambie va permettre de limiter de façon statutaire la colonie française au seul espace Gambie-Sénégal à partir de 1783, quand la France retrouvait enfin sa Concession du Sénégal.

Contrairement donc à la notion de Sénégambie trop limitative – car ne concernant qu'un espace qui va de Albreda sur la rivière Gambie[11] à Saint-Louis du fleuve Sénégal – la notion historico-juridique de Concession du Sénégal donnait le privilège aux compagnies françaises d'exploiter un vaste territoire subordonné à Saint-Louis du Sénégal et Gorée et ses dépendances.

Rappelons que Gorée et dépendances deviendront plus tard les « Rivières du Sud » (Southern Rivers), par opposition aux « Rivières du Nord » (Northern Rivers) anglaises. Les Rivières du Sud étaient un énième « nom générique qui regroupe les fleuves Gambie, Casamance, l'ensemble des rivières à l'intérieur de la Guinée portugaise et la nouvelle colonie de la Guinée française » (Capitaine Faidherbe 1881). Elles faisaient partie des dépendances de Gorée qui emprunteront plus tard sous les écrits de certains représentants coloniaux l'expression de « Sénégambie méridionale » (Bocandé 1849-57-93). Une autre dénomination qui a surtout participé au maintien de l'expression Sénégambie qu'utilise Boubacar Barry et qui englobe dans sa démarche toutes les régions entre le Sénégal et la Guinée française (Barry 2001).

Retenons donc que la Concession du Sénégal regroupe les espaces géographiques entre le Cap-Blanc et le fleuve Sénégal, les fleuves Sénégal et

Gambie et enfin les dépendances de Gorée qu'on pourrait situer entre la Gambie (voire à partir de la petite côte) et la Sierra Leone. C'est dans cette étendue qui va de la Mauritanie nouvelle à la Sierra Leone, avec des limites inconnues dans l'Hinterland, qu'il faut chercher à connaître le rôle que jouait Gorée dans le contexte de la traite négrière.

Concession du Sénégal : Gorée dans la traite atlantique

Gorée était avant tout un comptoir commercial dans la Concession du Sénégal qui sollicitait un territoire plus grand que Saint-Louis et la Sénégambie éponyme, d'où l'appellation de Gorée et dépendances. De par sa situation géographique d'abord, l'Ile était le lieu le plus convoité dans le système atlantique. Elle « était jadis le plus important des établissements sénégaliens, parce qu'elle occupait une situation fort différente de celle de St-Louis » (Delcourt 1984). Contrairement à l'île de Saint-Louis, aucune barre n'interdisait son accès aux navires de haute mer. Tandis que le large fossé qui la séparait du continent la mettait à l'abri des visites indésirables des potentats indigènes.

En outre, « Gorée était plus encore une relâche pour les navires qui de France se dirigeaient vers les escales de traite de la côte de Guinée. Ainsi, la plupart des navires des compagnies commerciales s'arrêtaient dans sa rade » (Delcourt 1984). L'île servait aussi d'entrepôt annexe de l'entrepôt général de St-Louis et administré par un directeur qui dépendait de la direction générale du Sénégal. Mais les deux entrepôts avaient des spécialités bien distinctes :

> De même que St-Louis rassemblait dans ses magasins la gomme traitée en rivière et la gomme de la côte de Mauritanie avant de l'expédier en France, de même Gorée enfermait dans ses captiveries devenues célèbres les esclaves traités aux différentes escales de la côte, depuis le Cap-Vert jusqu'aux Bissagos, avant de les acheminer vers l'Amérique (Delcourt 1984:93).

En d'autres termes, comme on peut le voir désormais, Saint-Louis était spécialisé dans l'entreposage de la gomme qui était acheminée en France, tandis que la spécialité de Gorée était l'entreposage des « Nègres » dans ses « captiveries et autres esclaveries privées ou Maison d'Esclaves devenues célèbres » (De Benoist 1998:128).

Gorée n'était donc un entrepôt annexe parce qu'il devait servir exclusivement pour l'entreposage de la marchandise de traite négrière en provenance à la fois de Saint-Louis sur le fleuve Sénégal, de l'île elle-même du point de vue de la Petite Côte et, enfin, de ses dépendances respectives allant du fleuve Gambie à la Sierra Leone. Les esclaves provenaient donc des différentes escales de la côte comme de l'Hinterland qui constituaient ainsi les limites de la Concession du Sénégal.[12]

Il faut surtout prendre en compte le fait qu'avec un arsenal maritime capable de les mener jusqu'en Sierra Leone, les Français n'avaient pas élevé d'autres comptoirs aussi importants que Gorée. C'est ainsi que toutes les traites qui se font dans les rivières du Sud où ils étaient en concurrence avec les Anglais et les Portugais étaient sous la dépendance de Gorée. Une situation qui faisait de l'île de Gorée le principal et le plus important centre de transit des « Nègres » vers les colonies françaises d'Amérique.

En définitive, l'historiographie actuelle qui tente d'expurger de la traite atlantique française précisément, les aspects qui pourraient être gênants occultent bien ce fait historique du rôle de Gorée dans la traite atlantique en manipulant les statistiques. Or on ne saurait nier le fait que le commerce du Nègre,

> à proprement dit, servait de base et de fondement à tous les autres traites (comme la gomme entreposée à Saint-Louis) puisque c'étaient les Nègres qui cultivaient la terre et qui fabriquaient les marchandises du pays, de telle sorte que s'ils venaient à manquer, les îles françaises d'Amérique tomberaient en ruine (Ly 1958:40).

Conclusion énonciative : de la « Maison des Esclaves » au mythe de Gorée

Nous avons voulu démontrer dans ce texte que le rôle de Gorée dans la traite atlantique est subordonné à l'étude de l'étendue géographique de la Concession du Sénégal qui englobe la Sénégambie éponyme et les dépendances de Gorée. Une telle démarche permet ainsi de comprendre et de corroborer les résultats scientifiques qui font de Gorée le centre de transit de Nègres vers l'Amérique le plus important.

On peut aussi rajouter que la première génération des historiens qui ont travaillé sur la traite négrière française étaient tellement conscients du rôle de Gorée du point de vue de la concession du Sénégal dans la traite atlantique qu'ils décidèrent d'ériger un Musée historique sur l'île afin de permettre aux visiteurs d'acquérir une connaissance sur la connexion des peuples africains avec les diverses parties du monde (IFAN 1955).

Le Musée historique de Gorée fut installé après « une patiente restauration d'une ancienne demeure bourgeoise de Gorée qui se trouve être une maison dans laquelle le rez-de-chaussée avait servi d'esclaverie (IFAN 1955). C'est aussi grâce à leurs travaux d'historiens que fut imaginée une structure muséale nommée « Maison des Esclaves » sur la même île de Gorée qui se veut épouser la philosophie de l'histoire de la Négritude.

La Maison des Esclaves devait apprendre à ses visiteurs, les descendants d'anciens esclaves, « à revaloriser une partie de leur patrimoine tombé en déshérence, leur renseigner le goût d'eux-mêmes ».[13] Elle n'est pas supposée

transmettre des connaissances historiques comme le lieu didactique qui est le Musée historique de Gorée. Partant, on ignore qu'on ne saurait critiquer son existence qui conduit à parler de mythe de Gorée sans avoir interrogé la démarche du poète président Senghor qui voulait faire de celle-ci et de Gorée un symbole de pardon et de réconciliation à travers l'oralité qui serait, selon le poète, détentrice de mémoire, tandis que l'écriture, par conséquent l'histoire, serait sans mémoire.[14]

D'où le projet de proposer, dans la suite logique de ce texte, une réflexion sur le rapport entre la négritude et la commémoration de l'esclavage et de la traite négrière en Afrique, telle qu'elle fut symbolisée par l'ouverture de la Maison des Esclaves de Gorée à l'occasion du Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres de 1966 ?[15]

Notes

1. Nous renvoyons ici à notre thèse de doctorat en Histoire [Voir Pape Chérif Bertrand Bassène, « Mémoire de l'esclavage et de la traite négrière en Sénégambie (1965-2007). Dialectique de la diversité mémorielle ». Thèse de Doctorat Histoire, Université De Bretagne Sud - Université Laval Quebec, décembre 2011]. Et aussi à des publications comme : Djibril Samb (dir.),*Gorée et l'esclavage.* Dakar, IFAN Cheikh Anta Diop, 1998 / *Saint-Louis et l'esclavage.* Dakar, IFAN Cheikh Anta Diop, 2000 ; Ralph A. Austen, «The Slave Trade as History and Memory: Confrontations of Slaving Voyage Documents and Communal Traditions». The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, Vol. 58, No. 1, New Perspectives on the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Jan., 2001), pp. 229-244; Bernard Bailyn, «Considering the Slave Trade: History and Memory». The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, Vol. 58, No. 1, New Perspectives on the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Jan., 2001), pp. 245-252.

2. Voir « Célébration de la journée des mémoires : le ministre français de la Coopération à Dakar »,*Le Soleil,* mai 2006.

3. Initié depuis 2006 sous le président Jacques Chirac, cette « collaboration mémorielle » a vu la participation de M. Youssou Ndour, actuel ministre du tourisme, aux cotés des Présidents Nicolas Sarkozy et Jacques Chirac lors de la seconde édition en 2007.

4. N°1297 – Assemblée nationale – Constitution du 4 octobre 1958 – Onzième législature- Proposition de loi de Mme Christiane Taubira-Delannon tendant à la reconnaissance de la traite et de l'esclavage en tant que crimes contre l'humanité, déposée le 22 décembre 1998.

5. Il sera suivi en décembre 1998 du Symposium international sur « la traite négrière à Saint-Louis du Sénégal et dans son arrière-pays ». On voit aussi que la thématique de la rencontre de Gorée est directement liée au texte de Curtin et à l'article du quotidien *Le Monde :*« Gorée dans la traite atlantique : mythe ou réalité ? ».

6. Voir sur le blog de Jean Luc Angrand le texte, « Petite note sur la fausse « Maison des Esclaves de Gorée » », repris et publié le 22/02/13, vu le 23/02/13 sur http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/jean-luc-angrand/maison-des-esclaves-goree_b_2709281.html. A propos de Jean-Luc Angrand, il est aussi l'auteur de *Céleste ou le temps des Signares,* Paris, Editions Anne Pépin, 2006.

7. Nous avons donné une suite à ce premier texte en nous intéressant finalement au symbole de Gorée comme « île mémoire » et de la Maison des Esclaves sous la Négritude politique du président Senghor (voir conclusion énonciative).

8. Voir Pape Chérif Bertrand, Akandijack, Bassène, *Histoire authentique de la Casamance,* Editions La Brochure, novembre 2011.

9. La Robinsonnade (de Robinson Crusoé) est un genre littéraire qui englobe les romans d'aventure qui ont foisonné à l'époque de la colonisation dans sa connotation esclavagiste (XVIIIe et XIXe siècles) et qui ne faisaient que traduire la mentalité impérialiste de l'époque. Voir Bassène, *Histoire authentique de la Casamance.*

10. Pour l'histoire d'Albreda comme possession française, voir Abdoulaye Ly, « Un navire de commerce sur la côte sénégambienne en 1685 »*Bulletin de l'IFAN, Catalogues et Documents*, Vol. 27, 1964.

11. A propos des limites imprécises de l'Hinterland de la Concession, rappelons qu'entre 1749-1754, Michel Adanson avait dessiné une, « Carte générale de la concession du Sénégal côte occid[entale] d'Afrique depuis le Cap-Blanc 20 d. 1/2 lat. bor., jusqu'à Sierra Leone 8d. lat. Boréale et du cours du fleuve Niger [Sénégal] et de la rivière de Gambie ».

12. Voir in *1906-2006: Année Senghor, «Cent ans de Négritude»,* OIF - Magazine Espace francophone, Léopold Sédar Senghor et Aimé Césaire : 2006.

13. Citation : « L'encre du scribe est sans mémoire », Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Anthologie de la Nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française,* Léopold Sédar Senghor, Paris, Puf, 2007, p. 168.

14. Ce sera certainement aussi l'occasion d'aborder la problématique des politiques culturelles en Gambie en établissant un parallèle entre Juffureh/Albreda et Gorée comme lieux de mémoire. En plus, pour avoir étudié les politiques culturelles en Gambie à partir des années 1990 sous le régime du président, professeur A.J.J. Jammeh, la mise en place des « Roots Homecoming Festival/ Kanilai Cultural Festival » – qui attirent les descendants africains américains vers des lieux de mémoires préétablis à travers la lecture de l'œuvre romanesque de leur compatriote Alex Haley, *Roots,*[New York, Doubleday, 1976] – permet au moins de dire que la Gambie est le pays qui a su adopter avec réussite l'esprit des politiques culturelles de la Négritude telles que les voulaient les Aimé Césaire (dont nous commémorons le centenaire cette année) et autres Léopold Sédar Senghor.

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Opposition Politics and Electoral Democracy in Cameroon, 1992-2007

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Abstract

This article seeks to assess the impact of electoral democracy in Cameroon especially in terms of the performance of the Opposition between 1992 and 2007, evaluate the internal shortcomings of opposition parties, and make a projection regarding a vibrant democratic space that will go beyond routine elections to speak to the issues preoccupying the Cameroonian masses.

Résumé

Cet article vise à évaluer l'impact de la démocratie électorale au Cameroun en particulier en termes de performance de l'opposition entre 1992 et 2007, à évaluer les lacunes internes des partis d'opposition, et à faire une projection concernant un espace démocratique dynamique qui ira au-delà des élections ordinaires pour aborder les questions qui préoccupent les masses camerounaises.

Introduction

The political history of modern Cameroon can be divided into four periods. The first was the period of total dependence on the colonial power which extended from 1884 to 1945 during which the country did not possess representative institutions. The second period stretched from 1945 to 1960/61 during which Cameroonians passed their apprenticeship in democracy. The third started on 1st January 1960, with the proclamation of independence in French Cameroon and the reunification of West and East Cameroons in 1961 in a federal structure, and the fourth saw the light of day on 20 May 1972 when the federal structure was abolished in what the then Head of State, Ahmadou Ahidjo termed the 'Peaceful Revolution' (Sobseh Emmanuel 2012:88).

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During the Federal structure, multiparty politics was vibrant in both the West and East Cameroons until 1 September 1966 when the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP), the Cameroon People National Congress (CPNC) and the Cameroon Union Congress from West Cameroons decided to fuse with the Union Camerounaise (UC) into a single party called the Cameroon National Union (C.N.U). According to Ahidjo, multiparty politics was a luxury and politics under this system was bitter and could easily lead the nation into civil war. However when Ahidjo left power on 6 November 1982, his constitutional successor Paul Biya changed the name of the single party to Cameroon Peoples' Democratic Movement (CPDM) in March 1985. The CPDM single party did not last as internal and external pressures militated against multiparty electoral democracy in Africa. Cameroon could not be insulated from this wind of change. Internal pressure in Cameroon arose mainly from people's power when some civil society actors decided in February 1990 to challenge the single party system and they were all arrested and detained. This gave a leeway to Ni John Fru Ndi and a group of lawyers to file in a document in March 1990 for the creation of another party called the Social Democratic Front (SDF). This was met with reluctance and resistance by the ruling elite and the result was a bloody confrontation between the masses and the soldiers, leading to death and arrests on 26 May 1990. Triggered by the events of 26 May 1990, that led to the defiant launching of an opposition party (Social Democratic Front - SDF), multipartyism and eventually opposition parties became institutionalized following the Law of Association of 19 December 1990 (Law No. 90/056). In spite of this reform to accommodate multipartyism, the main kernel of a democratic transition to put enabling structures in place eluded the political establishment in Cameroon.

Unlike other African Countries such as Benin (1990), Mali (1991), Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo (1991) and South Africa (1994) that planned a democratic transition, the leadership of Cameroon at first resisted, then reluctantly gave in to a form of transition whose outcome fell below general expectations. Such a context only encouraged the emergence of a new elite in the political arena, next to the old ones who switched over, for the occasion, to the virtues of political pluralism (Tidjani Alou 2002:28). The setting up of Constitutional Conferences, Sovereign National Conferences and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions as modes of transition was meant to provide new political and economic paradigms suited to the demands of pluralism. As discussion forums, transition modes served as the balm of national reconciliation and as a catharsis as well as avenues to put in place reforms and structures that would change the qualities of lives of the masses.

When President Paul Biya therefore declared on 27 June 1991 at the National Assembly that 'Je l'ai dit et je le maintiens, la conference nationale est sans objet pour le Cameroun' ('I insist that the National Conference is baseless in Cameroon'), Cameroonians were stunned into both rage and revolt.

Biya's refusal to yield to popular demands for a national conference was partly due to the opposition parties' misconception of the purpose of such a conference. Their perception was not one of overhauling the obsolete monolithic apparatus but one of impeaching and eventually stripping Biya of legitimate power. Cameroonians therefore missed a rare opportunity to reassess the gains of nation-building and to examine the expectations of a democratic renewal. What they (Cameroonians) instead got was a Tripartite Conference consisting of the ruling party, the opposition and the civil society. This conference that was held from 30 October to 18 November 1991 proved to be futile as national aspirations became mortgaged on the altar of parochialism. The main weakness of this conference was the quasi-obsessional temptations of the ruling party, which wanted rules and results for its prime benefit alone.

So without any concrete rules on the exigencies of multiparty politics, without a change of the monolithic constitution, without a defined role of the opposition, and without a clear cut line between the party and state, Cameroon set forth on the journey of electoral democracy without a map (Ngwane 1996:175).

Justification

This article seeks to assess the impact of electoral democracy especially in terms of the performance of the Opposition between 1992 and 2007, to evaluate the internal shortcomings of opposition parties, and to make a projection regarding a vibrant democratic space – one that would go beyond routine elections to speak to the issues preoccupying the Cameroonian masses. It does this through a presentation of the various election data from 1992-2007, especially depicting the downward trend of opposition gains in elections. It analyses this scenario and tries to look into the future of opposition politics in electoral democracy in Cameroon.

Election Database

Parliamentary Elections

(a) 1 March 1992

Registered Voters	4.019.562
Total Votes	2.435.443
Voter Turn out	(60.6%)

Invalid /Blank Votes   238.200
Total Valid votes   2.197.243

Party	Number of seats
Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (CPDM)	88
National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP)	68
Movement for the Defense of the Republic (MDR)	18
Union of Cameroon Populations (UPC)	06

Two opposition parties, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) and Cameroon
Democratic Union (UDC), boycotted the poll.

b) 17 May 1997

Registered Voters   4.000.000 (approx)
Total Votes   Not Available
Voter turnout   Not Available

Party	Number of seats
Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM)	109
Social Democratic Front (SDF)	43
National Union For Democracy and Progress (UNDP)	13
Union of Cameroon Populations (UPC)	05
Movement for the Defense of the Republic (MDR)	01
Union of Cameroon Populations (UPC)	01
Liberty Movement of the Cameroon Youth (MLJC)	01
Vacant	07

The Supreme Court cancelled the election results in seven constituencies
due to serious irregularities. On 3 August 1997 further elections were held to
fill the vacant seats. The RDPC won all of the seats, thus increasing its level
of representation in the National Assembly.

(c) 30 June 2002

Registered Voters   Not Available
Total Votes   Not Available
Voter Turnout   Not Available

The Supreme Court nullified the result for 17 seats on account of various
irregularities. By-elections were held on 15 September to fill the vacant seats.

Party	Number of seats
Cameroon People's Democratic Movement	149
Social Democratic Front (SDF)	22
Cameroon Democratic Union (UDC)	05
Union of Cameroon Populations (UPC)	03
National Union For Democracy and Progress (UNDP)	01

(d) 22 July 2007

Registered Voters   5.000.000 (aprox.)

Total Voters /Voter Turnout   Not Available

Party	Number of seats
Cameroon People's Democratic Movement	140
Social Democratic Front (SDF)	14
Cameroon Democratic Union (UDC)	04
National Union For Democracy and Progress (UNDP)	04
Progressive movement (MP)	01
Vacant	17

The Supreme Court nullified the results for 17 seats on account of various irregularities. By-elections were held on 15 September to fill the vacant seats.

Presidential Elections

(a) 11 October 1992

Registered Voters   4.195.687

Total Votes   3.015.440

Voter Turnout   71.9%

Party	% of Votes
Paul Biya (CPDM)	39.98
John Fru Ndi (SDF)	35.97
Bello Bouba Maigari (UNDP)	19.22
Adamou Ndam Njoya (UDC)	3.62

(b) 12 October 1997

Registered Voters   Not Available

Total Votes   Not Available

Voters Turnout   81.4%

Invalid/Blank Votes   Not Available

Total Valid Votes   3.422.055

Candidate (party)	Number of votes	% of votes
Paul Biya (CPDM)	3.167.820	92.57
Henri Hogbe Nlend (UPC)	85.693	2.50
Samuel Eboua (MDP)	83.506	2.44
Albert Dzongang (PPD)	40.814	1.19
Joachim Tabi Owono (AMEC)	15.817	0.46
Antoine N'Denabbu (RDPF)	15.490	0.45
Gustave Essaka (DIC)	12.915	0.38

The election was boycotted by three main opposition parties – the Social Democratic Front (SDF), National Union for Democratic Progress (UNDP),

Cameroon Democratic Union (UDC) and a small Party, The Union of African Population (UPA).

(c) 11 October 2004

Registered Voters	4.657.748
Total Votes	3.830.272
Voters Turnout	82.2%
Invalid/Blank Votes	72.051
Total Valid Votes	3.758.221

Candidates (party)	Number of votes	% of votes
Paul Biya (CPDM	2.665.359	70.92
John Fru Ndi (SDF)	654.066	17.40
Adamou Ndam Njoya (UDC)	168.318	4.48
Garga Haman Adji (ADD)	140.372	3.74
Justice Mouafo (NPC – BUSH)	14.915	0.40
Yondo Mandengue Black (MNSD)	13.601	0.36
Ancient Ekane (MANIDEM)	13.290	0.35
Fritz Pierre Ngo (MEC)	13.122	0.35
Jean Michel Tekam	12.785	0.34
Victorin Hameni Bieleu (UFDC)	11.920	0.32
Boniface Forbin (JDP)	10.542	0.28
Djeukam Tchameni (MDI)	10.539	0.28
Jean-Jacques Ekindi (MP)	10.158	0.27
Hubert Kamgang (UPA)	7.508	0.20
George Dobgima Nyamndi (SLC)	6.730	0.18
Gustave Essaka (DIC)	4.996	0.13

Note: All election data were collected from the book 'Rethinking Citizenship, Politics and Governance in Cameroon'.

Analysis

Statistics show that in 1992, opposition parties put together won 92 seats as opposed to 88 for the ruling party giving the opposition a 51.1 percent representation in Parliament. On the face of it, this would have given the Opposition a strong weapon to initiate reforms through the Assembly but for the fact that one of the Opposition parties (Movement for the Defence of the Republic) decided to form a coalition with the ruling party. That kept the opposition in a minority status in the National Assembly.

In 1997, the Opposition had 64 seats of the 180 scoring 35.5 percent of the vote.

In 2002 the Opposition had (before the rerun for 17 seats nullified by the Supreme Court), 31 seats of the 180, scoring 17.2 percent of the vote.

In 2007 (pending results of the rerun for 17 seats nullified by the Supreme Court) the Opposition had 23 seats, 12.7 percent of the vote.

So from 51.1 percent of the vote in 1992, the Opposition had plummeted in parliamentary representation to 17.2 percent in 2007.

With regards to presidential elections, the combined Opposition obtained 58.81 percent as opposed to 39.98 percent for the ruling party of President Paul Biya in 1992. Therefore, had the opposition parties presented a single candidate, they would have won the presidential elections of 1992. Nonetheless the election results were shrouded in controversy with other sources giving opposition party (SDF) leader (Fru Ndi) 37 percent, and the ruling party (CPDM) 36 percent.

The fragmentation of the Opposition, a flawed electoral system and the absence of a run-off electoral procedure deprived the Opposition from winning the first multiparty presidential elections in Cameroon in 1992.

In 1997, the Opposition combined received a dismal 7.42 percent of the vote, as opposed to 92.57 percent for the ruling party. A major reason for this ridiculous performance by the Opposition was the fact the three main opposition parties (Social Democratic Front, National Union for Democratic Progress and the Cameroon Democratic Union) boycotted the election.

In 2004 the Opposition all together received 29 percent of the vote, as opposed to 70.92 percent for the ruling party.

So from a 58.81 percent figure in the presidential elections in 1992, the combined opposition dwindled in its share of the vote, attaining only 29 percent in 2004.

It can be seen that for both parliamentary and presidential elections since 1992, the Opposition has shown a steady decline.

Categories of Opposition Parties

The circumstances that led to the emergence of opposition parties in Cameroon were predicated on the twin phenomena of challenge and change. Challenge was based on the need for the establishment to reform itself and to give access to alternative voices while change referred to a political agenda that was meant to overturn the ruling oligarchy in favour of a new dispensation by a change of regime.

Initially as in most African countries, the resurgence of multipartyism in Cameroon was borne out of the hunger for change, hence the liberation theology preached by most opposition parties became the democratic mantra. Liberation theology according to these parties meant that change could come to Cameroon only when the incumbent President Paul Biya was unseated. To them Biya the person was the stumbling block to democratic development in Cameroon.

In Cameroon the slogan 'Biya must go' was used by opposition parties as a template for achieving power. But even the most radical of the opposition failed to go beyond what Celestin Monga has termed 'slogans in line with populist illusions'. In other words, transforming liberation theology into a structured ideological philosophy seemed a task beyond the power of the opposition parties.

Since the quest for political pluralism comes down to the installation of multipartyism, opposition parties are expected to be distinct from and autonomous of the ruling party (Olukoshi 1998:19). Some opposition parties in Cameroon on the other hand believed that the real problem confronting political change went beyond Biya the person (liberation theology) to a complete cleansing of the dictatorial system which Biya had come to incarnate. To them structured ideological philosophy hinged on constitutional reforms and the putting in place of vibrant democratic institutions.

With no clear constitutional provision on the status of opposition parties in Cameroon (unlike a country like Mozambique where the Opposition is treated as a government in waiting), opposition parties in Cameroon have through various electoral processes given themselves a political identity.

The Opposition of Liberation

The SDF approach appears to focus on a zero-sum arrangement. Referred to as an external' opposition by Tangie Fonchingong, this category of opposition is formed outside the ruling constellation and often against the background of deep-seated disagreement, conflict and protest. It sees itself as a symbol of change and fights to the end for a radically alternative system (Tangie 1998:125). Its political mind-set is based on a 'Biya must go' strategy.

The Opposition of Co-optation

This approach is characterized by the desire to share power and the prebends or spoils of power with the ruling party. Attracted by the obnoxious notion of broad-based governance or a government of national unity, this category of opposition poses no fundamental challenge to the regime. It shores up the regime and seeks mainly to ensure its own share of the spoils rather than presenting radically different proposals (Tangie 1998:125). The mind-set of such opposition is based on a win-win situation. All through the electoral process in Cameroon, the NUDP, MDR, MLJC and UPC (the latter being the only opposition of liberation in Cameroon since 1948) and quite recently Minister Issa Tchiroma's party are opposition parties that belong to this nomenclature. Its political paradigm is based on a 'Biya must share' strategy.

The Opposition of Proposition

This kind of political activity is characterized by a strong ideological bent, working more on ideas rather than revolutionary propaganda. Emerging from the mass base within the same party, the opposition of proposition seeks mainly for a redress of grievances either in terms of party policy or party performance. It may sometimes break away as splinter group but more often than not stays within as mainstream members disagreeing at their own risk and peril, with a party focus. The case of the Progressive or Modernist wing of the CPDM comes out with its lists of grievances presented in 'The White Book' written by Chief Milla Assoute. The postures by the CPDM Parliamentary candidate the Honourable Adama Modi Bakary and the erstwhile CPDM Parliamentarian, Honourable Paul Ayah, now leader of the People's Action Party (PAP) to break away from socialised violence (irrational obedience to party ideology) are cases in point. The political mind-set of this group is based on a 'Biya must change' strategy.

In sum it is fairly easy to distinguish the opposition of conviction from the opposition of convenience within the electoral process in Cameroon, with the latter always enjoying a strong numerical advantage, albeit with a weak ideological stance, over the former. In the end we have witnessed an opposition that has over the years become a vehicle for the maximization of the interests of political opportunists and not frameworks for mobilizing popular forces for genuine change (Tangie 1998:127). This has taken its toll on our democratization process which according to Francis Nyamnjoh has served mainly as 'face powder', used to justify reactionary propaganda by the ruling party and its acolytes and revolutionary propaganda by the opposition (Nyamnjoh 1999:115).

Shortcomings of the Opposition

It is generally accepted that the playing field in Cameroon does not work in favour of opposition parties winning elections. With no genuine independent or neutral persons within the Independent Electoral Commission (be it the National Elections Observatory or Elections Cameroon), and with a contentious new electoral code adopted by a CPDM majority parliament in March 2012, the elections have been reduced to a two-horse race between the CPDM and its French translation – RDPC. In effect there are a lot of exogenous factors that deprive the opposition from starting the election race from the same blocks as the ruling party – disenfranchisement, a nonchalant international community, low civic participation, mass rigging, sterile political debates occasioned by the trading of accusations of illegitimacy between the ruling party and the opposition parties, and so on (Fonchingong 2004:35).

But apart from these failings, there are problems that are inherent in the modus operandi and structures of opposition parties in Cameroon. They include:

A Lack of Internal Democracy

The first thing that one notices is that all opposition parties have as Chairmen or Presidents those who founded the parties. So, for close to two decades, the same people who created these parties are at the helm of affairs (Ngwane 2004:21) Paradoxically, most of these opposition members were hell-bent on pushing the ruling party leader Paul Biya out of power when he was 'only' eight years into his term of office as President of the country (1982-1990) and 'only' five years as Chairman of his CPDM party (1985-1990).

The case of the main opposition party (SDF) is a cause for concern. Apart from the tenacity syndrome of its leader, Article 8.2 of the party's constitution raises issues around the role of dissent versus debate, and discipline versus dictatorship. Elected mayors have been dismissed for not complying with the caprices of the National Investiture Committee. The axe of Article 8.2 has fallen on militants who opposed policies or performances of the party hierarchy. Yet it must be recalled that the SDF was founded 'to rid the Cameroonian society of a system that deprives people from being free men or otherwise punishing them for daring to think freely, associate freely, assemble peacefully and freely'.

This long tenure of leadership at the helm of all opposition parties has resulted in party clientelism, personality cults, and the personalization of power.

A Lack of an Opposition Leadership Consensus

Since the creation of opposition parties, attempts at instituting an identifiable, credible and consensual leadership and programme have failed. Unlike other African countries that have a clear leadership within the Opposition (Gabon, Zambia, Kenya, Mozambique, Zimbabwe), the case of Cameroon differs widely. Ni Fru Ndi would have easily stood out as a rallying point as opposition leader owing to his grassroots support, but he has been met with contempt for his relatively 'low academic' baggage and because of mistrust for his Anglophone origin. Fru Ndi's own inflexibility and temper tantrums have sometimes not helped matters.

Broken Strategic Alliances

Alliances formed before elections tend to be broken even before the elections take off. The 'Directorate', 'Union for Change', 'Allied forces for Change', 'Coalition for National Reconciliation and Reconstruction', the 'G7', and

now the 'Republican Pact' (2012), have not been as coherent and programme-focused as for example, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) by the opposition in Kenya, set up for the 2002 Presidential elections, resulting in a victory with 62.2 percent of the vote.

Disconnection with Democratic Development

Most opposition parties concern themselves with what happens during elections and not what takes place between elections. In other words, within the five years that span municipal/ legislative elections and the years that span presidential elections, the opposition parties do not connect with the population on issues of daily survival (power cuts, fuel price hikes, inflation, water outages, unemployment, industrial action, and so on). Nor do they agitate continuously around government policies (IMF policies, sub-regional or continental disaffection, for instance). This is compounded by the poor performance of some of the elected opposition party representatives in local councils and the National Assembly.

To quote Achille Mbembe, it is necessary for the opposition to define a real strategy towards a social struggle (social democracy and democratic development) that is adapted to the present Cameroonian conditions (Mbembe 2004:12).

Lack of Linkages with Activist Elements of Civil Society

One of the most important groups in the pro-democracy movement is the activist elements in civil society, which include the human rights lobby, minority rights groups, movements for the empowerment and participation of marginalized groups such as women and youth, students and labour, the Church and the media (Ake 2000:135). The opposition in Cameroon built organic linkages with these groups in the early 1990s, but the relationship has strained due to so many reasons. Yet it was the youth that gave power to succeeding opposition leaders turned Presidents in Senegal, like Abdoulaye Wade in 2000 and Macky Sall in 2012; it is the feminization of power policy that Paul Kagame of Rwanda survives on, while the opposition leader and Prime Minister Morgan Tswangirai of Zimbabwe feeds on workers' union (himself a product of it) and most recently on the church.

Projections

In my opinion the real battle for the sustenance of democracy in Cameroon lies in what happens between now and future presidential elections. This battle in my view would take on either a positive peaceful or a negative peaceful avenue or both.

Positive Peaceful Avenue

Politics is the art of the possible and no one can rule out the possibility of Paul Biya's disengagement from subsequent presidential elections in Cameroon. Were he to do so then the ruling party would be forced into searching from among their ranks for a moderate yet benevolent disciplinarian leader. Such a leader's mission would be to walk the talk of balanced development, equitable resource allocation, and the West Cameroonian real or perceived identity of systematic victimhood. On the other hand, the successorship hypothesis provides the opposition with a beacon of hope. If a successor to President Biya did not sustain enough party consensus it could force some of the opposition of proposition militants in the CPDM to join camps with the opposition of liberation, the opposition of co-optation and activist elements of civil society to win fresh elections. It happened in Kenya when Daniel Arap Moi chose Uhuru Kenyatta as the KANU party leader, giving room for the joint opposition alliances (NARC) to win. If Biya's successor within the CPDM party did not command some charisma and aura, he could lose an election to the opposition presidential candidate, as it happened in Sierra Leone in 2007.

Were President Biya to turn his back on future elections, he would have to assume a neutral statesmanlike status (hints of which have been recurrent in his recent speeches), and not interfere with the electoral process. He has always wanted to be remembered as the person who brought democracy to Cameroon, and it would be in his interest to leave the scene with that legacy. With a law that was adopted by Parliament in 2011 giving the President immunity from criminal prosecution after leaving office, the fear of quitting office and being pursued for criminal offences could be allayed.

Ahmed Tedjan Kabbah, in spite of his lacklustre performance as President of Sierra Leone for ten years has been praised for his non-interference in the 2007 electoral process which brought the opposition to power. Mathieu Kerekou of Benin and Ould Ahmed Taya of Mauritania are of this same democratic school.

The second condition would be for the President in collaboration with all political beneficiaries to reform or re-examine the nature of elections in Cameroon.

Third, the electoral law needs to be revised to allow Independent Candidates to run for presidential elections without the infamous 300 signature clause. Related to this would be the need for a second round or run-off electoral process to be introduced during future presidential elections. Also in this connection, the civil service, the judiciary and the army must be depoliticised (Mbile 1990:14).

Fourth, while the elite should resist peddling compensatory development advantages by parties, the Cameroonian electorate would have to rise above its present inertia, its blind party adherence, and refuse to be cheaply bought

off by allurements and material inducements (bags of rice and bottles of beer). The youth in particular must see the long term advantage of building a sustainable development policy for Cameroon rather than trivial immediate interests that border on greed and gluttony. This means constant political education should be provided by activist elements of the civil society with funding assistance from development agents.

Negative Peaceful Avenue

If the positive peaceful avenue fails, at best activist elements or pro-democracy movements in civil society may throw caution to the winds and shed all party influences to flood the streets for a repeat of the 1991 Ghost town experiences, and the February 2008 mass demonstrations, but this time on their own terms. This happened in Guinea in 2007 and 2008 when the populace forced their agenda on the political class. At worst, 'khaki' rule may rear its head, as used to be the case when civilian chaos and predatory governance jeopardised genuine democracy and national unity, leading to army intervention.

Conclusion

In spite of all external odds, the opposition in Cameroon still survives, albeit waning in numerical strength, controversial in ideological focus, and riven with leadership tussles. This is symptomatic of the liberal democratic choice most African countries adopted rather than a peculiar disease of the opposition in Cameroon (Ngwane 2004:18). From all indications, the green tree of nation-statehood has not yet borne the yellow fruits of national cohesion. Perhaps a new democratic transition bringing all active forces together in an All-Cameroonian Congress could help chart a new course that would go beyond routine elections and usher in bold, creative and indigenous development programmes that resonate with human and infrastructural progress.

But before then it would be necessary for the opposition in Cameroon to shed itself of its embedded and shifting political predatory metaphors of grievance, greed and griotism to embrace a new political patriotic dispensation of values, views and vision.

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Renaissance africaine :
l'environnement juridique

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Résumé

La vie en société appelle nécessairement une réglementation et une
régulation. Il se constitue donc dans tout groupe humain un mécanisme
d'encadrement des rapports entre les individus lié à la culture que l'on
nomme : droit. C'est dire que le droit est un paramètre indéniable de la
culture. On peut aussi affirmer que c'est l'un de ses éléments les plus
dynamiques. Car le droit est aussi déterminant pour la culture qu'il en
est une manifestation caractéristique. On relève ainsi une interaction
qui rend le droit indissociable de la culture…

Lorsque l'on pose la thématique de la renaissance africaine, le droit y
trouve nécessairement sa place comme révélateur et moteur de culture.
De là à avancer le postulat suivant lequel la renaissance africaine suppose
l'émergence de systèmes juridiques en phase avec les cultures de
l'Afrique, il y a une distance qu'il faut franchir résolument. De fait, le
droit étant avant tout un phénomène humain, tout groupe sécrète son
propre droit, ses codes de conduite, ses modes de solidarité et cela se
vérifie en Afrique. C'est aussi dire que l'Afrique est une entité
socioculturelle, bien que marquée par de grandes diversités. Ces
diversités culturelles, linguistiques, ethniques et donc juridiques, qui la
caractérisent, ne sont pas exclusives de principes communs susceptibles
de nourrir les bases de systèmes juridiques endogènes. Ainsi, pris sous
l'angle juridique, le contenu programmatique de la renaissance africaine
pourrait être défini en tenant compte d'un ensemble de données
historiques, sociologiques et économiques. Cela appelle une
mobilisation de sources et ressources pluridisciplinaires et un effort de
conceptualisation. C'est dans cet objectif que l'article présenté ici pose
quelques problématiques et traces des pistes de discussions.

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Abstract

Community life necessarily requires rules and regulations. Therefore, every human settlement generates from within a mechanism to govern relationships between individuals related to culture which is called: law. This means that law is an unquestionable cultural feature. We can also say that this is one of the most dynamic elements. Actually, law is also crucial to culture because it is an emanation of culture. There are a number of interactions that closely bind law to culture...

When it comes to the theme of African Renaissance, law necessarily comes into play as a cultural feature and engine. Before positing that the African renaissance facilitates the emergence of legal systems in line with the cultures of Africa there is a gap that necessarily needs to be bridged. In fact, law being primarily a human phenomenon, each group breeds its own law, codes, its solidarity mechanisms and this applies to Africa. This also means that Africa is a socio-cultural entity although markedly diverse. These cultural, linguistic, ethnic diversities and therefore legal, that characterize it are not exclusive of common principles capable of supplying the foundations of endogenous legal systems. Thus, taken from a legal standpoint, the programmatic content of the African renaissance could be defined based on a set of historical, sociological and economic data. This calls for a mobilization of sources and multidisciplinary resources and conceptualization efforts. It is in this end that hereby article raises some issues and gives room to discussions.

Introduction générale

Droit et renaissance : une problématique pertinente ?

La renaissance marque un point de rupture historique où les idées se renouvellent en puisant dans les périodes antérieures la sève utile pour un nouveau départ. Elle est donc aussi continuité. Substantiellement, c'est une quête de l'étymologie (de l'esthétique épurée en matière d'art), car elle requiert un retour aux sources. Au-delà, on note qu'elle a trait aux idées, à la culture.

Rapportée au droit, la problématique de la renaissance renvoie à une autre question : le droit est-elle culture ?

De prime abord, la culture saisit en tant qu'ensemble des aspects intellectuels propres à une nation (*Le Nouveau Petit Robert*, 1993, sens 2 et 3). Elle est globale en ce sens qu'elle renvoie aux mondes des idées et des pratiques. Le droit est des deux bords, il est idée et pratique. Dans cette mesure, c'est un élément de la culture. En outre, il est l'un de ses éléments les plus dynamiques. Culture et droit sont dans une interaction permanente. Le droit est aussi déterminant pour la culture qu'il est déterminé par elle. On ne saurait donc parler de renaissance africaine tout en occultant la place et le rôle du droit.

Pour dégager quelques pistes de réflexion sur la projection d'un renouveau du droit en Afrique, nous nous proposons de voir dans un premier temps ce qu'est le droit dans son essence et l'incidence de son lieu d'élaboration avant de nous pencher sur le sens que l'on peut donner à la renaissance dans le domaine juridique.

Essence et genèse du droit

Partant de l'essence et de la genèse du droit, peut-on affirmer qu'il existe un droit propre à l'Afrique ancienne susceptible d'inspirer un renouveau des systèmes juridiques de l'Afrique subsaharienne ?

Prologue

Toute société requiert un minimum d'organisation, d'ordre. Les pratiques ou actes par lesquels on atteint ce résultat relèvent assurément du domaine du droit. Le droit est donc propre à la communauté des hommes. La forme sous laquelle il se manifeste ne participe pas de sa définition. Ainsi, le droit coutumier côtoie le droit étatique. Mais la source première du droit reste le peuple, car il ne peut naître d'un commandement (Jouanjou 2005). Mais il importe de savoir ce qui, parmi les pratiques du peuple, relève de la sphère juridique ou se prête à la fabrique du droit.

Le droit, outil d'organisation de la société, est défini habituellement comme un ensemble de règles qui régit les rapports entre les individus. On omet souvent que c'est là une description et non une définition. Dans cet ensemble, il y a la règle de droit, un élément constituant, une unité juridique, et le tout est mobilisé pour une répartition, la plus juste possible, des choses (*suum cuique tribuere – attribuer à chacun le sien –* Michel Villey 2001:49 et s). Le droit se définit ainsi par sa finalité. Il faut aussi ajouter qu'il exprime nécessairement des valeurs. Avant d'être saisi par l'Etat, le droit est une conduite générale de groupe. Et on exprime souvent la même chose en affirmant que le fait précède la loi. Le droit est d'abord dans la pratique en tant que conduite, façon de faire. Aussi le mot législateur, par lequel on désigne, par distorsion du sens, le créateur du droit étatique signifie-t-il bien *legis lator*, celui qui révèle le droit (Beignier 2007:183). Il confirme le droit par réception et légalisation ou interdiction de ce qui se fait, de ce qui se pratique.

Les groupes humains ont, en tous lieux, produit des règles de conduite, ce que les juristes nomment l'ordre social spontané ou coutume. La norme de civilité, norme générale qui sous-tend la vie en société, est, en ce sens, une pratique, un vécu avant d'être source de règles juridiques.

La juridicité se construit donc à partir d'une formalisation, d'une consécration. Elle se crée pour générer le droit en tant qu'ordre social

contraignant. Ainsi, les rituelles : procédures de vote, promulgation, participent d'un cérémonial qui confère aux hypothèses retenues un attribut juridique.

Une fois cette assertion admise, l'existence de droits autochtones dans l'Afrique ancienne n'est plus sérieusement discutable. Cela doit être retenu comme postulat. Se pose encore la question de savoir comment identifier les règles qui régissaient les rapports entre les individus, les institutions dans la période ancienne. Car l'absence d'écrit serait un obstacle à la connaissance fiable du droit traditionnel. Et si on admet que ce droit existe bien, a-t-il survécu à l'implantation des systèmes juridiques européens ? N'a-t-il pas été infiltré par des règles issues des religions telles que l'islam et le christianisme ? Enfin, que faut-il considérer comme droits africains ?

Le problème de la confrontation entre des systèmes juridiques différents est connu. Il s'est posé dans d'autres pays tels que l'Italie et, surtout, l'Allemagne. Dans le premier, on se demandait dans quelle mesure l'esprit national avait résisté à l'influence germanique, tandis que dans le second, on manifestait sa défiance à l'égard du droit romain. La théorie du *volksgeist* (qui signifie, littéralement, esprit du peuple) est, justement, née de ces interrogations en Allemagne. Elle postule l'idée selon laquelle « *chaque droit est, comme la langue, l'esprit d'un droit national* » (Jouanjou 2005). L'école historique, dont le maître est Savigny, un juriste allemand, s'est évertuée à creuser et à affiner cette théorie au nom de la libération allemande de l'esprit français. L'individualité du droit tient à l'individualité des peuples en tant qu'entité. Wilhem Rehberg, l'un des tenants de cette théorie, s'opposera farouchement au maintien du code civil français en Allemagne en dénonçant ses méfaits sociaux. A l'appui de l'identification du droit à une culture, à un peuple, on invoque, légitimement, Montesquieu. Il affirme : « *les lois doivent être tellement propres au peuple pour lequel elles sont faites que c'est un très grand hasard si celles d'une nation peuvent convenir à une autre* » (Montesquieu 1995, tome 1). Au demeurant, le droit ne peut naître d'un commandement. Il a son siège premier dans l'activité du peuple. C'est la raison pour laquelle, en droit positif, on affirme souvent que la pratique précède la loi. Le siège véritable du droit est « *la conscience commune du peuple* ». La science en fait ensuite une représentation. C'est tout l'objet de la science juridique. En somme le droit est créé par le peuple à partir de ses pratiques. Quel est alors le rôle du législateur ?

Ainsi qu'il a été dit précédemment, en foi de son appellation, *legis lator*, il révèle, relate le droit. Il ne le crée pas. Que dire lorsque le législateur se contente « d'importer du droit » ? Il n'assume plus aucune fonction. Il n'est plus légitime en tant que représentant du peuple dont il ignore les aspirations. Le législateur africain est, souvent, le prototype du gestionnaire mimétique. Le transfert de normes est sa technique législative habituelle (cf. II / Rupture

ou compromis). Il est l'un des principaux acteurs du blocage des sociétés africaines.

Par ailleurs, le droit étant aussi viscéralement lié à la culture d'un peuple, on peut se demander si les droits de l'Afrique ancienne ont survécu à l'influence des différentes cultures qui ont pénétré l'espace africain. Il va de soi que la rencontre des hommes s'accompagne généralement d'une interpénétration des cultures. Cependant, ce qui a été observé en Afrique, notamment sur le champ juridique, c'est une juxtaposition de strates de normes (Sacco 2009) ; il y a donc nécessairement une survivance de coutumes anciennes plus ou moins nourries par divers usages. Ce phénomène tient à l'aptitude particulière des Africains à vivre la diversité. En effet, là où les peuples d'Europe se singularisent par l'uniformité sous la bannière du christianisme ou des idéologies politiques, ceux de l'Afrique tolèrent la diversité jusque dans la cellule familiale.[1] Il en va de même des systèmes juridiques. Les anthropologues-juristes auraient recensé, durant la période coloniale, quelques milliers de systèmes juridiques (Rodolfo Sacco 2009). L'analyse statigraphique a ainsi relevé la coexistence de trois composantes : les coutumes traditionnelles, les règles issues des religions, celles introduites par l'Europe, auxquelles il faut ajouter celles qui sont en gestation depuis l'indépendance dans les pratiques populaires. Alors, on peut être dubitatif quant à la possibilité d'identifier un droit africain. Cependant, un auteur a pu affirmer l'existence d'une famille de droit africain (Allot 1968:131). Les recherches en anthropologie juridique menées pendant la période coloniale avaient abouti au regroupement de différents droits traditionnels en institutions et normes pour dégager quatre ordres sociaux, selon Rodolfo Sacco. Bien qu'on leur reprochât le caractère formel et systématique de la méthode employée, leurs travaux représentent un grand intérêt pour les juristes africains et africanistes. Ils devraient pouvoir compléter et enrichir ces tentatives avec l'aide des anthropologues et sociologues.

Ce bref détour par l'histoire met en évidence l'intérêt scientifique de la problématique de l'identification d'un peuple à travers son système juridique. Mais il s'agit aussi de dire que dans la quête d'un renouveau juridique pour l'Afrique, il existe des éléments de base, des matériaux exploitables. On peut être critique ou approuver les différentes démarches qui ont été entreprises pour les collecter, mais on ne peut les ignorer. Il ne s'agit pas non plus de se figer dans le passé. Toute culture se nourrit d'apports extérieurs, de pratiques nouvelles nées de la nécessité de satisfaire des besoins actuels. Il demeure que l'esprit, la philosophie qui imprègnent le vécu du peuple concerné fournissent les fondements du système. Chaque génération le nourrit ensuite de ses expériences. Au regard de ces considérations, les données qui sont à notre portée nous offrent des bases de réflexion. Il convient d'en citer deux

qui sont d'inégale importance, mais toutes assez significatives pour retenir l'attention du juriste. D'une part, nous avons la charte de Kurukan Fuga et, d'autre part, les caractéristiques supposées du droit africain mises en lumière par la doctrine.

La charte du Mandé : valeur et potentialités

La charte de Kurukan Fuga ou charte du Mandé est doublement intéressante pour les chercheurs africains. Il l'est, quant au fond, certes. Il l'est aussi par les conditions de sa découverte. La tradition orale nous l'a livrée (CELHTO 2008). Cela montre, si besoin est, qu'on peut encore tirer parti de ce mode de transmission du savoir en Afrique. Un doute subsiste s'agissant de la valeur qu'il faut reconnaître aux sources orales. Si nous nous en remettons à la position arrêtée par les rédacteurs de l'*Histoire générale de l'Afrique* (UNESCO/NEA 1995), nous conviendrons que la tradition orale est « une source à part entière… qui confère à l'histoire de l'Afrique une puissante originalité » (UNESCO 1995:27-31 ; 168-203). Le traitement que l'on fait des données recueillies éprouve par la suite leur crédibilité. Les juristes africains ne devraient pas craindre le recours à l'empirisme pour valider juridiquement les pratiques et déclarations recueillies des populations. Après tout, tous les textes fondamentaux ont été revêtus de cette valeur par des hommes pour servir des intérêts prédéfinis. La charte du Mandé dont on observe la vivacité dans les relations personnelles en Afrique (exemple la parenté à plaisanterie, l'entraide, etc.) a certainement une valeur fondamentale dans les cultures africaines. Il faut en mesurer la portée et en dégager les principes dérivés communs aux peuples d'Afrique. La charte aura alors une place incontestable dans la charte africaine des droits de l'homme, car elle participe de nos valeurs et de notre unité culturelle. Outre ses aspects historiques, elle aura la valeur que nous lui aurons donnée. Aucune donnée n'est intrinsèquement juridique. En effet, la norme juridique résulte d'une expression collective portée par une institution à laquelle on reconnaît une autorité suprême (Didier 1984).

A titre liminaire, on peut indiquer ici le principe qui nous semble être le fondement même de la charte de Kurukan Fuga : la sauvegarde de la paix sociale. Il irrigue l'esprit tout entier de la charte. Il en dérive nécessairement d'autres principes actifs pour servir l'objectif primordial. En effet, La paix en tant que valeur est, en elle-même, grosse d'une multitude de principes. Car comment concevoir la paix sans un minimum de justice sociale ? Elle est le préalable de toute recherche de bien-être personnel et collectif. La justice sociale, composante élémentaire de la paix, postule assurément l'égalité, la dignité, le respect de la personne humaine dans toutes ses dimensions. Et, au demeurant, la charte élève la dignité de la personne humaine jusque dans le

conflit. Ainsi, on peut vaincre son ennemi, mais ne jamais l'humilier. C'est ce qu'il faut lire dans l'énoncé 41 : « *Tuez votre ennemi, ne l'humiliez pas* ».[2] La grandeur de l'homme est dans le respect de son ennemi, même vaincu. Des adages dans diverses langues africaines rappellent cette valeur.

Appliquée aux sociétés africaines du début du XXIe siècle, la valeur paix implique que soient assurés à chaque individu les moyens de participer au bien-être collectif. La portée de cette assertion est plurivalente. Car œuvrer pour le bien collectif suppose qu'on ait d'abord une existence satisfaisante ou dont on se satisfait pour pouvoir penser à autrui. Tous les droits de la personne peuvent être visités dans l'analyse de la proposition qui précède. Mais on s'en tiendra ici à deux aspects essentiels au regard des droits des individus et des sociétés : l'éducation et la formation.

L'éducation et la formation sont des droits fondamentaux dus à tout enfant né dans nos sociétés. C'est ainsi qu'il pourra prendre sa place dans la communauté et contribuer à sa continuité et, son épanouissement. Dès lors, à l'éducation de l'enfant échoit à toute la communauté.[3] On a tendance à oublier cette responsabilité collective vis-à-vis de l'enfant. L'enfance est la racine de l'homme. Bien « *élevé* », il sera l'homme qui « *servira* » toute la société. C'est en ce sens qu'il est « *l'enfant de tous* ». La solidarité, que nous avons encore la chance de vivre dans certaines régions du continent, puise sa source dans cette philosophie. La réussite d'un membre de la famille ou du clan profite à tous.

Comme on le voit, tous les droits sociaux et politiques qui tendent à assurer la cohésion sociale et la démocratie peuvent trouver leur source dans le principe de sauvegarde de la paix. Il n'est pas propre à l'Afrique. On peut le classer parmi les principes universels logés dans les soubassements des sociétés humaines. Les mécanismes déclinés par la charte pour assurer sa sauvegarde dénotent bien un esprit particulier dans lequel les Africains peuvent se reconnaître. La valeur paix est donc infiniment riche d'une multitude de principes. Elle éclairerait d'un jour nouveau le concept de justice et le rôle du juge dans les sociétés africaines. Il appartient aux juristes et autres penseurs d'en extraire tout le potentiel sous l'éclairage de l'esprit communautaire et de la solidarité qui caractérisent les cultures africaines.

Existence et caractéristiques des droits africains

La deuxième donnée, que nous exposons ici, est tirée de la doctrine africaniste : les caractéristiques des droits africains traditionnels. Cette donnée a la particularité d'être en amont et en aval de toute appréhension globale du droit. Les droits africains traditionnels seraient de forme orale, communautaire et empreints de sacralité.

L'oralité et le caractère communautaire sont des traits permanents des cultures africaines subsahariennes. Le droit en est forcément marqué. Toutefois, il convient de garder en mémoire que l'exigence de rigueur et de précision prévaut dans le domaine juridique. Elle suppose une étude approfondie de ces caractéristiques afin d'en saisir les effets sur la formulation de la règle de droit traditionnel. La question linguistique doit être traitée au préalable. La conceptualisation pourrait alors suivre aisément. Aucune culture n'a généré spontanément un langage scientifique dans quelque domaine que ce soit. Il est le fruit d'une construction conceptuelle, sémantique guidée par des principes prédéfinis. C'est l'objet préliminaire de la science juridique. Par ailleurs, l'oralité rend la règle instable ; dès lors, la formulation précise requiert un traitement particulier des données.

Pour ce qui est du lien entre le droit traditionnel et le sacré, il est conforté par nombre d'auteurs africains et africanistes (Centre d'Etudes Juridiques Comparatives 1979). Ailleurs, la sacralité déclinée par des rituels aurait pris des allures de solennité, de formalisme. En Afrique noire, elle est occultisme, fétichisme, œuvre divinatoire, voire maléfique. Il est tentant de céder à la facilité pour transposer des stéréotypes ; oublieux des exigences scientifiques du domaine exploré. De fait, l'omniprésence des morts, des ancêtres et autres mânes dans les cultures d'Afrique révèle assurément une croyance en un monde surnaturel ou parallèle invisible mais réel. Cependant, on ne peut faire l'amalgame entre ce qui est du droit et ce qui est hors du droit. C'est là une tension que les juristes maîtrisent en principe. Les rapports que l'homme africain noue avec ce monde parallèle sont a-juridiques. Or le droit est bien un instrument d'encadrement des rapports entre des êtres vivants. Il convient donc de faire la part des choses, de faire le tri entre les différents éléments du cosmos négro-africain. Parle-t-on de droit ou de croyances quand on envisage les rituels que peuvent effectuer les individus en vue de s'assurer le soutien d'un monde occulte ? La situation de droit se distingue d'abord en ce qu'elle concerne des personnes vivant en société, donc des êtres vivants. Dans son approche la plus mécanique, le droit est un groupe de règles qui régit les rapports entre les personnes. Sa sphère d'application exclut les situations qui ne tirent pas leur efficience d'une condition juridique quelconque et ne produisent aucun effet du même ordre. La sphère juridique s'articule autour de la personne, de la chose, des actions et activités. Le droit est lié à la vie et à la vie en communauté. Par conséquent, il y a amalgame entre croyances et droit quand on fait de la sacralité l'une des « dimensions » (Sacco 2009) des droits traditionnels africains. Les craintes et les croyances doivent être séparées de l'acte de volonté pur et du fait juridique pur. Le droit ne peut être qu'un rapport de contrainte et d'avantages entre des hommes vivants. Si on prend quelques-uns des exemples cités pour illustrer la consécration du sacré dans

certains systèmes juridiques africains actuels, on se rend encore compte qu'il y a, là aussi, une confusion. Une loi qui interdit au juge de se prononcer sur les accusations de sorcellerie, mais renvoie ce fait à la compétence policière (Sacco 2009) ne fait que prendre en compte une réalité sociale susceptible de troubler l'ordre public. Il relève donc de la compétence de la police. Ce n'est pas une consécration du sacré ni de l'occulte.

In fine, la sacralité disqualifie le droit. Elle le rejette dans l'ordre des croyances. Par conséquent, il revient aux chercheurs de voir, en perspective historique, comment délimiter le champ du juridique dans l'Afrique ancienne afin de voir quels matériaux en relèvent.

De son fonds culturel propre l'Afrique a hérité d'un esprit, d'une philosophie des rapports entre les personnes. De la colonisation européenne elle a recueilli un système juridique distinct et, surtout, des mécanismes de fabrication des droits étatiques. Dans la période post-coloniale, elle a officiellement choisi la conservation de l'héritage européen sur les plans linguistiques et juridiques. La réalité nous montre un déphasage permanent entre le vécu, les pratiques des populations et les dispositifs et systèmes juridiques officiels. Aussi la renaissance, vue sous l'angle du droit, suppose-t-elle de nouveaux choix, un réajustement tenant compte des réalités de l'Afrique actuelle.

La renaissance : rupture ou compromis ?

Le questionnement du droit étatique face à la renaissance

Comme nous l'avons souligné, le droit positif africain est d'inspiration occidentale, française pour les anciennes colonies de la France, s'il n'est, purement et simplement, une création de pays occidentaux. La proclamation de la continuité du système juridique après les indépendances a été certainement une solution simple dans cette période. Mais en optant pour la continuité, les Etats africains ont choisi non seulement des règles de droit positif, mais aussi une philosophie, une conception des rapports entre les personnes. Le pilier du droit européen est l'individualisme. L'individu est au centre de tout. La toute-puissance de la volonté individuelle est la mesure du système. L'Afrique ne nie pas l'individu. Mais il n'est qu'un élément du groupe. Il s'ensuit toute une série d'effets opposés sinon distincts de ceux qui dérivent de l'individualisme. Nous ne parlons pas seulement de règles figées dans leurs supports, mais de mode de vie, de manière d'être ensemble. Le conflit de valeurs est donc latent dès le départ. On en connaît l'un des signes révélateurs : l'ineffectivité des normes, le développement de systèmes parallèles dans divers domaines. Ailleurs, on parlerait de pratiques *praeter legem,* sinon *contra legem…*

Les codifications post-coloniales et l'empreinte du système occidental
Malgré les mouvements successifs de codification dans la période post-
coloniale, le problème reste le même. Les systèmes juridiques officiels de
l'Afrique demeurent, dans une large mesure, très proches de ceux des anciens
pays colonisateurs. L'exemple le plus parlant aujourd'hui, c'est le droit
harmonisé des affaires, le droit OHADA. A peu de choses près, c'est une
copie du système français en ce qui concerne le droit des entreprises en
difficulté par exemple. Certes, la méthode de l'harmonisation en elle-même
va dans le bon sens, celui de l'intégration du droit des affaires en Afrique.
L'initiative prise par les Africains eux-mêmes et la spécificité de la codification
en question ont été louées par les spécialistes à juste titre. Toutefois,
substantiellement, le petit entrepreneur africain y est totalement ignoré. Or
un tel outil devrait intégrer un appareillage pédagogique qui permet de porter
la dynamique entrepreneuriale des populations africaines. Le petit entrepreneur
n'a pas la surface financière du gros investisseur, mais il a un rôle primordial
à jouer dans le processus de développement. Il mérite donc d'être pris en
considération, notamment dans les systèmes intégrés. Outre l'exemple de
l'OHADA, on peut dire, d'une certaine manière, que l'indifférence de la
population ou la distorsion des règles importées est une résistance culturelle.
La renaissance est donc une problématique qui interpelle surtout le juriste
formé à l'école occidentale et le législateur qui se confine dans l'importation
de textes.

Si le législateur africain est complètement paralysé et inefficace, les juristes
ont également leurs maux. En effet, quand un juge africain (d'une Cour
suprême !) invoque une décision de la Cour de cassation française pour
légitimer sa propre décision, il y a là quelque chose de pathétique. C'est une
aberration absolue.[4] Mais quand on sait qu'un auteur africain, universitaire et
enseignant de son état, se propose d'expliquer une situation dans le contexte
social de son pays par une décision rendue par un tribunal d'instance en
France, on se dit qu'il y a péril en la demeure[5]. Pour faire court, simplement
sur le plan de la méthodologie et des techniques d'interprétation, il y a là une
erreur fatale qui inciterait à se pencher de façon plus approfondie sur ce cas
précis. Au-delà du constat de ces errements intellectuels, il faut dire que pour
penser un droit africain à partir de ses sources, il faut faire l'effort d'accepter,
d'assumer que l'Afrique est indépendante.[6] En somme, il faut se libérer l'esprit,
prendre la liberté de penser. Mais ce n'est peut-être pas le plus simple. La
liberté est, en soi, un risque : exposer ses idées sans se légitimer d'une
quelconque source ou autorité reconnue ; sauf le refus d'affirmations
hasardeuses, donc sa seule technicité et sa conscience comme éclairage…

Les manifestations de la résistance d'un ordre traditionnel

L'ordre traditionnel désigne ici, de manière générique, les systèmes antérieurs. Quand on parle de tradition, on oublie généralement son sens premier, pratiques et modes de pensées transmises de génération en génération, pour le confiner au folklore.[7] Il est question de continuité des sociétés humaines, de réception et d'adaptation de données institutionnelles, organisationnelles. Il va de soi que chaque génération réajuste ce qu'elle reçoit en fonction des contingences dans lesquelles elle évolue. Aussi, sauf à nier que les générations qui les ont précédés aient été douées de bon sens,[8] faut-il reconnaître que les Africains ont recueilli quelques préceptes et principes qui ont façonné les sociétés antérieures. De fait, la persistance des ordres traditionnels se constate dans les relations sociales et, au-delà, ils imprègnent certains phénomènes d'adaptation spontanée des populations aux systèmes dits modernes (BB-Laye 2009). Les mécanismes du travail « informel » et les systèmes de solidarité que l'on observe dans différentes régions relèvent de ce phénomène. Cette résistance de l'ordre traditionnel n'est pas un mal en soi, comme nous l'avons dit ailleurs (BB-Laye 2012). Mieux, nous pensons que c'est un atout majeur dont les Etats modernes doivent se saisir et lui donner toute efficience dans les dispositifs économiques et sociaux officiels. Là aussi, il faut oser, non pas l'invention (les populations ont réajusté leurs modes de production et de protection contre les risques sociaux aux exigences actuelles, c'est donc une réalité à intégrer), mais l'affirmation de l'aptitude de l'Afrique à générer des systèmes originaux porteurs de progrès pour ses populations (BB-Laye 2012).

Les éléments d'un droit endogène

Assurément, il existe en Afrique, comme ailleurs, des philosophies, des conceptions des rapports en société. L'oralité, comme lieu de conservation de ces mémoires, est souvent considérée peu fiable. Toutefois, les travaux réalisés pour *l'Histoire générale de l'Afrique* (UNESCO 1995) et ceux du Centre d'Etudes Linguistiques et Historiques par la Tradition Orale, CELHTO (2008) témoignent de la légitimité et de la pertinence des sources orales. Outre les pratiques que nous pouvons constater dans la vie quotidienne des populations (l'assistance mutuelle, les entraides et, surtout, la pratique des médiations et compromis en matière de règlement des conflits…), la charte de Kurukan Fuga nous semble receler une mine d'informations qu'il appartient aux juristes d'exploiter. Il ne s'agit pas de faire renaître une Afrique ancienne (ce qui serait une aberration), mais de retrouver l'esprit, la sève qui irrigue les liens sociaux afin de concevoir les outils juridiques du XXIe siècle. Dans les pays occidentaux, la crise des valeurs, les impasses et la remise en cause

de systèmes (largement éprouvés par des siècles de pratiques et d'évolution !) que les penseurs exposent et interrogent sans complaisance devraient inciter les tenants d'une transposition des systèmes occidentaux en Afrique à plus de prudence. De plus, Les chercheurs européens qui travaillent sur l'Afrique pointent l'originalité et l'adéquation aux besoins locaux des mécanismes qu'ils constatent.[9]

Mais il n'y a pas de contradiction à dire que les droits modernes de l'Afrique subsaharienne doivent trouver leurs racines dans les pratiques et pensées de ce continent tout en restant perméable aux avancées durables que les autres communautés ont réalisées.

La nécessité du compromis

La renaissance signifiera-t-elle une rupture ? Dans certains domaines, la réponse ne peut être qu'affirmative. Le modèle de système social africain, par exemple, doit être tiré des principes fondateurs des sociétés africaines. La diversité culturelle n'est pas un obstacle dans la mesure où nous savons qu'il existe un fonds commun. Des principes communs peuvent, en effet, en être dégagés. Et il est tout à fait envisageable d'établir des variantes de systèmes sociaux dont les grands principes seraient inscrits dans le droit communautaire continental ou sous-régional, à l'instar des mécanismes d'intégration actuellement en œuvre. Pour ce faire, une théorie du droit doit voir le jour et se nourrir des études historiques, sociologiques, anthropologiques. La méthode des questionnaires devrait être ravivée et utilisée systématiquement pour recueillir des données sur le droit traditionnel, les coutumes. La conceptualisation devra être entreprise avec les linguistes. La création d'une école africaine de théorie du droit est souhaitable pour porter la renaissance. Rappelons qu'il ne s'agit pas de figer les systèmes africains dans le passé, mais d'avoir des outils juridiques inscrits dans une continuité socioculturelle.

Enfin, si renaissance signifie rupture à certains égards, le compromis ne peut non plus être écarté. Une ouverture sur le reste du monde signifie nécessairement l'utilisation d'instruments d'échange communs, la réception de données éprouvées quant à la sauvegarde de l'homme, l'amélioration de ses conditions d'existence et la préservation de son environnement. L'Afrique doit s'approprier ces outils et méthodes afin d'échanger avec le reste du monde sur des bases compréhensibles pour elle et pour ses partenaires…La réflexion reste ouverte.

Notes

1. Certains considéreront que les guerres et autres violences « ethnico-religieuses » que l'on déplore dans nombre de pays démentent cette affirmation. Nous estimons que ces conflits ont des causes beaucoup plus complexes que ce que les médias laissent entendre par « conflits ethniques ou religieux ». D'autre part, les situations illustrant l'aptitude à vivre la diversité sont d'une constance et d'une généralité qui confortent l'argument. Il n'y a nul autre continent où autant de peuples de cultures diverses partagent le même territoire sans chercher à s'annihiler mutuellement d'une façon ou d'une autre. La permanence et la généralité de cette donnée nous semblent plus probantes que l'argument contraire tiré de situations d'exception envenimées par des intérêts économiques.

2. Cet énoncé peut être pris dans un sens brut, apparent ce qui prêterait à confusion. Il serait incompréhensible au regard de la philosophie de la charte qu'il y ait un appel au meurtre. Aussi, du point de vue de la technique d'interprétation, convient-il de retenir qu'on ne peut affirmer une chose et son contraire. L'argument *a contrario*, dire une chose, c'est exclure son contraire, permet d'accréditer le texte d'une logique interne qui exclut toute lecture littérale. De plus, l'expression par amplification (emphatique) est une caractéristique des cultures africaines qui ne doit pas être négligée dans l'interprétation des sources orales. Il faut donc saisir l'énoncé 41 par l'esprit général de la charte. On se rappellera alors que la dignité tout comme l'honnêteté et le courage étaient des valeurs fortes sur lesquelles on veillait particulièrement dans les familles et clans. On comprend que l'humiliation soit perçue comme un avilissement moins supportable que la mort.

3. L'énoncé 9 de la charte du Mandé attribue la charge de l'éducation des enfants à tous, de même que la puissance paternelle. Autrement dit, l'enfant est celui de la communauté tout entière. On peut aussi faire référence à l'adage wolof qui dit « xale boo baxe doomu ñépp le », un enfant « bien » (bien élevé, qui a réussi) est l'enfant de tout le monde. Cet adage doit être confronté à la responsabilité collective en matière d'éducation. Il serait intéressant de faire quelques développements sur cette responsabilité collective.

4. Un collègue français, professeur des universités en droit privé, avec lequel je discutais de ce phénomène, me dit qu'il trouve cela particulièrement choquant. Il a enseigné plusieurs années dans une université africaine après son agrégation. Il ne comprenait pas que cette question laissait complètement indifférents (à la limite vaguement critiques !) ses pairs africains lorsqu'il abordait la question avec eux (!).
   -Voir, sur ces questions, A.B. Fall, « Le Code des obligations de l'administration au Sénégal ou la transposition de règles de droit administratif français en Afrique par la codification », in *Mélanges Jean du Bois de Gaudusson,* 2013, p. 225. L'auteur invite le juge sénégalais à ne pas rester « esclave » du Code de 1965 ayant introduit au Sénégal la jurisprudence administrative française. Le

système juridique sénégalais gagnerait à ce qu'il fasse une utilisation réfléchie et rationnelle des notions et principes qui y sont contenus (non seulement en rapport avec les valeurs et croyances des sociétés concernées et aux règles juridiques traditionnelles auxquelles celles-ci croient et appliquent quotidiennement de manière informelle, donc en marge du droit écrit moderne), mais aussi en fonction des moyens et, surtout, des objectifs de l'administration (Etat) qui sont loin d'être ceux de la France.

5. Sur ce cas, voir Recueil PENANT 2009 n° 868 p. 261.

6. Sur le plan matériel, le savoir du juriste est contingent, mobile. Les règles changent, évoluent selon les lieux et les époques. Il est composé de données temporelles. C'est donc l'intériorisation d'un mode de penser et d'action, la maîtrise de concepts, de techniques d'interprétation, d'une méthodologie qui constituent le socle des savoirs du juriste. Ce socle lui confère une solide charpente lui permettant ainsi d'investir tout environnement juridique. Cet article ne postule donc pas une nouvelle formation des juristes africains, mais simplement la libération salutaire des esprits afin de regarder l'Afrique sans fard et d'investir de nouveaux champs de réflexion. Le juriste, le chercheur en particulier, n'est pas seulement un réceptacle, il confectionne, invente et construit…

7. Du latin *traditio, tradere* : transmettre, remettre. Par extension on en tire : légende, mythe, folklore. Parlant de culture, la tradition renvoie donc à ce qu'on a reçu des générations précédentes.

8. Dans un article paru au journal *Le Monde* en 1990, un haut fonctionnaire, qui a longtemps servi en Afrique, a fait publier sous le pseudonyme « CHESNAY » un article intitulé LES AFRICAINS, UN PEUPLE SANS PERES. Plus méprisant que le discours de Dakar ! Et c'est certainement l'un de ces fonctionnaires qui ont caressé nos dirigeants dans le sens du poil, excité leur *ego* et les ont poussés à toutes les folies… A défaut de monuments grandioses, sanctuaires et autres reliques, si on ne peut pas témoigner du fait que les Africains ont eu un minimum de sens, d'organisation et de gestion de leur vie en communauté transmissibles à leurs descendants, ce type de discours s'en trouve conforté.

9. Consultable sur Internet : Alain Supiot « Etat social et mondialisation : analyse juridique des solidarités », notamment les séminaires 2012-2013, « Entretiens sur les avatars de la solidarité » et la contribution de madame Danouta Liberski-Bagnoud, « Les formes africaines de solidarité » – C'est peut-être d'Europe que nous viendra le goût de penser l'Afrique pour ce qu'elle est !

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Managing Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: The Inter-Religious Mediation Peace Strategy

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Abstract

Nigeria with over 150 million people consists of muslims and christians who live across the country. The religious divide in the country criss-crosses more than 250 ethnic groups as well as deep political divisions that cross religious lines. Over the last decade, numerous 'hotspots' around the country have suffered from pervasive violent religious conflict, with devastating impact on the citizenry and the peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian state. The February 2000 anti-Sharia crisis in Kaduna, the religious riots in 2001 and 2004 in Bauchi State, the dispute over a perceived insult to islam during a beauty pageant in 2002, the riots over Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed in 2006, and the August 2009 Boko Haram onslaught which led to major mayhem in the Northern parts of the country are all disturbing signs of this situation. It is not surprising therefore that the Federal Government of Nigeria and some non-governmental organisations have decided to pay special attention to this challenge by putting in place innovative structures designed to provide effective solutions to the phenomenon of violent religious conflicts in Nigeria. No doubt, the inter-religious mediation organ represents an energetic and indispensable vehicle for achieving lasting peace among divergent religious groupings in the country. The questions that beg for answers therefore include: What are the salient requirements for a successful policy of inter-religious mediation strategy in terms of religious conflict management, prevention and peace building? What are the most practical alternative ways of enhancing the capacity of the inter-religious mediation group to effectively resolve religious conflict in the country? In a nutshell, the study investigates the various religious conflicts vis-à-vis the peace strategy of the 'inter-religious mediation' groups in the country.

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Résumé

Avec une population de plus de 150 millions de personnes, la population du Nigeria est composée de musulmans et de chrétiens qui vivent sur toute l'étendue du pays. La fracture religieuse dans le pays sillonne des territoires occupés par plus de 250 groupes ethniques et crée de profondes divisions politiques qui suivent le sillage de divisions religieuses. Au cours de la dernière décennie, de nombreux « foyer de tension » à travers le pays ont subi de violents conflits religieux, avec un impact dévastateur sur les citoyens et la coexistence pacifique au nigérian. La crise de février 2000 née des soulèvements contre la charia à Kaduna, les émeutes religieuses de 2001 et 2004 dans l'État de Bauchi, le différend au sujet d'un concours de beauté en 2002 jugé insultant pour l'islam, les émeutes contre les caricatures danoises représentant le prophète Mahomet en 2006 et les attentats de Boko Haram au mois d'août 2009 qui ont conduit à installer la chienlit dans la partie Nord du pays étaient tous des signes inquiétants de cette situation. Il n'était donc pas surprenant que le gouvernement fédéral du Nigeria et d'autres organisations non gouvernementales accordent une attention particulière à ce problème en mettant en place des structures innovantes visant à apporter des solutions efficaces au phénomène des conflits religieux violents au Nigeria. Sans nul doute, l'organe de médiation inter-religieux représente un mécanisme dynamique et indispensable pour parvenir à une paix durable entre les différents groupes religieux dans le pays. Les questions qui exigent des réponses incluent donc : Quelles sont les principales exigences d'une politique réussie de médiation inter-religieuse en termes de gestion des conflits religieux, de prévention et de consolidation de la paix ? Quelles sont les moyens alternatifs plus pratiques pour renforcer la capacité du groupe de médiation inter-religieux à résoudre efficacement les conflits religieux dans le pays? En un mot, l'étude examine les différents conflits religieux à la lumière de la stratégie de la paix des groupes « de médiation inter-religieux » qui officient dans le pays.

Introduction

Nigeria today faces greater challenges to peace and stability than ever before. The various regions in the country, the Northern part of the country, the South West, and the Niger Delta, are a volatile mix of insecurity, ethno-religious conflict and political instability. Thousands have been killed in riots between the two major religious groups sparked by various events: aggressive campaigns by foreign evangelists; the implementation in 1999 and 2000 of Sharia, or islamic law, in 12 of Nigeria's 36 states; and the 2002 Miss World pageant saga which resulted into another religious imbroglio when a local christian reporter, Isioma Daniel, outraged muslims by writing in one of Nigeria's national papers, *This Day*, that the Prophet Mohammed would have

chosen a wife from among the contestants. Similarly, in 2006, riots triggered by Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed left more people dead in Nigeria than anywhere else in the world (*This Day* September 2006). The attention to the role of religion in conflicts has been stimulated by positive and negative developments, including the desecularisation of Nigeria's polity and the rise of religious conflicts. In the country today, attention is now on the militant forms of religious fundamentalism as a threat to peace. Also important has been the phenomenon of continuous armed religious conflict which have spread quickly across other states in the country (Mason and Talbot 2000; Polgreen 2008). Religious diversity appears to play a complex role in these conflicts, often entrenching struggles over resources through ethnic violence and social exclusion.

Both the federal government and some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have set up various institutions to deal with ethno-religious conflicts in the country. Many deal with them on an ad-hoc basis without articulating a standard way to process conflicts. Some of these ad-hoc committees have gone to the extent of designing a Conflict Management System (CMS) to address the issue of religious conflict in Nigeria (Kwaja 2009; Ahmed 2007). Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) and Inter-Religious Mediation Groups are no exception. While many FBOs have well-developed programmes for conciliation, mediation, and scripture-based peacemaking, very few religious communities have taken advantage of the CMS approach to their internal conflicts (Ibrahim 1999).

Using contemporary examples, this paper assesses the feasibility of inter-faith mediation strategies in peace-making. The paper also argues that internationally supported Inter-Religious Mediation and Faith Based Organisations promote peace between and among divergent religious groupings in Nigeria. In some cases, the faith-based organisations and inter-faith mediation group's approaches to peace-making and reconciliation can offer a corrective alternative to the failings of the western peace-making model. This paper is meant as a contribution towards the ongoing search for a lasting peace to various religious crises in the country. The Nigerian government has taken bold steps to reduce tension, but the continuing religious conflicts raise questions about the effectiveness of these mechanisms towards addressing the issue of religious crises in the country.

Religion and the Nigerian State

Nigeria is a state where islam, christianity and traditional African religions are freely practised. Nigeria's two major religions, islam and christianity, are sometimes depicted as monolithic entities that confront each other in pitched battles. Religious beliefs and values are an important feature of the daily lives

of many families and communities in the country (Kukah 1993). It should also be emphasised that traditional beliefs, values and practices have a powerful impact upon our patterns of life and social interaction, as do the beliefs, values and practices of the many religions that have flourished in the country. Nigeria is clearly a prototype state in accommodating divergent religious fault-lines. With a population of over 150 million and over 250 ethno-linguistic groups, it is the only country with a population of approximately half christians and half muslims (Paden 2008; Kwaja 2009). Since the awakening of religion, wars have been fought in the name of different gods and goddesses. Still today most violent conflicts contain religious elements linked up with ethno-national, inter-state, economic, territorial and cultural issues. Conflicts based on religion tend to become dogged, tenacious and brutal. When conflicts are couched in religious terms, they become transformed in value conflicts (Kazah-Toure 2003; Kwaja 2008).

The character of the Nigerian State is responsible for the country's deepening ethno-religious contradictions. This plural nature originates a constant feeling of distrust between the muslim and christian religious groups and they are working towards dominating one another (Kukah 1993; Mason and Talbot 2000). The religious contradictions that Nigeria faces are daunting. The country is essentially a heterogeneous society, with the two monotheistic religions – islam and christianity – enjoying the loyalty of most Nigerians. A sizeable fraction of the population still prides itself as being pure religious traditionalists, meaning adherence to one or the other of the many traditional religions (Olu-Adeyemi 2006; Paden 2008).

Within the Nigerian political setting, everything takes place in a political framework. There are clear intersections of religion and fragility in its politicking, in fact, religion and politics are intertwined. For instance, religious discourse is used in politics, religious sites are part of the struggle, there is an active role of the state in religious institutions and there is internal socio-political and religious division among the various ethnic groupings in the country (Takaya 1992; Williams and Falola 1995). Indeed, the most overlooked aspect of this religious encounter is that competition within the various religious faiths – between the christians (Pentecostals and Orthodox) and the islamic groups that want to engage with or reject the modern world – is just as important as the competition between the faiths. But it is also true that the fastest-growing forms of faith on both sides tend to be the most vibrant and absolute. Nigeria has been identified as a country of occasional violence between muslims and christians, especially in the northern and central parts (the Middle Belt) of the country. Here, the two religions have co-existed and sometimes engaged in fierce confrontation (Ibrahim 1991; Williams and Falola 1995).

Despite the political differences between the various ethnic groupings in Nigeria, religion has also become a source of friction between the muslims and the christians. Violence against christian Igbo immigrants in the muslim north was a key factor during the Nigerian Civil War, and even after the war, the trouble between christians and muslims, especially in the northern part of the country, intensified (Egwu 2001; Babangida 2002). The use of religion as a tool for achieving political ends has contributed immensely to the problem of religious conflict in Nigeria. Some politicians in Nigeria are known to engage in reactionary recourse to religious fervour as a means of either holding on to power, or as an instrument for political ascendancy (Counted 2009). It should be reiterated that religious conflicts are fast becoming a common feature of society, in spite of socioeconomic development coupled with the gains of democracy. Many scholars have attributed the causes of conflicts between and within various religious groups in Nigeria to a number of factors, such as ways of propagating the religions, selfishness, intolerance, mistrust and suspicion between the followers of the various religious groups (Agbaje 1990; Blakely, Walter and Dennis 1994). Conflict prevention and resolution are key objectives on the agenda of Nigerian governments and major inter-faith mediation groups.

Within the Nigerian state, many governments and international organisations are suffering from a legitimacy deficit, and one can expect a growing impact of religious discourses on Nigerian politics. Religion is a major source of soft power (Kukah 1993; Ibrahim 2000). It will, to a greater extent, be used or misused by religions and governmental organisations to pursue their selfish interests. Religious tension in different parts of the country has threatened the survival of the Nigerian state, and the federal government is slow in stemming the religious violence that engulfs the country. When a government fails its people, they turn elsewhere to safeguard themselves and their futures, and in Nigeria at the beginning of the twenty-first century, they have turned first to religion. Here, then, is the truth behind Takaya's assertions with respect to religion and state control. He argues that outbreaks of violence result not simply from a clash between two powerful religious monoliths, but from tensions at the most vulnerable edges where they meet zones of desperation and official neglect, and then faith becomes a rallying cry in the struggle for state control (Takaya 1992).

In spite of this early trend, the issue of religion did not come to the front burner as a critical issue dividing Nigerians until 1999. When military rule ended in 1999, democratic politics provided a perfect platform for corrupt and cynical politicians to play on religious fears to gain votes. The major event that opened the floodgate of religious antagonism was the decision of the Zamfara State government to introduce the *Sharia* penal code in the state

(Yusuf 2008). This move was seen by christians as a ploy to turn Nigeria into an islamic state against the spirit of secularity of the Nigerian state as enshrined in the constitution. The introduction of the Sharia legal system has added another dimension to religious dissension. This singular action of Alhaji Ahmad Sani (Yerima Bakura), the executive governor of Zamfara State, marked the epoch of intractable inter-religious violence in Nigeria. This religious imbroglio continued even in some states where Sharia was not introduced and this was as a result of the inability to categorically distinguish the place of politics and religion. The incessant religious crises erupting across the polity since 1999, when the military handed over power to a democratically elected government, negates Adigun Agbaje's (1990) optimistic thesis that 'Nigeria under a democratic dispensation would likely witness a lessening of tension over religion and politics'. The nascent democracy is witnessing increasing religionisation of politics and politicisation of religion due to the resolve of some northern state governors to adopt the islamic Sharia as the penal and criminal codes in their states. With Zamfara State blazing the trail, eleven other northern states have followed suit. Takaya (1992) also identified centrifugal factors that gave rise to the politicisation of ethnic and religious identities in Nigeria, which include the existence of two or more religious groups with sufficient numerical strength that can significantly affect the outcome and direction of a democratic political process. Then follows the instrumentalisation of ethnicity and religion as a legitimising tool of hegemony when the interests of the political class are under threat. He further reiterates that the society is characterised by political, social or economic hardships which have caused alliances along ethnic and religious fault-lines and these have resulted in the politicisation of religion in Nigeria (Kwaja 2009).

It should be reiterated that before the military handed over power to the civilians in 1999, the country had already witnessed a series of religious crises, and scholars have argued that the long years of military rule increased the gap of distrust as the politicians deliberately employed state power to heighten primordial sentiments, thereby increasing intolerance in Nigeria. The current political and religious sentiments are thus fuelled by some religious fundamentalists and individuals who benefit at the expense of the state (Olu-Adeyemi 2006). In 1990 a muslim-christian crisis broke out in Bauchi and in 1991 another religious riot exploded in Kano after a German fundamentalist christian announced a campaign to bring his Good News Revival campaign to the city (Ibrahim 1991; Egwu 2001). Also in 1992, a violent clash broke out in the northern town of Zangon Kataf, this development brought about a fierce confrontation between the christians and muslims in the community. In that incident, the mostly muslim Hausa and the predominantly christian Kataf ethnic group fought over the relocation of the community's main market

in Zango Kataf, and from there killings spread to other parts of Kaduna State (Yusuf 2008; Polgreen 2008).

Some of the religious conflicts that have captured national and international attention in the last ten years (1999 to 2009) in Nigeria include: The Kaduna anti-Sharia crisis on 21 February 2000; the clashes followed a march by tens of thousands of christians to protest the proposal to introduce muslim Sharia law as the criminal code throughout Kaduna State. Between February-May 2000 over 1,000 people died in rioting over the introduction of Sharia in Kaduna State alone. On 28 February 2000, hundreds of ethnic Hausa were killed in reprisal attacks in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria (Igbokwe 2000). In 2001, over 2,000 people were killed and thousands displaced in religious violence that spread across the Middle-Belt states of Benue, Plateau, Taraba, and Nasarawa (Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2012). The outbreak of a religious crisis in the town of Jos, the capital of Plateau State and a city surrounded by beautiful hills, created pandemonium in the Middle Belt geo-political zone. The ironic thing is that Plateau State calls itself 'The Home of Peace and Tourism' in Nigeria. On the other hand, everyone in Nigeria is familiar with the fierce animosities that exist between the various religious groups in Jos (Kwaja 2008; Counted 2009). A week of violent clashes left at least 1,000 people dead and many more displaced in Jos. Soldiers and police kept vigilant watch on vehicles entering town, hoping to curb any potential reprisals. In every household, church and mosque, people blamed followers of the other religion with planning and executing the attacks with a vitriol that does not bode well for the future of the city.

Plateau State has the highest number of displaced people as a result of clashes between christian and muslim communities there. Subsequently a low intensity conflict spread to the surrounding countryside, where the mainly christian farmers clashed repeatedly with the predominantly muslim livestock herders. Over 500 people died in these skirmishes, which forced several thousand people to abandon their homes (Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2012). Most of the clashes in Plateau State have been portrayed as being between christian and muslim communities, but have often assumed an ethnic dimension. The predominantly christian Tarok farmers consider the mostly muslim Hausa cattle herders as outsiders, and accuse them of stealing land and trying to usurp political power (Ahmed 2007).

Again in 2004 another sectarian clash between christians and muslims broke out in Jos. Some Fulani herdsmen were believed to have brought weapons into the city and an army search triggered riots which led to the deaths of many innocent citizens. In that crisis, churches and mosques were destroyed and whole communities killed or driven out. This led to the burning down of 72 villages, and in the densely populated residential area of Jos,

dozens of homes laid crumbling, and blood splatter stained floors, walls and the large peach-coloured boulders between homes (Paden 2008; Kwaja 2009).

In a reprisal attack, about 30 people were killed in Kano, the largest city in northern Nigeria with a population of about eight million. Religious violence erupted with a muslim protest demonstration on 10 May 2004, as a protest against the killing of over six hundred muslims in the small town of Yelwa in Shendam Local Government area of Plateau State (Olasope 2012; Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2012). Again over 1,000 people were injured after mobs of youths armed with clubs, machetes and jerry cans of petrol roamed the streets in Kano, attacking suspected christians. An estimated 10,000 Kano residents, mostly christians fleeing from their homes in troubled parts of the city, took refuge at the main military and police barracks on 11 May 2004 (see *Vanguard* of 16 May 2004). At least 57,000 people fled their homes following sectarian violence involving christians and muslims in northern and central Nigeria. More than 30,000 christians were displaced from their homes in Kano, the largest city in northern Nigeria. Also over 27,000 displaced people had sought refuge in Bauchi State following a massacre of muslims by christian gangs in the neighbouring Plateau State earlier in May, 2004 (The Nigeria Inter Religious Council 2009).

Another major protest broke out in connection with the Miss World contest in 2002 in Kaduna and Abuja. Violence surged when a columnist wrote that the Holy Prophet Mohammed would likely support the pageant, an event some muslims felt was indecent. The 'blasphemous' article suggested that the Prophet Mohammed would have liked to marry a Miss World beauty queen (*The Straits Times* 2002). Some islamic fundamentalists perceived this as an insult to islam and it eventually led to further riots in which many people lost their lives. More than 2,000 people died in the rioting that followed in Kaduna and Abuja.

In 2006, riots over Danish cartoons depicting Prophet Mohammed led to the deaths of nearly 200 people in several Nigerian Northern cities, more than in any other country that experienced violence in the global backlash against the cartoons (Hill and Asthana 2006).

Then came the sudden insurgency of a violent islamic sect in the Northern part of the country. Known as Boko Haram, the fundamentalist grouping aims to overthrow the federal government of Nigeria. The sect's leader, Mohammed Yusuf, is believed to have formed Boko Haram (meaning western education is a sin) in 2002 in the restive northeastern city of Maiduguri with the intention of imposing a strict version of islamic law. He declared total Jihad in Nigeria, threatening to islamise the entire nation by force. The group attacked a police station in the northern state of Bauchi on 26 July 2009. The incident led to a four-day armed struggle between state security forces and

members of the militant group, spreading to three other states (Yobe, Kano and Borno) and leaving over 800 people dead, many of them members of the sect. The militant attacks, which followed the arrest of several of its members, targeted mainly police stations, prisons, government buildings and churches in the four states. Since the completion of a military attack that sought to break up the sect, no more violent outbreaks have occurred. Borno State and its capital city Maiduguri – the stronghold of the sect – were most affected (*Time* 2009).

Religious clashes are relatively common in Nigeria and are likely to persist in the future. However, many of these clashes include a much stronger political dimension than is often suggested, concerning more the uneven distribution of power and wealth, rather than religion per se. While those crises have remained localised in the past and have not had the potential to turn into a full-scale national crisis, the destructive effects on the communities are immense.

The various religious conflicts have brought about economic and political instability, despite the abundant natural resources in the country. The losses in human capital due to the direct and indirect effects of the religious conflicts are of inestimable dimensions. Taking into consideration the level of destruction in the various religious conflicts, and coupled with incessant religious fundamentalist insurgencies, the Nigerian state cannot sustain the economic and human losses. Prevention and resolution of conflicts are, therefore, critical priorities in the nation's socioeconomic development. It is for this reason that peace making has become a key objective on the agenda of the federal government and other relevant non-governmental organisations.

Peace Moves towards Resolving Religious Conflicts in Nigeria

There are significant numbers of international and local faith-based organisations operating in Nigeria, and they are making impressive move towards peace and reconciliation among the divergent religious groupings in the country. Some of the early efforts at reconciliation proved to be ineffective, and in some cases, counterproductive. Nevertheless, many faith-based Non-Governmental Organisations have made a significant contribution to ethno-religious reconciliation in Nigeria. For instance, the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), which consists of both christian and muslim clerics; The Interfaith Mediation Centre of Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum (IMC-MCDF) based in Kaduna, Nigeria; and the International Peace League (IPL), a University of Jos student organisation that encourages pluralism and understanding across religious and ethnic boundaries (Ahmed 2007; Berlin Declaration on Inter-religious Dialogue 2007; Olu-Adeyemi 2006). The Heinrich Boll Foundation is also worthy of mention; it is not a faith-based

organisation itself, but it has facilitated many inter-faith dialogues and helped
to fund the local Centre for Religious Dialogue in their peace efforts. It
developed an approach to organising dialogues that has proved effective
over several years in Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi and Jos. Furthermore, the Nigerian
Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, the Christian Association of Nigeria,
Jamaâ'atu Nasril Islam and the Conflict Management Stakeholders Network,
have encouraged inter-faith collaboration in planning local, educational, and
infrastructural projects aimed to promote dialogue among different religions,
spiritual and humanistic traditions in the country (Paden 2008; Yusuf 2008).

Conflict resolution and peace-making and building processes are very
complex and time and resource consuming. Success stories are extremely
rare. On the road to peace there are often more failures than successes. One
reason may be the assumption that leaders make rational choices about the
costs of war and the benefits of peace (Ceadel 1987; Kaufman 2006). But
then, the inter-religious mediation groups played a leading role in conflict
resolution and building on past efforts to mobilise political and religious leaders
to increase dialogue across religious divisions. They use their resources to
establish peace forces, fostering favourable environments for negotiations
and strengthening weak peace processes.

The activities of inter-religious groups in resolving the disagreement and
violent clashes among various religious groupings in the country reveal the
capacity of religious communities to educate their members on the root causes
of religious intolerance and conflict (Princen 1992). The inter-religious
dialogue facilitates peaceful coexistence and also serves as effective advocates
for the prevention of religious conflict locally and regionally. They play a
central role in mediation and negotiation among religious fundamentalists,
and lead their communities in the reconciliation and healing required to
transform their divergent views and disagreements into a true and lasting
peace (Smock 2007). The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), the
International Peace League (IPL), and the Interfaith Mediation Centre of
Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum (IMC-MCDF) in the country played a
central role in conflict resolution, through their various activities, i.e.,
mobilisation and peace network, fostering multi-religious cooperation, building
inter-religious councils, and providing religious communities with the tools
they need to effectively address religious conflict. They have emerged as
key actors for peace.

Religious organisations are rich sources of peace services. They function
as a powerful warrant for social tolerance, democratic pluralism, and
constructive conflict-management. They are peace-builders and peace-
makers. Inter-faith religious organisations contribute to peace-building by
empowering the weak, influencing the moral-political climate, developing

cooperation and providing humanitarian aid. They also make efforts to overcome religious intolerance, sectarianism or nationalism, and to develop an ecumenical climate. Hans Kung urges, as a first step, the development of an ecumenical and concrete theology for peace between christians and muslims (Kung 1990). A systematic analysis of their divergences and convergences, and their potential of conflict and cooperation would be a helpful step forward.

The Inter-Religious Mediation Strategy

The process of reconciliation is basically one where there is restoration of good relationships between individuals and groups. It is rooted in individuals but has lasting effects on social harmony in the state. Though there are several dimensions to reconciliation, the main ones include spiritual, social, psychological, and political (Ahmed 2007). The end of communism revived not only the pre-communist models of inter-religious relations, but brought about new patterns of tolerance and cooperation. Zartman and Touval posit that mediation is best thought of as a mode of negotiation in which a third party helps the parties find a solution which they cannot find by themselves. They describe why third parties decide to mediate, why and when conflicting parties accept mediation, and what factors produce effective mediation. Inter-religious dialogue means more than a coexistence of different religious traditions and institutions (Zartman and Touval 1996). The dialogue includes purposeful activities of collaboration between religious institutions in favour of social peace and prosperity. Ahmed (2007) posits that inter-religious dialogue is certainly a bridge-building exercise. It has to do with the way and means of relating with people of different religions. It includes creating harmony in the society, encouraging the development of friendship and spirit of tolerance.

Inter-religious dialogue is a particular way of interacting with others through which all who are involved can be transformed. Dialogue on issues of faith and identity goes beyond negotiations. Open and trustful inter-religious dialogue is furthered by a secure knowledge of one's own religious tradition as well as that of others. This knowledge should be taught in a spirit of peace and respect for the different traditions (Princen 1992; Smock 2007)). Many religions make truth claims that are mutually exclusive. This is no more an impediment to dialogue and the full participation in society than the explicit or implicit truth claims of secular ideologies. Dialogue between religions, cultures and social groups is often dialogue across opposing truth claims and world views (Berlin Declaration on Inter-Religious Dialogue).

As a result of the incessant religious conflict in Nigeria, all the faith based NGOs mentioned earlier were all set out to address the issue of religious crises in the country.

The Interfaith Mediation Centre stands out as the most highly visible and effective NGO which serves as a bridge builder between the warring religious factions in the Northern part of the country. The Coordinator of IMC, Imam Nurein Ashafa, is well known for the reconciliation work he and his former enemy, Pastor James Wuye carried out together to stop christian-muslim violence in Kaduna (IMC-MCDF 2004). The inter-religious dialogue acknowledged all faiths and shared experiences, needs and longings. It should be emphasised that the interfaith bodies recognise various religious groupings in Nigeria. One aim of inter-religious dialogue is to reduce false perceptions of difference and culture gaps. Today the motivations for inter-religious dialogue arise from different grounds. The Nigerian government and concerned citizens in the country has realised that there is the need to convince the religious warring factions to resolve their differences peacefully. They therefore pursue dialogue with the religious leaders and listen to their complaints, while at the same time expressing condemnation of the religious fundamentalists.

This unique gathering of religious leaders can help debunk the dangerous myth that surrounds religion intolerance. First, the inter-religious groups reach out to various religious leaders, particularly those who feel alienated and powerless, and who, having lost faith in the future, are often vulnerable to extremist ideologies. Secondly, the role of religious leaders as peace builders had to be reinforced. Religious leaders have played and continue to play a prominent role in helping to initiate dialogue between warring parties, in providing emotional and spiritual support to communities affected by conflict, and in facilitating the process of reconciliation (Yusuf 2008). The various inter-faith religious groups are using a faith-based approach to promote acceptance of differences (religious, cultural, gender and other social differences) that exist in society and the use of non-violent methods in solving the religious problems. This strategy acknowledges the fact that people are passionate about their religion and that nearly all people in Nigeria belong to one religion or another. It also draws on the immunity, moral authority and influence that religious leaders have on religious communities.

In addressing peace-building challenges, the inter-faith religious groups use scriptural texts that promote peace, and collaborate, partner or network, with other peace practitioners and institutions. Furthermore, they undertake peacemaking initiatives that establish frameworks for achieving peace at both high policy and community levels. They also promote good governance as a vital tool in conflict prevention, using a faith-based approach. For instance, the Interfaith Mediation Centre of Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum (IMC-

MCDF) facilitates empowerment activities through training and conflict management, peace building and reconciliation. They also undertake and promote healing and trust building activities in different parts of the Northern region of the country. Also, the International Peace League (IPL) has recently facilitated two high level consultations in February 2004 and May 2004 for christian-muslim relationship in Jos (Kwaja 2009). The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), which consists of clerics from both christian and muslim leaders, also facilitates a cordial christian-muslim relationship in the country. The major inter-faith religious organisations were presented as role models for peace at the co-existence initiative organised by the Conflict Management Stakeholders Network. The Heinrich Boll Foundation also organised workshops in Kaduna after the outbreak of the Sharia crises in that area. They have programmes that encourage partnership across the religious divide by supporting economic empowerment activities of inter-religious women's groups in conflict-torn communities. Apart from their peace initiatives, they have also participated as resource persons in different parts of the Northern region, building a network of religions to achieve peace. They were also facilitators on forgiveness and reconciliation between and among religious groups.

Inter-religious dialogue stresses the need for reciprocal interactions and influences religions, spiritual and humanistic traditions. It also fosters mutual respect. Learning the art of dialogue is both a personal and social process. Developing one's skills and capacity for dialogue implies a willingness to be open while retaining one's critical judgment. For instance, the Jamaâ'atu Nasril Islam and the Christian Association of Nigeria demonstrate that enlightened action by faith-based NGOs can contribute to inter-religious reconciliation in places where religion is a source of conflict. These faith-based organisations can bridge religious divisions, diminish the level of animosity, and focus attention on the shared responsibility to rebuild society (Mason and Talbot 2000; Smock 2007).

The International Peace League (IPL) brought the diverse muslim and christian student population together to view a film produced by the Nigerian-based Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) and open discussion on the value of inter-religious dialogue. Engaging youth has been particularly important to the IMC and IPL, since aspiring politicians often use unemployed and uneducated youth to foment inter-religious strife for political gain. The IPL plans to replicate the student event at three more educational institutions in Nigeria with the aim of reaching over 1000 students. The Heinrich Boll Foundation supports civil society organisations engaged in inter-religious dialogue, mediation, and resolution in Kaduna, Plateau, Bauchi and Adamawa States. The presentation could not have come at a better time as the University of Jos and Plateau State in general have seen an increase in early warning

signs of potential conflict. The cooperation between Heinrich Boll Foundation and the various inter-faith religious organisations is now evolving to support training seminars for the christian and muslim students. They also organise different events for youth to engage in inter-religious dialogue to facilitate a peaceful coexistence. It should be emphasised that inter-religious organisation such as the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) and Conflict Management Stakeholders Network have set out all the necessary machinery to perfect the use of an early warning mechanism that alerts the community to trouble signs and to know how to control a contentious situation before it spreads. The mechanism includes improved connections between government security officers, community leaders and others involved in calming a violent situation. They also work to achieve signed peace agreements between prominent religious leaders and state or local government. The effort includes working with violent youths through christian and islamic teachings that emphasise forgiveness and non-violence.

It should also be noted that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) action in the area of inter-religious dialogue seeks to inform and encourage open exchange and interaction between individuals and among groups of different cultural and religious backgrounds, with a view to creating new frameworks for harmonious co-existence and generating new responses to recognised mutual interests and common needs (UNESCO, Final Declaration 2003). Since the outbreak of religious crises in Kafachan, Kaduna state in 1992, there is a growing religious enlightenment and social education that gives recognition to inter-religious dialogue and this has contributed proactively to peace and stability, especially in the Northern part of the country. Religious leaders also played a key role in reinforcing within their communities the precepts of dialogue among cultures and peoples, in particular a broadly agreed body of shared religious and ethical values. Several major encounters have been organised under the aegis of UNESCO such as the 'International Congress of Cultures in West Africa', held in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2003, and 'Religion in Peace and Conflict: Responding to Militancy and Terrorism', in Melbourne, Australia (April 2005). These meetings called upon religious leaders to work together for common goals such as development, inter-religious mediation and reconciliation, social justice and poverty alleviation. They were also invited to advocate these goals in the social and political arena. Alongside high-level meetings, there is also a need to involve the population at the forefront of intra- and inter-religious conflicts. Dialogue becomes a tool for mediation in poor urban areas, together with the training of trainers in inter-religious mediation, the production of educational materials and specific seminars for faith-based women's associations.

To get a better grasp of what inter-faith religions organisations could do, to help promote religious harmony one could start by investigating systematically which positive or negative roles they play now. Consequently, suggestions would be made about how to reduce the negative and strengthen the positive impact. Religious organisations can act as conflicting parties, as bystanders, as peace-makers and peace builders. Religious actors should abstain from any cultural and structural violence within their respective organisations and handle inter-religious or denominational conflict in a non-violent and constructive way. This would imply several practical steps, such as a verifiable agreement not to use or threaten violence to settle religious disputes. Very important is the creation of an environment where a genuine inter-religious negotiation is possible. Extremist rhetoric flourishes best in an environment not conductive to rational deliberation. Needless to say, extremist rhetoric is very difficult to maintain in a discursive environment in which positions taken or accusations made can be challenged directly by the disputing religious organisations. Without a change in the environments of public discourse within and between religious organisations, demagogy and rhetorical intolerance will prevail (Weigel 1991; Williamson 1992; Takaya 1992).

Conclusion

Inter-religious based organisations have a major impact on inter-religious and communal conflicts. The Nigerian state cannot survive without trust and religious tolerance. Religions play a major role, as parties in violent conflicts, as passive bystanders, and as active peace-makers and peace-builders. Religions have a major responsibility in creating a constructive conflict culture. They will have to end conflicts fuelled by religion, stop being passive bystanders, and organise themselves to provide more effective peace services. Religions and religious organisations have an untapped and under-used integrative power potential. To assess this potential and to understand which factors enhance or inhibit joint peace ventures between the muslims and christian religions is an urgent research challenge.

In each development and peace building context, questions can be posed with regard to religion. In secular states such as Nigeria this becomes even more urgent and concrete, since religions, religious institutions and organisations are often relevant players in the political game play at the national, state and local levels, where the government is often failing to resume its responsibilities. Based on their legacy of invoking social trust, religious agents are often the only ones capable of securing some social cohesion. Religion typically affects all of these efforts, whether as a constructive force or as a source of concern.

With respect to the argument in this paper, inter-religious dialogue is important for a peaceful Nigerian state. We also call on inter-faith religious organisations to intensify their inter-religious dialogue based on the principles of enhancing multi-religious networking, trust-building, collaborating and promoting the understanding of religious differences. We call on all religious people in different parts of the country to enter into the most important dialogue at all levels, in the local community, in families and workplaces with confidence and courage. The Nigerian government in conjunction with the major inter-religious faith based organisations should work to prevent conflicts, mediate and promote tolerance and understanding among warring parties, support healing and reconciliation, and work together in a holistic way to address the root causes of religious conflict in the country. They should also create frameworks within which religious tolerance and inter-religious dialogue based on concrete strategies can prevent the resort to terrorism. The government should further strengthen the existing inter-religious dialogue to address the overall objective of promoting religious tolerance, and therefore extend the scope of the dialogue and increase the number of stakeholders in the process. Such initiatives must link local dialogues to the national scene so that signs of trouble are detected early and resolved before violence breaks out. Such dialogue would further create better understanding and accommodation. It must include women and members of civil society so that their concerns are also heard. Efforts to make the Nigerian state safe from religious conflicts should be high on the socio-political agenda of the federal government and various inter-religious mediation groups.

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'Ties that Bind and Differences that Divide': Exploring the Resurgence of Ethno-Cultural Identity in Nigeria

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Abstract

This article investigates the resurgence of ethno-cultural identity in contemporary Nigeria. The article shows that contestations associated with ethno-cultural identity are not recent, but date back to the creation of the modern state called Nigeria. The article also demonstrates how colonialism fostered various social, economic and political problems in Nigeria and highlights the manner in which the post-colonial political class has fed on the far-reaching effects of colonialism to complicate intergroup relations in the country. The study reveals that Nigeria's return to civil rule on 29 May 1999, opened the space for the political class to exploit the resurgence of ethnicity and religion in a way capable of jeopardising the corporate existence of the country, especially in the current phase of democratisation. In conclusion, it proffers possible recommendations towards ameliorating the enormous challenges arising from the mismanagement of ethno-cultural identity in Nigeria.

Résumé

Les identités ethnoculturelles au Nigeria continuent d'être une question hautement controversée à cette époque contemporaine. Ces identités qui ont gagné en puissance pendant l'ère coloniale, ont servi à exécuter la politique du « diviser pour régner ». Cette situation a plongé le Nigeria dans un dilemme social et politique dans l'ère postcoloniale. Après l'indépendance, précisément en 1966, le pays a basculé dans une guerre civile (1967-1970), qui a eu des effets dévastateurs sur les différents groupes ethniques et religieux au Nigeria. Après des décennies de régime militaire, la démocratie dont le retour date du 29 mai 1999, a ouvert la voie à la résurgence des anciens clivages ethniques et identités religieuses. Cette situation a exacerbé les différences au sein et hors des groupes et fertilisé les tendances à la violence et posé des défis

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ethnico-religieux de l'existence même du Nigeria. Cet article soutient que, la manipulation des identités de groupe par l'élite est la cause de la résurgence de l'ethnoculturalisme envahissant dans la phase actuelle de démocratisation au Nigeria. Cet article conclut que la confiance des gens est rétablie grâce à l'engagement sincère de la responsabilité, la probité et la réactivité de leurs préoccupations, quel que soit leur identité ethnoculturelle.

Introduction: Framing the problem

Nigeria with so many ethnic, religious and sectional groups paints the picture of a potentially vulnerable society to conflicts.

– Shettima, Kashim, 'North as Hotbed for Conflicts', *National Trail Newspaper*, Monday 17-Sunday 23, December 2012, p. 56.

The real and lasting victories are those of peace, and not of war.
– Budha

The resurgence of old boundaries of ethnicity and religion has become a major challenge in many countries across the world. The situation in Africa is particularly alarming and it is ravaging the internal stability of many countries, especially in sub-saharan Africa. The enormity of ethnic and religious crises faced by Nigeria in the current phase of democratisation is the outcome of the elite's manipulation of ethnic and religious identity (Usman 1987). Ethnic and religious contestations have produced antagonistic social and political relationships among various ethno-cultural groups which have turned out violently in contemporary times in Nigeria. Suffice it to say, however, that the dynamics of ethnic and religious identity and the way they manifest violently is not peculiar to Nigeria, but is also evident internationally. Jega (1996:89) and Falola (2004) associate the problems of ethnicity and religion to the historical configuration of the country, the nature of the political class and the manner in which they struggle. It is also associated with the exclusionary nature of the politics of ethnic and religious identity among different groups in the country.

Democracy in Africa evolved out of the need to provide an environment for profitable intergroup relations in a society marked by ethnic plurality. Unfortunately, this is not the case in many democracies on the continent because those countries that have embraced it did so without the readiness to adhere to democratic principles. In most circumstances, the failure to respect and adhere to democratic principles is responsible for the crisis Africa is experiencing in this 21st century. The missing link in Africa's democracy is that political elites have failed to appreciate that democracy is the outcome of the struggles by citizens for a better life, and that, it is the social contract

they entered into with the citizens that construed their elections unto the power rostrums. In this case, the citizens act indirectly through their elected representatives. The elected representatives, therefore are expected to be responsive and accountable to their respective constituencies and ultimately, to their own countries (Cattell and Sisson 1984; Osaghae 1992; Nnoli 1994; Ake 1994, 1996). Unfortunately, government failures characterised by horizontal and vertical inequalities in countries across Africa have produced 'democratic paralyses' (Chirot 1977:224). Democratic paralysis manifests in the form of grave consequences and emboldened sentimental ties along ethno-cultural identity to starve the state of the required loyalty (Ibrahim 1995; Ekeh 2004).

The return to democratic rule in Nigeria rekindled people's aspiration for improved standard of living, but their aspirations were soon suppressed by parochial ethno-cultural and religious identities. There are no words to adequately describe and demonstrate the ethno-cultural challenges to democracy in Africa in contemporary times. Currently, the continent is experiencing political challenges enhanced by institutional decay and horizontal inequalities among different ethno-cultural groups in various countries. The result of the recent Arab spring and other related conflicts in africa reflect critical democratic deficits (Cillier 2004).

In Nigeria, the rebirth of democracy opened the space for various dynamics of social and political crises in that various ethnic and religious militias emerged to seek for social and political space and relevance, individual and collective rights, as well as ethnic and social equality among others. This work explores the resurgence of ethno-cultural identity in Nigeria in a democratic environment. The work analyses the reasons for their resurgence and proliferation, and provides suggestions on how they can be positively managed and harnessed.

Ethnicity, Religion and Democracy

Ethno-cultural resurgence is a product of ethnic group group relation, which is rooted in the dynamics of identity politics. Suffice it to say that ethno-cultural identity is a social construct designed by human communities to understand internal dynamics of social relations with other groups. Ethno-cultural group identity revolves around organised questions, discourse and movement of identities based on ethnic, religious, social, cultural and national characterisation of groups within a geographical boundary (Du Plessis 2001). The concern here is the ethnic group. Weber (1968:389) defined ethnic group as 'primarily, the political community ... that inspires the belief in common identity' (Giddens 1971). Accordingly, an ethnic group can be defined as

people who conceive of themselves as being of a kind, united by emotional bonds and concerned with the preservation of their type with few of them speaking divergent languages but largely sharing the same culture and tradition (Shibutani and Kwan 1965:47). These definitions are in tandem with Ake's (1993) definition of ethnic group, which is '…a descent-based group, a segmentary hierarchy with boundaries defined by standards of exclusion and inclusion which are objective and subjective'.

From Weber (1968) and Shibutani and Kwan's (1965) definitions, two observations can be made. The first is people's self-identification to one ethnic group or the other. The criteria for determining one's self-identification with a group include: (a) unique cultural traits such as language, clothing, and religious practices (b) a sense of community (c) a feeling of ethnocentrism (d) ascribed membership from birth, and (e) territoriality or the tendency to occupy a distinct geographical area by choice and/or for self-protection' (Kendall 2007:311-313; Du Plessis 2001). The second observation can be located within the given characteristics, cultural traits or outlooks which set an ethnic group apart from other ethnic groups. At this point, the individual and the group find expression within these identity traits to assert social, economic and political inclusion in the larger multi-ethnic society (Giddens 1971). Emphasis here is on the use of ethnic consciousness to define in-group and out-group relations (Osaghae 1994), and could be situated within the context of the culture of a people.

The former gives an objective view of an ethnic group as a group unified by shared cultural and traditional ties. This implies that, ethnic group is an 'object' because it possesses some primordial pedigree. The latter definition is a subjective view about ethnic group, because it sees it as an identity group, which creates ethnic consciousness and emotion to promote social, economic and political struggles for inclusion in the state At this point, ethnic group has been transformed into 'ethnic group for itself' (Nnoli 2008). Ethnic group at this level becomes a subjective force because of the sentiments of loyalty and consciousness it generates among members of the same ethic group.

Ethnicity here assumes the character of group identity. Identity, according to Agbu and Lenshie (2010:59), is a given characteristic which differentiates an individual or a group from others. It produces identity politics. Identity politics is a by-product of primordial sentiments and manipulations by the elite in a multi ethnic society. Ethnicity is a product of identity. The first is built on the concept of group politics while the latter is constructed on the basis of elite politics. At group level, Jega (2000) argues that identity goes beyond individuality and self-awareness to identification with and commitment to certain values and belief systems in a social construct. This could often lead to group demand for recognition and inclusion in the state based politics

or even demand for self-government. Nnoli (1978) cited in Sithole (1994:152-165) points out that ethnicity exists only within a political society consisting of diverse ethnic groups; it is characterised by a common consciousness of belonging to one in relation to other relevant groups. It tends to be exclusive, and is often characterised by social relations, which tend to accept or reject one's identification or belonging based on linguistic-cultural grounds, and lastly, it is often characterised by conflicting relations.

From the foregoing, it implies that ethnicity reinforces ethno- cultural sentiment and tends to create the tendency for conflict generation and relations. Ethno-cultural sentiments may be 'ethnocentric' when it is attitudinally expressed (Nnoli 2008). It may also be destructive when it transforms into instrument necessitating intergroup competition for resources (Nnoli 1994:21). In plural societies, ethnic identity formations inform the struggle by both dominant and oppressed groups for greater autonomy, protection of rights and inclusion in the statecraft (Osunubi and Osunubi 2006:104).

Osaghae (1994:135-151) concurred that ethnicity is usually intense in countries where groups are many, and have unequal sizes, especially where they are unequally developed. In countries, namely Nigeria and Uganda, where groups have unequal sizes and access to resources and power, because of the recursive nature of regional, religious, class and ethnic forces make ethnicity intense. These forces stimulate, articulate and direct ethnic feelings against the state and its ramification for failure to provide the people with equitable means of livelihood. This means that the tense nature of ethnicity in divided countries like Nigeria produces 'ethnocentrism' or 'ethnic nationalism' which supersede national identity (Osaghae 1986; Jorklund 1987; Snyder 1993:12; Ekeh 2004:23).

Bangura (2006) buttresses the reasons for the manifestation of ethnocentrism when he stated that:

> 'ethnicity affects the identities of states, access to institutions, and the confidence different sections of society may have in government. Inequalities arising from the structure of opportunities and the way the public sector is governed are often a source of tension as individuals use group solidarity to maintain or alter advantages'. This means that ethnicity has the tendencies of creating ethnic animosity and conflicts. Ake (1993) cited Lancaster (1991:158) to corroborate that 'the conflicts, even violently could erupt should ethnicity become a dominant or leading factor in the struggle for power....'

Apart from ethnicity, religion is also a uniting force and a disintegrating force among and between groups of people. Cosmologically, religion is an integral part of one's ethnic identification. It is equally distinctive from ethnicity. Ethnicity deals with the aspect of material culture, religion deals with spiritual

culture. Religion is a powerful force which constantly negotiates vertical and horizontal relationships in the society. The vertical relationship is the personal/private domain of people. It is transcendental, and hence it relates to the spiritual and supernatural, which naturally guides people and control their actions and inactions (Lenshie and Johnson 2012).

Horizontally, religion is concerned with relationship between humans. It is an integral aspect of ethnicity which directs and redirects human social relations.

According to Emile Durkheim, religion is 'a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community' (Otite and Ogionwo 2006). Religion, importantly, determines intergroup relations and creates in-group and out-group phenomenon among religious adherents. In the process of intergroup relations, religion often leads to restiveness and violence.

Stephen (1999) cited Paul Gifford thus:

> Religion provides definition, principles of judgement and criteria of perception. It offers reading of the world, of history, of justice and of ultimate truth. Religion limits or increases the conceptual tools available, or channels them, and withdraws certain issues from inquiry. It inculcates a particular way of perceiving, expressing and responding to reality. Religion can legitimize new aspirations, new relations and a new social order. Every religion involves struggles to conquer, monopolize or transform the systemic structures which order reality.

From the foregoing, we may infer that, as religion builds internal solidarity within a group of adherents, it generates the tendency of legitimising evil through the use of both transcendental and mundane myths to assert their religious world views above other religions. It can also increase the tendency of intolerance and aggressiveness and the willingness to use violence against opposing religion(s) (Haynes 1999). It is these tendencies that give birth to the rise of fundamentalism, which according to Nsirim-Worlu (2009) is an element of the superstructure influenced by the substructure. Central to this influence is the role of the elites or the ruling class to construct an ideological expression of its outlook on the lives of the people in order to bring the masses under subservience.

Religion also finds appeal among groups of people who Karl Marx consider as subscribing to religion in order to pacify their suffering (Nsirim-Worlu 2009). Religion, therefore, can be summed up as a weapon employed by the elites, both governing and non-governing elites, to control and direct political, economic and social actions. Often, these actions are influential,

confrontational and/or violent in nature. The myth use is the invocation of consciousness among a religious group to perceive adherents of other religions as infidels who should not be tolerated. The non-permissive approach religion has to prevent coexistence of adherents within the same geopolitical region is at the root of ethno-cultural conflicts across the world, particularly in developing countries in Africa and the Middle East. In most cases, the problems motivating conflicts are usually political but often they find expression in religious interpretations. Religion is always used to create the dividing line of intergroup relations (Lenshie and Johnson 2012).

Reflecting on the multicultural nature of most countries around the world, the situation reveals that the only system in modern times which guarantees and celebrates pluralism is democracy. Democracy is a system of government that socially empowers the people. It is driven by the people and for the people (Chatuverdi 2006:82). It has the capacity to allow widespread participation of citizens in statecraft through the competition and co-operation of their elected representatives (Ake 1996). When government fails in the task of governance, the tendency for ethno-cultural resurgence of identity becomes imminent.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 ushered in the era of western cultural hegemony accompanied by widespread democracy across the world (Huntington 1996b). For Diamond and Plattner (1996), it was an era of global resurgence to democracy. On the contrary, for Huntington (1996b) it was going to usher in the era of clash of civilisation and the remaking of the new world order. Huntington's thesis points to ethnicity, and most importantly, religion, as decisive factors in intergroup relations across the world in the post-Cold War era. With global resurgence to democracy, particularly across Africa countries opened the space for political pluralism, a process that produced the environment for competitive political interactions and social relations which underpinned intergovernmental relations vis-à-vis ethno-cultural group interests within the political system.

There is no doubt that ethno-cultural resurgence of identity today is provoked by the struggles for self-preservation and survival in the new world order. Ethno-cultural resurgence of identity throughout Africa can be traced to the emergence of political tribalism. Political tribalism can be conceived as a practice constructed not on the basis of tribal grouping or ethnic identity but politics (Kerr 1997). It informs the practice that tends to exalt one's ethnic identity not for itself but to achieve certain goals or objectives in the political bargaining process within the state. Achieving the objectives for which political tribalism is motivated, certain nexus of identity affinities such as common historical past, race, religion, culture, territory, whether actual or perceived have to be aggravated.

Political tribalism also involves some clandestine practices such as hostility, confrontation, domination, suppression, exclusion and xenophobia, used as means of protecting, projecting and expanding the space of one's ethno-cultural identity. Political tribalism demands unwavering support for a political party by persons within a tribal area or they are made to suffer the consequences for failing to support the party. Political tribalism is the antithesis of constitutional democracy, with its freedom of association and incidentally, the right of the citizen at will to join or support the party of choice (Kerr 1997). Bujra's (2002) comparative analogy of the dynamics of conflicts of some selected countries in Africa reveals that ethno-cultural identity is a major tool used by politicians to aggravate and mobilise ordinary people – ethnic and/or religious groups to kill and be killed.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

This paper adopts group and elite theories to approach and analyse the resurgence of ethno-cultural identity in Nigeria. The rationale for choosing these theories is informed by the dynamics of ethno-cultural resurgence of identity in Nigeria, on the one hand, as a function of '…a complex process of group bargaining and interaction that ensures that the views and interests of a large number of groups are taken into account' (Heywood 2007:297), and on the other, as the elites constitute the central force that motivates, negotiates, directs and channels group behaviour towards achieving socio-economic and political goals in any plural society (Varma 1975). The group theory originated from Arthur (Heywood 2007:297). Some notable group theorists include Robert Dahl, Grant McConnell, Theodora Lewi and Oran Young among others. Fundamental to group theory is that, group reflects on the political and social dynamics of democracy, which inherently is characterised by ethnic and religious pluralism.

Bentley defines group as 'a certain portion of the men[women] of a society, taken, however, not as a physical mass cut off from other masses of men[women], but as a mass [of] activity, which does not preclude the men[women] who participate in it from participating likewise in many other group activities' (Varma 1975:162-163). In his discourse of group asymmetry, Horowitz argued that: 'Group claims are not equal. Some groups seek domination, not the mere avoidance of it. Some seek to exclude others from the polity although, and some seek merely to be included on equal terms'.

It is these interrelated but also separate claims that give room for conflicting relations, which is because 'political inclusion and exclusion have an area of mutual incompatibility' (Horowitz 1985:196). Accordingly, Horowitz further buttressed that the intensity of group conflicts is dependent on the strength of group claims, for example, to both tangible and intangible resources within

the state. In making its claims, a group does not necessarily seek for absolute value but a value determined by the extent to which it reduces another group's share (Horowitz 1985:196) The claims could be ethnically or religiously driven, but central to all, is that the '…claims to priority or exclusion are supported by appeals to moral principles, invoked to justify departures from strict equality' (Horowitz 1985:201). To the extent to which it takes this form, as it is in Nigeria, there are always forces actively pushing for such claims. This is because group relations in every society are constructed ostensibly based on ethnic blocs and religious blocs, to pursue common or variegated interests which are often confrontational, conflicting and eventually, end in violence.

In Nigeria, the problem with ethno-cultural resurgence lies between group claims to dominion and equality. It becomes conflicting when group demands transverse issues of resources, power and security, or when there are mutual fears of domination of a group by another within the same geo-polity. The activities of various ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria can best be interpreted in this context. But, every group does not in any way emerge to pose challenges to the system without a rallying ideological base and those responsible for crusading and proselytising such ideological belief systems. This is because no group in itself can create any social action, that is capable of transcending into conflicts for itself, except mobilised by collective forces embedded in it. This force is one or more shared attitudes informed by certain affinities which they claim to make demands upon other groups (Varma 1975).

Often, in every group, whether ethnic, religious, political, economic or ideological, there are always a certain group within the group that create the bases for group solidarity and action. They are centrally the motivator of collective behaviour among group membership, directed at other groups to rectify these imbalances. This group are the elites. They are a small minority group, who by their status are leaders within the group. The concept of elites generates from the political thinking of theorists like Vilferado Pareto, Roberto Michel, Gaetano Mosca and Ortega Gasset among others. The elite are a minority group that possesses social and political power over the larger majority in the society. The majority consist of the masses, who, though have influence over the minorities but because of their gullibility, are incapable of self government. On the other hand, elites are successful people who rise to the top in every occupation and stratum of society (Varma 1975:144-145; Mahajan 1988). Pareto in his discourse on elites identified basically two types of elites belonging to higher stratum and the lower stratum of the society. At the higher stratum, these are the *governing elites* and the *non-governing elites*, whereas at the lower stratum are the *non-elites*. In the works of

Gaetano Mosca, elite is the class that rule no matter what form of government, and he referred to them as *oligarchy*. Outside this class lies the class that is ruled, which are the masses. For Roberto Michel, the oligarchs are predestined to rule the majority, who are predestined to submit to the dominion of a small minority. The oligarchs achieve this objective through the use of oratory power, persuasion, playing upon sentiments in order to fool the masses (Varma 11975; Mahajan 1988).

Varma (1975) cited C. Wright Mills as classifying the elites as follows: the political elites, religious elites, traditional elites, economic elites and the military elites. These elites must not necessarily be integrative, but have common objectives, each within the sphere of their operation. They have greater role in creating and determining the peaceful or conflicting engagements among various groups in the society. No matter what type of political system, whether religious theocratic state or democratic state or otherwise, they exist with various social and political dynamics, and pattern of primitive accumulation of resources, influence and power in the society does not change diametrically. What obtains in every society is the circling of elites. This takes the form of 'the old elites going out of being and the new elites coming into being' through recruitment and status progression, but before this is done, the old elites infest the new breed elites domineering ideals and objectives which they should pursue. In the process, intra-class struggle emerges and manifest virulently in the society. The ruled, in other words, the masses become victims of manipulation and channel their energies towards achieving some specific elitist goals. This is what constitutes the manipulation of the *mass mind* (Varma 1975; Mahajan 1988).

To understand the manifest dynamics of ethno-cultural resurgence in Nigeria, both the group and the elites must be understudied. The implication is that politics and governance in Nigeria cannot be understood from one standpoint, but through an integrated study of the various social forces within the Nigerian space. Both the elites and the masses are integrated within Nigeria, but their interests diverge at the moment of decision. At the activation of mass social action defined along ethnic and/or religious identities in Nigeria, the masses stand to suffer whereas the elite stands to gain from the creation of new opportunities derived from the mass action (Horowitz 1985:238). The various manifestations of virulence of identities in Nigeria, which largely are ethnic and religiously motivated and directed are in the real sense elitist struggles to rectify imbalance or set-off the balance in the society. The victims of their power game are the mass uneducated and gullible people, who, through transcendental and mundane mythology have come under mystification, and are used as expendables to satisfy elite interests and claims

in the competitive environment of the society. Some of the factors that become instrumental include group affinities, affiliations and solidarity, because without these, the elites igniting communitarian nationalism becomes difficult and as such will not achieve their purported objectives. The thrush here is to within this context study the trend in the virulence of ethno-cultural identity resurgence in Nigeria.

Evolution, Continuity and Change in the Trends of Ethno-Cultural Identity in Nigeria

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic state which emerged from the rubbles of colonial domination, inhabited by people distinguished by geography, ethnic and cultural outlooks (Post and Vickers 1973). Nigeria, according to Akpan (1978), is 'an accidental foundation by Lugard', necessitated by European adventurism (Odofin 2003a). In Nigeria, colonialism started through a gradual process of trade monopoly and later, adopted military superiority, divide and rule system, and outright conquest of hitherto, independent ethnic communities (Osaghae 2002). Alavi (1972) posits that they were spontaneously conscripted and renegotiated into forming the current state call 'Nigeria'. This making brought ethnic groups in Nigeria into permanent socio-economic and political intercourse.

The colonialists in the task of colonial administration relied on local power structures to execute their colonising mission, since they could not do as their disposition would have permitted them. During the colonial and the post colonial era, various competing centres emerged to compete for political space at regional and national levels. In Nigeria, the three major ethnic groups, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, exploited this advantage to lord themselves over other ethnic nationalities (Ayohai 2010). It is the truism that ethnic nationality differences in Nigeria were manipulated so that the people would see one another as potential enemies and to prevent them from contesting colonial profligacy (Rodney 1972).

With these, the colonialists sustained the traditional institutions of some ethnic nationalities while destroying traditional institutions of other ethnic groups, or at best, ensuring that they were subservient (HSRC Review, 6(1), March, 2008). In this wise, some cultural structures, for example, Islamic institutions and practices in the northern Nigeria were allowed to flourish uninterrupted, whereas in southern Nigeria and the Middle-Belt areas, the cultures and traditions of people, who the colonialists christened as pagans were rendered barbaric. In no circumstance were they given cultural opportunity to flourish within the Nigerian space. Ekeh (1975:75) further buttressed this assertion thus:

> Missionaries openly told Africans [Nigerians inclusive] that ancestors-worship was bad and they should cut themselves loose from their 'evil' past and embrace the present in the new symbolisms of christianity and western culture. Indeed, Africans were virtually told that the colonisers and missionaries came to save them, sometimes in spite of themselves, from their past.

During this period of colonisation, christian missionaries were allowed to christianise these areas identified above in the name of protecting the pagans from Islamic influence (Adebisi 1980). While doing that they created a head on collision between christianity and islam (Fafunwa 1974:100). Christianisation went side by side with the introduction of western education in the south, while the north was denied the privilege until 1922, when the Katsina College was established to build northern aristocratic intelligentsia (Sa'ad 1980; Ubah 1985; Kalu 1985; Osaghae 1998; Okwori 2003). In this vein, the colonialists created a double-fold problem of regional imbalances. They established tyranny of population in favour of northern Nigeria and educational headstand in favour of southern Nigeria (Odofin 2003a; Ikime 2006; Banigo 2008). Ekeh (1975:99) further argued that colonialism created two publics – the realm of primordial public, which largely is conditioned by ethno-cultural ties, and the civic public, which locates its value within the realm of westernisation. Within the primordial public, it further created dichotomy between the native (Africans, who are without western education) and the westernised (Africans, who have received western education).

Long after the colonialists departure, the elites due to their inability to figure out the future of governance in Nigeria, re-created the colonial strategy of 'divide and rule system' in which case, the Nigerian power elites relied on regional differences to galvanise support for their political organisation. Subsequently, the strategy threw the country into tumultuous confusion that culminated in a civil war. Afterwards, attempts to reconstruct the political and social infrastructures were never immune from some parochial considerations (Falola 2004). Owing to the growing frustration of adopting the colonial strategy of *divide and rule*, the Nigerian state settled for democratisation and multi-party system to integrate various interests, reminiscent of the United States of American model. This political experiment persisted but was infected by the virus of ethno-cultural identity resurgence. This malaise manifested in different forms, giving rise to first and foremost, all the political parties drawing support basically from ethnic and religious backgrounds.

The intensity of these identity differences ran-down the Second Republic, but insurgency became intensified with various ethnic and religious identity

groups such as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in the South-South, Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the south-east, Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC) and Afenifere in the south-west, The Middle-Belt Congress (MBC) in the north central and Arewa Consultative Forum and in the north among others, playing out to contest for social justice, human rights and participation with varied impacts on the corporate existence of the Nigerian state. The activities of the various identity groups threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria and eventually ushered in another period of military rule. The rebirth of democracy in 1999 to serve as a panacea to address these problems still leaves so much to be desired. These problems became heightened as the concept of rotational presidency emerged to legitimise and justify the identity criteria in our national ethos. Expectedly, the breach or brute-rape of this unconstitutional understanding provoked yet another round of identity politics, which basically is now playing out along ethnic and religious lines to some extent. The question is: could it be that democracy evolved on a wrong and feeble footing in Nigeria? This is where interrogating ethno-cultural resurgence of identity, understanding its foundation and the dynamics of such diversities and their complex social interconnections with violence in Nigeria is important.

Post-Colonialism, Ethno-Cultural Manipulation and Identity Resurgence

The post-colonial character of ethnic and religious diversity in Nigeria finds sufficient reflection in Nwabueze's (1993) statement that, Africans were not under the same ethnic and cultural enclaves. They were traditional and primitive but the colonialists agglomerated them and imposed new states and systems that were both structurally and systemically different. This gave birth to the emergence of modern states in Africa which were directed at meeting new ends. At independence it led to the emergence of ethno-cultural gladiators to struggle for state power and accumulation of resources. The modern state soon became supervening, cabalistic and prebendal, in the process of elites class struggles and the manipulation and resurgence of ethno-cultural identity heightened (Jega 1996:96; Soyinka 2009; Joseph 1986). In this circumstance, the Nigerian experience was not an exception.

At independence, the Westminster model was imposed on Nigeria. The evolution of democracy was not organically developed from below rather it was constructed and constitutionally foisted on the Nigerian educated elites and the uneducated natives. Accordingly, the inability of the Nigerian political class to arrive at a consensus on the political system to adopt for Nigeria prompted the vertical adoption of the Westminster tailored after the country's

erstwhile colonialists. This systemic arrangement lends credence to various contestations and the rise of ethno-cultural identities which regionally was exploited to assert the elites' political influence over state power (Falola, 2004:159; Nzongola-Ntalaja 2006; Jega 1996). This was engendered because at independence, Nigerians were made to see themselves as divergent ethnic nationalities with different interests and competing centres of powers for easy manipulation and mobilisation of ethno-cultural identities. Recapping the circumstance, Olukoshi and Agbu (1996:77) argue that:

> …by 1960 when Nigeria attained independence, it did so in a context in which there were influential and competing centres of power whose perception of one another and of national matters was increasingly coloured by ethnic, regional and religious considerations as the struggles for access to and control of resources intensified.

Affirming the above assertion, Ayam (2003) posits:

> With independence, the pattern of party politics and participation did not alter the north-south divides. Rather, this pattern was reinforced by the few enlightened elites in whose interest it was to further polarise the regional, religious and political interest to the detriment of the ordinary Nigerian citizen.

This political character was manifested in their respective pre-independence party manifestoes. To buttress this point, Nnoli (1978) stated that:

> …election manifestoes of the nationalist movements and parties led by these classes' show an overwhelming emphasis on relation of distribution rather than those of production and on the super structures of society such as the principles of social and political interaction rather than the infrastructure, the relation of production.

This explains why Nigeria is perceived as a colonial contrivance, which in the post-colonial era instead of generating the needed internal cohesion and solidarity, elevated ethno-cultural identities to the level of a monster. Ethno-cultural identities preceded national identity and it reflected in the organisation of various political parties of the First Republic and the Second Republic. For example, the Action Group (AG) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo emerged from a pan-Yoruba association, the *Egbe Omo O'odua,* to promote and project their interests. In the north, the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) led by Sir Ahmadu Bello emerged from the *Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa* (JMA) to enhance the competitiveness of the Aristocrats of Hausa-Fulani. To this end, as noble and nationalistic as the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) led by Sir Nnamdi Azikiwe was, it soon degenerated to a pan-Igbo political party to promote the interests of the Igbo people on the Nigerian political landscape.

The NPC in northern Nigeria however, emasculated the radical *lumpen proletariat* political party, the Northern Element People's Union (NEPU. They also contended with any form of opposition to their political hegemony by manipulating the 'one north, one people, irrespective of tribe and religion' philosophy to capture state power and to consolidate its usage (Kazah-Toure 2003:27-28). It is demonstrable that as from the 1959 election onward, the NPC had landslide victory both at the central and regional level. The process of governance in northern Nigeria was to the exclusion of NEPU from the power equation. At the national level, AG was excluded, and between NPC and NCNC, power frictions ensued.

In the western region, the northern led government carved out the Mid-western region but denied same to christian dominated Middle-Belt, which have clamoured for self-autonomy since the 1940s (Dudley 1982; Iwara 2004:19-36). The agitation by christians of minority ethnic groups of northern Nigeria was motivated by *Islamaphobia* of the Hausa-Fulani muslims, through the instrumentalities of the northernisation policy which favoured the muslims to the exclusion of the christians, who no matter their educational status or merit, were not allowed to attain the upper rungs of the native authority in northern Nigeria (Okwori 2003). According to Horowitz (1985), during the period northernisation policy was introduced in 1959, there were virtually insignificant numbers of northerners in the upper rungs of the civil service. By 1965 the number of northerners in the upper echelon of the civil service had outnumbered the number of expatriates and southerners respectively. Kukah (1993) revealed that in the early parts of national independence, the northern aristocrats established *Jama'atul Nasir Islam* (JNI) to champion the course of Islam. With the northernisation policy, Islam became a major factor for the attainment of social, economic and political privileges. To achieve this prospect, the resort to *islamisation* of northern Nigeria was subtly carried out through what Okwori (2003) referred to as 'economic jihad'.

It suffices to state that christians utilised internal solidarity to establish the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) to counter virulent activities of the Hausa-Fulani muslims in northern Nigeria (Kukah 1993). The manner in which these religious umbrellas operated in Nigeria are to propagate and expand the teaching of Islam and christianity as well as developed based on the philosophy of Prophet Mohammed's Jihad and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even though, these personalities and their philosophies are entirely foreign to African and of course, Nigerians, within several periods employed communitarian nationalism as a tool to propagate their respective religious belief systems (Lenshie and Johnson 2012:43-53).

The various socio-political dynamic played out by the elites in the First Republic demonstrated that they were not concerned about the aspirations

of Nigerians. It could be recalled that the educated political class mobilised the uneducated majority of Nigerians and crystallised their consciousness towards political struggles for national independence, with the hope that national independence was going to transform into bumper political harvest of rights and freedom and social provisioning of means of livelihood (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2006). These political elites who emerged at independence jettisoned their aspirations. In fact, they were only concerned about capturing state power for primitive accumulation of resources. The post-colonial elites feeding on the colonial legacies of sectional fragmentation and confrontations, engaged in ethnic mobilisation expressed structurally in ethnic political parties to keep themselves in power (Anikpo 1985:45). Within this period, ethnic minorities in Nigeria intensified their struggles against perceived injustices meted out on them by ethnic majorities and this resulted to dozens of political violence and also led to military intervention of 1966 (Ademoyega 1981; Kurfi 1983).

The coup was perceived and misinterpreted as an Igbo coup motivated by pan-Igbo sentiment and nationalism, moreso as General Thomas Aguiyi Ironsi, an Igbo and the most senior military officer became the Head of State. On assumption of office, he immediately suspended the constitution and announced the transfer of the public service to the federal government. These changes angered the north because they feared southern domination in the Nigerian civil service. On 29 July 1966, some young military officers of northern extraction staged a countercoup and assassinated him. Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Yakubu Gowon, as the Chief of Staff and the most Senior Military Officer of northern extraction assumed the office of the Head of State. Ordinarily, Brigadier Ogundipe, a Yoruba and the most senior military officer, was supposed to be the Head of State after the assassination of Gen. Ironsi, but the command hierarchy was not followed. Gowon was in Britain and therefore, was not prepared to assume power at the time of the counter coup. Logams (2004:725) argues that:

> …late on the 31ˢᵗ July 1966 after northern soldiers had forced Brigadier Ogundipe to resign and had taken a ship to England.… Gowon finally made up his mind to assume the leadership of the nation and the Army in which the political nature of the soldiers he inherited was fundamental in shaping the decision on interests to preserve the federation of Nigeria

The failure to uphold the command hierarchy angered the late Lieutenant Colonel (and later, Major General) Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu against the Gowon led regime. The final stroke was public resentment, the declaration of the 'State of Biafra' and the civil war between 1967 and 1970 (Ademoyega 1981; Kurfi 1983).

The resentment of the late Lt. Col. Ojukwu was motivated by the failure of the 'military as a guarding angel of the state' to follow the laid down command hierarchy. With this he was cautioning against the military degenerating into an ethnic and religious institution. While he was insisting on the rules governing the military command, little did he realise that the Nigerian polity, including the military had already been politicised based on ethno-cultural identities. On the other hand, he was concerned about what he termed as *brutal annihilation of the Igbo race*, majority of them christians resident in northern Nigeria and was calling for justice to take its course. He was seeking to foster a Nigeria where citizens will be treated on equal bases irrespective of ethnicity, religious affiliation, and other primordial identities. The inability to secure social and political justice, following the brutal annihilation of the Igbo in some northern states, namely, Kano, Kaduna and so on, motivated Biafran secession (Uwechue 1971; Jorre 1972). Events unfolding everyday in Nigeria point to Ojukwu's concern for Nigeria and Nigerians to live to together in unity as a country. The polarisation of group identities along old ethnic and religious lines rather than creating a common sense of identity as Nigerians, explains why conflicts along these fault lines have persisted since the end of the civil war in 1970.

It is plausible to state that, Gowon assiduously worked to reintegrate the Igbo into Nigeria after the Civil War. Gowon's effort is presented by Poloma (2012) thus:

> General Gowon declared a general amnesty to all Biafran troops which exonerated them from prosecution for treason and other war crimes and offences (no victor, no vanquished). Many soldiers who fought on the Biafran side were reabsorbed into the federal armed forces after the war. An opportunistic review of the career progression of few of the reabsorbed officers, which remains a matter of public record today… General Gowon's compassion, mercy and kindness were not limited to fighting soldiers alone. He undertook the resettlement of displaced persons and rebuilding physical facilities in the east. Ex-Biafran civil servants, who were in the public service at the regional level, were permitted to report to their new states for re-absorption, while those at the federal level were also eligible for re-absorption into the federal service if they so desired. Each returning civil servant in the east received salary advance as "mercy pay" along with three weeks leave to enable them settle down after the war.

Before Gowon could consolidate on the gains of *no victor and no vanquished*, Brigadier Murtala Mohammed led a palace coup and toppled the government. Apart from conventional reasons for toppling the Gowon's regime found in most extant literatures, there are three critical issues to rethink that era. These are: (a) the circumstance in which Gowon was invited to assume the

position as the Head of State. One cannot but admit that he was invited to assume the position of the Head of State, though a northerner and as a christian, the secessionist Biafrans were going to see and accept him as one of their own, (b) In case Nigeria lost the battle to reintegrate the secessionist Biafrans, as the Head of State he was going to be blamed. Invariably, to avoid this unforeseen tendency, he was going to recruit many within the central region to execute the civil war. Of course, this could explain why the bulk of the military recruit during the interwar period came from the middle-Belt of Nigeria, and lastly, (c) the inability of Gowon to keep to his promise of transition to democracy and to curb inflation was used as an excuse to topple his regime. The period of Gowon's rule was marred by civil war and rehabilitation programmes, therefore he needed more time to consolidate the process of governance, unfortunately, five years later, precisely in 1975, his government was toppled. Explaining the rationale for the Murtala Mohammed led coup, Logams (2004:723) stated that:

> …when Gowon created states in Nigeria, Lt. Colonel Murtala Mohammed had lost the much of his support in the Army by the polarity of identities within the northern troops. This was largely so, because the Middle Belt officers and men in particular, were not prepared to countenance any challenge to the leadership of Gowon. Furthermore, many Middle Belt soldiers did not take it lightly when Murtala Mohammed unsuccessfully challenged the appointment of Joe Akahan, as Chief of Army Staff, seemingly based on the ideas that, since the Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Army, Gown, came from the Middle Belt areas, the Chief of Staff, ought to come from soldiers from Islamic Society in the North.

This grief among other issues motivated Murtala Mohammed to stage a coup which ended the Gowon regime. The coup was interpreted by Gowon's kinsmen as an injustice done to a man who sacrificed to subjugate and reintegrate the Biafrans into the Nigerian federation. Gowon's kinsmen interpreted the coup as motivated by selfish interests of core northern Hausa-Fulani military elites, who although participated in the civil war, waited to take over power after successful execution of the war.

According to Logams (2004:722-724), before the Nigerian Civil War in the northern region, ethnic and religious differences had already ensued, even within the army. The much feared Hausa-Fulani domination had led to the identity construct such as the *Yan Gida* (Home people) or Dan Gida (Home son) and the *Yan Arewa* (sons of northern Nigeria) or Dan Arewa (northern son). This was for them necessary as they sought to differentiate people from the denied Middle Belt areas from the larger northern Nigeria dominated by the Hausa-Fulani. In the army, despite the fact that Gowon was not ignorant that he was from the embattled Middle Belt areas, he accepted

the identity of *Dan Arewa* in other to maintain internal solidarity within the northern dominated. After the civil war, the internal identity factor contributed to Gowon's overthrow. The same factor explains why Maj. Bukar Suka Dimka led the reactionary coup that led to the death of Gen. Murtala Mohammed. Like the Chukwuma Nzeogwu led coup which was interpreted as the *Igbo coup*, the Dimka led countercoup was interpreted as the *Plateau coup* but every other coups that were carried by the northern Hausa-Fulani were reported as national coups (Lenshie and Agbo 2010).

General Olusegun Obasanjo, who later assumed power, quickly ushered in a transition to civil rule. The transition brought in Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), as president of the second republic (1979-1983). The democratic regime was overthrown by Major General Muhammadu Buhari in a bloodless coup. The military intervention, according to Nzeribe (1985) was another hope betrayed. Kukah (1993:103) pointed that, the Shagari administration was marked by high level of corruption, mismanagement, ethnic and religious manipulation as well as political exclusion tailored against ethnic minorities in northern Nigeria. He also negotiated Nigeria's controversial membership of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). During the Democratic Transition in 1982-1983, party politics followed ethno-religious lines and the politicians behaved like 'dogs let loose for vandalism'. Corruption became a household name of the democratic regime (Joseph 1987; Soyinka 1994). These, among other activities, were marked evidence that Shagari administration was going to be toppled. Major Genderal Mohammadu Buhari stepped in to stir up the treacherous waters by overthrowing the government. Microsoft Encarta Premium (2009) avers that:

> Buhari's government enjoyed widespread public support for its condemnation of economic mismanagement, of government corruption, and of the rigged 1983 elections. This support waned, however, as the government adopted a rigid programme of economic austerity and instituted repressive policies that included a sweeping campaign against 'indiscipline,' a prohibition against discussing the country's political future, and the detention of journalists and others critical of the government.

Gen. Buhari's perceived high-handedness rendered his regime unpopular. This explains why he was toppled by Major Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. With Babangida in power, people's hope was rekindled but the government in power was full of political deceptions. The regime set up the Political Bureau to consider the possibility of the transition to democracy. After 15 days of intense deliberation and inclusive resolution that power should be transferred to a democratically elected president in 1990, the government jettisoned such proposal and came up with new strategies to guide the transition to democracy,

which was faltered after the June 12, 1993 election (Osaghae 1994; Diamond, Kirk-Green and Oyediran eds. 1997).

The transition plan provided for a series of elections, beginning with the local government election in late 1987, the state gubernatorial election in 1990, and lastly, concluding with the election of the president and federal legislature in 1992. During this period, two political parties were formed. These were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC). He enlisted two of his friends, Chief Moshood Kolawale Abiola, a Yoruba and Alhaji Bashir Tofa, a Hausa-Fulani, both Muslims to contest on the platform of the respective political parties. Although, the transition programme was considered the most costly and longest in Nigeria's political history, most observers were of the view that it was free and fair. However, the transition ended in a fiasco as the election was annulled when it seemed apparent that Chief Moshood Abiola of the SDP was going to emerge winner. The action of the regime motivated violent protest in south-west Nigeria. Since both presidential candidates were Muslims, what played out in the crisis was regionalism. Islamic religious elites from northern Nigeria considered the failure of the transition as an act of God. To the contrary, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) insisted that the computation of figures of the election results be concluded and the results declared (Kukah 1993). For many Nigerians, the election was annulled because even though Abiola, was a muslim and a key player in the propagation of islam, he was not a Hausa-Fulani muslim from northern Nigeria (Aper 2008).

Some of the regime's economic policies also created a lot of tension. The government unilaterally decided to adopt the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) policy of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The policy brought untold hardship to the populace. It further exacerbated ethno-cultural resurgence of identities and pro-democracy protest across the country (Ibrahim 2003; Agbu 1996; Olukoshi 1995; Jega 2000). Again, the regime fostered the bidding to conclude Nigeria's membership to the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). This development brought about mutual mistrust and suspicion. This promoted religious confrontations between christians and muslims in northern Nigeria, especially in states such as Kaduna, Katsina, Kano and Gombe States as a response to this unpopular decision. By way of contesting the continuous favours which northern elites enjoyed under the regime, several attempts were made to topple the government; famous among the coups was the Gideon Okar led coup in 1995 (Diamond, Kirk-Green and Oyediran, eds. 1997).

Constant opposition from both national and international civil society organisations, compelled Gen. Babangida to "step-aside" from power. While doing that, he instituted an interim government led by Chief Ernest Shonekan,

as a measure to diffuse the political agitation from the people, especially from south-west Nigeria. In spite of the effort by the interim government to institute a new transition programme, with election to take place in February 1994, it failed to secure acceptance from the civil and the military domain. Gen. Sani Abacha therefore took advantage of the crisis and took over power in a palace coup (Ibrahim 1995; Elaigwu 2005). Gen. Abacha announced his willingness to hand over to a democratically elected government without any delay. He lifted the ban on party politics and six political parties were established to that effect. Of the six political parties, five of them adopted him as their consensus candidate. Chief Bola Ige christened the five political parties as Abacha's 'five leprous fingers' (Agbo and Lenshie 2010). Abacha's transition programme attracted political agitation from various pro-democratic fronts domestically and internationally. With this situation the regime lost credibility before the Nigerian public, more so that standard of living had worsened as a result of the causal effect of Babangida's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the crisis of the post-12 June 1993 presidential election (Diamond, Kirk-Green and Oyediran eds. 1997; Agbo and Lenshie 2010).

To actualise his self-succession plan, Abacha employed state terrorism to haunt and crush every form of ethno-cultural resurgence. Ethno-cultural organisations such as the Movement for the Actualisation of the Survival of the Ogoni People (MASSOP), the Middle-Belt Forum, Eastern Mandate Union (EMU), and Western Consultative Group (WCG), the Northern Elders Forum (NEF), the Ndigbo Federation (NF), the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) were all crushed. The pro-democratic forces championing opposition to his plans were jailed to serve different terms, some of them were assassinated and some others escaped death and exiled themselves from Nigeria. Mustapha (2004) connectively argues that particularly the Igbo suffered the most under the Abacha's regime, on the ground that they rallied themselves solidly behind Abiola after the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential election.

Abacha manipulated ethnic and religious identities to enhance his legitimacy and hold on to power. This was evident in his several appointments which were based on ethnic and religious sentiments to favour the north. In the same vein, Igbo were pitched against Yorubas, muslims against christians, and the minorities against the rest and so on (Kukah 1999:10). He also executed the environmental activist, Ken Saro Wiwa and several other Ogoni people, who protested lack of government responsiveness to the suffering of the people of Niger Delta and the role of the Multi National corporations (MNCS) in the area (Watts, Okonta and Kemedi 2004; Watts 2004; Ibeanu 2006; Watts 2011:68). During this period, corruption became a full-blown cancer

in Nigeria as both military and civil elites in close ties with the regime exploited the advantage to stash their ill-gotten wealth in foreign banks (Lenshie 2006).

These characteristics of the regime attracted international sanction, but it could not prevent the use of state apparatus for repression and violence against Nigerians. It created the legacy of mistrust among Nigerian people (Haider 2011). Like Mobuto Sese Seko of Zaire, Abacha was the state, the people and the government. It was after his demise on 8 June 1998 that Nigeria was rescued from tyrannical rule. Several reasons were, adduced to explain the cause of his death (Egwemi 2010:2-3) but Adepuju (2009) reported that Abacha died officially of heart attack. After his death, Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar, took over power and concluded the transition to democracy in 1999.

Military Exit and the Resurgence of Ethno-Cultural Identity

The exit of the military in 1999 led to a new era of party politics. During the transition period, some political parties notably the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), All Peoples' Party (APP), later All Nigerian Peoples' Party (ANPP), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and Alliance for Democracy (AD) contested in the April, 1999 elections. On the surface, these political parties had the required national outlook as they had party structures at least in two-third states in Nigeria. In terms of ethnic and religious composition all the parties were somewhat regionally confined except PDP that drew its membership from across the country,

> The APP had its stronghold in the Hausa-Fulani muslim dominated areas of northern Nigeria. APGA dominated south-east Nigeria reflecting the pan-Igbo identity and interests, while AD was established by the *Afenifere* or the *Egbe Omo Oodua* extractions from the south-west Nigeria with the Yoruba exercising dominance. Despite the nationalistic character of the PDP, the zoning system adopted for the party assigned power shift between the north and the south poles of the country. The northern Nigeria, although ethno-culturally diverse, was treated as ethnically and religiously monolithic, southern Nigerians were allowed to battle out their ethnic differences. Meanwhile, it appears that in the zoning arrangement, the Igbo of the south-east were left out of the presidential power zoning principle (Agbo and Lenshie 2010:63).

Notwithstanding, the transition to democracy was embraced by various ethnic nationalities. For the Igbo, it was an opportunity to enhance their competitiveness on the political terrain more importantly that at this time power was zoned to the south. The contest became vociferous between politicians of the Igbo and the Yoruba nationalities. Before now, the Yoruba had lost out from capturing state power due to the annulment of the June 12,

1993 presidential election. Therefore, the constant clamour for a Yoruba presidency by the pan-Yoruba identity organisation became a stake in the political calculus (Mustapha 2004:259). However, the inability of the Igbo and Yoruba to reach consensus, the contest was alternatively pushed to be determined at the PDP primaries. In the primaries, the political heavy weight of the south-east favoured Chief Alex Ekwueme, while in the south-west Chief Olusegun Obasanjo earned the political will of his people to vie for the presidency. On a general premise, the party primaries swing in favour of Chief Obasanjo as the party's Presidential candidate. To indicate the unity and conflict of opposite in southern Nigeria, Mustapha (2004:262) avers that:

> …prolong military rule from 1983 … accentuated Igbo feelings of marginalisation, and democratisation was welcomed as an antidote. Though Igbo politicians were disappointed by the PDP's failure to endorse Ekwueme's candidacy, they still threw their support behind his rival Obasanjo, garnering massive votes for him in the south-east in the 1999 election.

Nevertheless, APP entered into an alliance with AD and presented Chief Olu Falae as their consensus candidate. Unfortunately, he lost at the presidential polls. Even though the Yoruba could not vote for Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, his victory was conceived to the general will. The support Obasanjo had from the southern and northern Nigerians demonstrated this assertion of the 'unity in diversity'. For most part of the northern Nigeria, Obasanjo's election as president was seen as political compensation ofor the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential election (Mustapha 2004). During his first tenure (1999-2003), Obasanjo gave northern Nigeria an unalloyed consideration in the power sharing formula of his cabinets and resources distribution. After securing a second term (2003-2007), he shifted concentration to the southern Nigeria.

This generated complaints of marginalisation among elites of northern Nigeria extraction. It also heightened ethno-cultural consciousness within the old boundaries of ethnicities to demand for social justice and inclusive citizenship (Alubo 2003). Before the democratic government could to be rooted, islamic social forces had begun to garner support within the country and internationally. It was not quite long the lingering Shariah issue that has been in existence since 1979 was reinforced in November, 2000 by Governor Ahmed Yerima of Zamfara State. More so, he stated that development in any sense could only be achieved through the islamic perspective, which can only find expression in the application of the Shariah system (Kendhammer 2012). Following the declaration, most muslims scholars and statesmen like Sheik Ibrahim El Zak-Zaky, Ali Abdullah and Alhaji Lawal Danbazzau have cautioned that it was going to be a failure in a system that is from its very

foundation developed on secular philosophy of federalism(Mustapha 2004:270-271). The question is, was the islamic shariah system successful? Therefore, Suffices to state that the initial consideration, though not pronounced, envisaged the Shariah legal system would merely represent religious symbolism, which to the best of our mind is established ostensibly to serve the interests of the power elites without the promise of fundamental relief to the oppressed. Accordingly, the system was also going to be utilised as a vehicle in service of the powerful interests there are and a political strategy to galvanise supports for their ambitions (Mustapha 2004:270-271).

These assertions were proved to be true when Ahmed Yerima decided to contest in the 2007 presidential election. When he discovered that the atmosphere was dusty, he reversed and used the same platform to access his ticket to the Upper Chamber (the House of Senate) in the National Assembly. Through the instrumentalities of northern elites, the Shariah system extended into other northern states like Kaduna, Yobe, Kano, Jigawa, Borno, Gombe, and Bauchi States. In all these states identified, it created the social pandemonium that sometimes resulted into violent conflicts, which has led to the wanton destruction of lives and property. The institutionalisation of the Shariah was for the muslims a protest against the perceived decline of islam in Nigeria occasioned by Western imperialism. In this context, Mamdani (2002) argued that United States of America created 'political islam' which developed on the fringe of political christianity, political Hinduism and political Judaism. The political islam was ensured through the creation of *Al-Qaeda* by the CIA to drive the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. Today, the American creation is standing in conscious opposition to American political and international interests. This motivated the so-called categorisation of 'Good Muslim' (Muslims that are pro-west and their ideology) and 'Bad Muslim' (Muslims that are countering their imperial hegemony) across the world (Mamdani 2002). This dynamic of political discourse is further buttressed by Mamdani (2005) thus:

> Contemporary, modern political islam developed as a response to colonialism. Colonialism posed a double challenge, that of foreign domination and of the need for internal reform to address weaknesses exposed by external aggression. Early political islam grappled with such questions in an attempt to modernise and reform islamic societies. Then, came Pakistani thinker Abu ala Mawdudi, who placed political violence at the centre of political action, and Egyptian thinker Sayyed Qutb, who argued that it was necessary to distinguish between friends and enemies, for with friends you use reason and persuasion, but with enemies you use force. The terrorist tendency in political islam is not a pre-modern carry over but a very modern development.

This explains why the confrontation of islam against the west and westernisation, or better still, westernisation and christianity as detailed in Huntington's (1996) discourse of *'Clash of Civilisation and the Remaking of the New World Order'*. Inherently, culture is an integral part of civilisation and religion is the driver of every culture and civilisation, that is why central to Huntington's discourse is religion as the hallmark of civilisation, and he argued that states will continue to remain the main actors in international relations, but religion will continue to play a role in the relationship to determine the nature of such interaction globally.

Huntington (1996b) suggests that the plethora of violent clashes around the world can be explained from the fact that civilisations around the world are competing for relevance, space and influence. This development will bring these civilisations into open confrontation and each civilisation is characterised fundamentally by religious philosophy. The clash among these civilisations will remain the feature of post Cold War conflicts with religion as central factor defining their interactions. Well, this argument seems plausible because the major global political security confrontation seems to occur between *Al-Qaeda* and its affiliate organisations (Mali's *Turegs*, Somalia's *Al-Shabab*, Palestinian *Taliban* and Nigeria's *Boko Haram* islamists), who are mostly muslims, and United States of America with her allies in western Europe. It is plausible therefore to state that if any Arab or islamic nation has expressed support to United of America, it is either so done on certain strategic exigencies or out of the pretext to achieve self preservation and survival.

Chronicling through historical lenses as from 1960 onward, the manipulation of ethno-cultural identities such as regionalism, ethnicity and religion became the mainstay in Nigeria. Religion as an identity construct started manifesting violently in 1980, and after the Cold War era, it became the most virulent determinant of intergroup relations. Within this period Nigeria was trapped in the Muhammadu Marwa led *Maitatsine*, a radical-extremist islamic revival movement which motivated upheavals across various states in northern Nigeria. In Kano, the *Maitatsine* crisis claimed the lives of over 700-1000 population, over 3000 were rendered homeless and property worth millions of Naira were destroyed. It later spread to Yola, the Capital city of the defunct Gongola State in 1984, where many people lost their lives and several properties destroyed. This marked the genesis of modern religious fundamentalism in Nigeria. It was the era that Nigerians began experiencing radical islamic movements across the northern Nigeria with catastrophic implications for muslims/christian relations (Isichei 1987:194-210, Elaigwu 2005:5-6, Tagowa and Garba 2007:244-242, Abimbola 2010:96-97).

The rebirth of democracy in Nigeria opened space for ethno-cultural identity resurgence among various groups – ethnic and religious or even other social forces, to challenge the corporate existence of Nigeria (Oputa Panel report 2005). Before this period, Bala Usman (1987) had earlier cautioned against the manipulation of religion, when he posed that systematic manipulation of religious sentiments by the elites for the purpose of capturing state power and primitive accumulations of capital was going to yield the foregoing deleterious experiences. He had protested that there was nothing opposing or supporting that the islamic fundamentalist should be fanatical about except for reasons of economic hardship and bad governance (Usman 1987). Beyond this era, particularly, similar experiences continued after the military exited from power in Nigeria.

During this period, several associations confederated to agitate against perceived insecurity to their lives and property in northern Nigeria. It must be stated that apart from the several ethno-religious violence in the states mentioned earlier, in Plateau State the violence was along indigene/settler question with religion greatly playing out in the conflict between native christians and muslims (Danfulani and Fwatshak 2002, Best 2007, Kazah-Toure 2011). Native christians in most areas where these typologies of conflicts have occurred have always engaged in reprisal attacks. The consequence of such resurgence gradually pushed the president, Chief Olusengun Obasanjo to *democratic dictatorship*.

To calm restiveness in many parts of the country, Obasanjo used the military might, for example, in Odi, a small village in Bayelsa State in November, 1999 and Zaki Biam, a small Tiv community in Benue State in 2000 over killing of 19 Soldiers suspected to have aided the Jukun in a tribal war (Alubo 2006). The government during this era continued to make use of state coercive apparatuses to counter ethnic and religious insurgencies. To explain the locus of religious conflicts in Nigeria, Tagowa and Garba (2007:245) explained thus:

> This religious conflict can be understood within the framework of intolerance as imbedded in the scriptures of both christianity and islam. The islamic extremist, for instance, believe that they have the right to murder in order to achieve religious and political goals. This is the theological framework developed by the Egyptian writer Sayyid Qulb in 1950s (Tomek 2006). This is an extension of the traditional Islamic rules concerning apostasy. For example, the Shi'a Iranian leader, Ayatollah Khomeini was quoted in Taheri (1987:4) as saying: '… Islam says, kill them, put them to the sword and scatter… Islam says kill in the service of Allah those who may want to kill you…' Similar assertions are also common among christian leaders. For instance, Jerry Vines, a Pastor in Jacksonville, Florida, was quoted in Tomek (2000),

denouncing Prophet Mohammed (SAW) as a demon-possessed paedophile, even the Holy Bible is categorical about intolerance of their religions. Thus, Apostle Peter is quoted as devaluing all religious faiths other than his own by preaching that salvation is only available through Jesus Christ (see Act 4:10-12, 1 Corinthians 10:20-21, 2 Corinthians 6:14, The Holy Bible).

Corroborating Tagowa and Garba's assertions, Nnoli (2008) succinctly explained why sectarians attack has manifested on an unprecedented scale in Nigeria thus:

> Religious differences have a high potential for separating people from one another. Throughout history these differences have been the basis of tension, animosity and even war. Many times a certain fanaticism is associated with people of a different religion, or hampers mutual trust and confidence when such relations happen to exist. This is because religion tends to define what constitutes appropriate social behavior. When this definition is at cross purposes with another, normal relations become difficult.

This can further be seen in the manner the 2003 electoral process was carried out. Prior to 2003 electoral process, people began to regroup under various umbrellas of ethnicity and religious identities to mobilise their people to vote along these identities. Ethnic associations such as the Afenifere was out for the Yoruba people, the Arewa People's Congress (APC) and the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) for the Hausa-Fulani, the *Ohaneze Indi Igbo* (OII) for the Igbo and the Middle-Belt Forum and the Northern Indigenes Interest Council for the northern ethnic minorities. Similar associations such as the Niger Delta Forum (NDF), Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), Niger Delta Resistant Movement (NDRM), Movement for the Survival of the Izon Nationality of the Niger Delta (MOSIEND) were for the southern ethnic minorities (Alubo 2003:60, Bamidele 2012:34).

Politicking during this period also tour religious lines as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and *Jama'atul Nasir Islam* (JNI) mobilised followers to vote according to their respective religions. In the election, the incumbent president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, emerged victoriously. Before concluding the second term, the president attempted to meddle through his third term agenda but the plan failed (Ibrahim 2006:51). This prompted an unprepared democratic transition which brought Alhaji Musa Yar'adua as an elected president in 2007. The transition was not without political violence recorded in some parts of the country (Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart 2010). The election was considered fraudulent and characterised by high level of rigging and manipulations. To break the circle of electoral violence given several contestations, Yar'adua acknowledged that the process was not credible but was willing to make future elections more credible. He inaugurated

Justice Mohammed Lawal Uwais Committee on Electoral Reforms to work out modalities for future elections in a manner they would be credible (Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart 2010).

Demonstrating the desire and commitment towards transforming Nigeria to meet vision one of the world's twenty economies by the year 2020, the government engaged the 'seven point agenda'. Several issues featured on the agenda but the Niger Delta situation required urgent attention. While the government was making effort to end the restiveness in the oil-rich region by declaring amnesty to the militants, in northern Nigeria the radical islamists, the *Boko Haram* emerged to threaten Nigeria sovereignty as a secular state (Bamidele 2012). In the process they demanded the abolition of western education and the establishment of islamic theocracy (Danjibo 2011, Abimbola 2010, and The International Institute for Strategic Studies 2011, Ajibola 2012). This also implies that they are anti-christianity. What is it that informs their rational? It is factual that Nigeria is a product of western colonisation. The democratic system it is experimenting is modelled after United State of America, and christianity is believed to be a part of western civilisation. Could it be that *Boko Haram* attacks on the state is viewed from this spectacle of western imperialism? Also, could it be that the attack of the Church is purported by claims that it is hobnobbing with the West? While these among other reasons may partly explain their restiveness, they do not justify their attacks on innocent citizens, mostly christians and muslims, who are victims of reprisals.

The *Boko Haram* sect sees Nigeria as a by-product of western imperialism and it antics promoted through christianity. Therefore, they consider the existence of the Nigeria as a secular state, permitting the operation of various religions and their philosophies as antithesis to islam. In this context, Abimbola (2010:103) argued that it is a core value of Islam never to allow other religion to coexist together. Islam does not separate the state from the religion, therefore, must be transformed into an islamic state formation by whatever means. This is because the secular-liberal state creates two domains, which Chatterjee (2010:32) presents thus:

> In accordance with liberal ideology, the public was now distinguished from the domain of the private. The state was required to protect the inviolability of the private self in relation to other private selves. The legitimacy of the state in carrying out this function was to be guaranteed by indifference to concrete differences between private selves – differences, that is, of race, language, religion, class, caste, and so forth. The trouble was that the moral-intellectual leadership of the nationalist elite operated in a field constituted by a very different set of distinctions – those between the spiritual and the material, the inner and the outer, the essential and inessential. The contested field over which nationalism had proclaimed its sovereignty and where it had

> imagined its true community was neither coexistensive with non coincidental to the field constituted by the public/private distinction.

The above quotation creates a distinction between two worlds, the public/private, spiritual/material, inner/outer, and essential/inessential. This is thinkable within what Huntington (1996b:48) also refers to as transcendental and mundane. These domains are not in any sense co-existential; the former is situated within the realm of spiritual while the latter is situated within the realm of the temporal, and are in continuous and perpetual opposition to one another. In this context, communitarian nationalism finds roots because the spiritual and the material exist in diametrically different terrains. They differ in approaches to explaining social, political and economic issues as they unfold around them. Therefore, within this context it can be appreciated that what motivates violent conflicts and confrontations of the *Boko Haram* islamists in Nigeria is the different lenses with which world affairs are interpreted.

It should be pointed out handy that by description of poverty line in Nigeria, the north-central recorded 67 percent; the north-west recorded 71.1 percent and the north-east recorded 72.2 percent of people living below poverty line. This points out that the north-east zone from where the sect emerged is the most poverty stricken (Danjibo 2011), while Abimbola (2010) pointed that over 75 percent of the region are considered as being poor as against the 25 percent in the southern Nigeria. This is against the background that northern Nigeria has some of the richest people in Nigeria, who have used state patronage to attain opulence (Lenshie 2006). The so called muslims and christians few, usually the political elites, within the realm of the temporal or the material make use of state patronage to siphon public resources to the detriment of the majority poor. This explains that both poor muslims and poor christians are living within the same material condition, but muslims have often reacted restively to this circumstance as if they share the same material fate.

In this regard, what is it that informs the passivity of christians and the restiveness of the muslims? If both muslims and christians are living under the same material condition and the Nigeria state is the cause of their suffering, why has the Church and christians come under attack? The basic explanation can be situated within the premises of cultural and religious consciousness to which muslims and christians are inundated. As pointed earlier, Islam does not separate the realm of the spiritual from the material. Both constitute the integral parts of the Islamic theocratic culture and tradition which means in Nigeria, Islam and the Shariah should and must constitute core values of the people and not to permit its existence with the presence of a secular culture and tradition.

If this is the objective of Islamic theocracy, they should direct their grievances against the state, not any religious institution or adherents.

If the state should be their target, it again raises a pertinent question: what is a state? The concept, the 'state' is politically elusive. The state is defined as group of people resident within a geographical territory internationally recognised and accorded respect as independent sovereign entity. However, the state can best be described by it features which include: (a) geographical boundaries, (b) population, (c) government, and (d) sovereignty. From this features, what is the central target? Is the Nigerian population? Is the government and her institutions? Who then constitutes the government? The problem should not be seen as being the Nigerian population, who largely consist of the poor victims of brutality from within the state, and these are the elites. The elites are not a religious category but a small group of people who through their wealth have brought other people under subjection politically, economically, religiously, mentally and otherwise. Religious scholars and preachers, using both transcendental and mundane mythologies to incite people into warring against another should be their targets.

Unfortunately, their anger is directed against the Church and christians, because of the wrong perceptions about christianity as agents of western imperialism or christians in Nigeria and elsewhere are hobnobbing with the West. However true it is, the christians are also victims of imperialism and the state. In the same vein, the christians have no reason to attack local Mosques and muslims in reprisals, who, christians perceive as agents of the Arab imperialism and islam, promoting and projecting A*rabisation* in Nigeria. This is because they are living under the influence of pan-Arabism. This assertion, therefore, reflect what Professor Mahmood Mamdani would describe as 'radical political islam', which he argued is not a development propagated by the *Ulamaa* (legal scholars), not even by the *Mulahs* or *Imams* (prayer leaders), but mainly the works of non-religious political intellectuals' (Mamdani 2005). Who are these non-religious political intellectuals? Could it be Americans as claimed? Islam created this logic of two worlds: *Dar-ul-Islam* (house of peace) and *Dar-ul-hart* (house of discord). Therefore, peace is comprehensible only in *Dar-ul-Islam*. Outside it is *Dar-ul-hart* where the infidel or the unbelievers are. These people need not to be tolerated until they confess islam. But, those in *Dar-ul-hart* globally have no problem with other people they live with, and even those people/members of *Dar-ul-Islam*. Why should be targeted? This demonstrates how this question is pertinent to understand the resurgence of ethno-cultural identities in Nigeria.

The Post-Yar'adua's Era: Zoning Politics and the Resurgence of Ethno-Cultural Identity

The period the late president Yar'adua took ill and later, announced death after protracted health condition created a lot of political debacles. Before now members representing various constituencies in the National Assembly contested that they wanted to be in the picture of the president health situation. Admits the power games that went on at the national level, the military were understudying the political scenario surrounding the contestations of president's health condition. The National Assembly in its wisdom under the leadership of Senator David Mark in 2010, created the allowance for the Vice President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, to act in the capacity of the president to remedy the lacuna inherent in the constitution, which did not envisage the emergence of an acting president. After a hundred days in office, he inaugurated the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and designated it to Professor Attahiru Jega, a renowned Political Science scholar and former Vice Chancellor, Bayero University, Kano, to chair the commission.

The incumbent president later indicated interest to run the 2011 presidential election. This created serious controversy within the PDP. Northern elites in the party, dominantly Hausa-Fulani muslims, resorted to the party constitution to make claims for the retention of the presidential zoning in northern Nigeria. Within the northern Nigeria, some of them insisted that power should be retained in the north-west, the zone of the late president; some other politicians from the north-east within the premise of political marginalisation, countered the proposal and insisted that the region had had enough and should give room for others. The christian minorities in northern Nigeria also insisted that if northern Nigeria must retain the position, then the party candidate should be a christian. Somehow, the PDP zoning principle was shoved away and Goodluck Jonathan's candidature was endorsed within the party.

Abubakar (2010) was quick to caution ahead of the PDP debacle over zoning principle, thus:

> If zoning is killed as being propagated, an Idoma man would never enter the Government House in Markudi. This would apply also to southern Kaduna, southern Borno, the non-Igala in Kogi state and those from such minorities' areas of various states. …those championing its death are those whose areas can never produce a governor or council Chairman except through the application of its principle (Desert Herald, October-November 2010).

The assertion is quite correct because without the zoning principle or the power rotation, ethnic minorities or religious minority groups in Nigeria may not attain any political height or significance whether at the national, state or local government level. However, the adoption of the zoning principle in

some countries has proved not to be successful. Professor Eskor Toyo argued that the political rotational presidency could not save a federation like Yugoslavia (Toyo 2001:15). The structuring of states into ethno-federal arrangement could also not survive in the USSR and Czechoslovakia. Therefore, it suffices to state that the PDP zoning principle is inimical to the principle of federalism and democratic practice in Nigeria and it is not a yardstick to measure the survival of Nigeria as a country.

After defeating former Vice President Atiku Abubakar in the party primaries and also going on to win the April 2011 presidential election, the presidential candidate of Congress for Progressive Change, General Mohammadu Buhari, expressed his dissatisfaction with the manner in which the election was conducted and contested the result of the election, alleging large-scale rigging by Goodluck Jonathan's People's Democratic Party. Soon, the supporters of Buhari took to the street to unleash mayhem, destroying lives and property of innocent citizens. The *Boko Haram* islamists also reacted to the victory of President Goodluck Jonathan. Maiangwa and Uzodike (2012) stated that:

> Following the declaration on 18 April 2011 of Goodluck Jonathan, an Ijaw christian from the Niger Delta region as the winner of Nigeria's presidential elections, there was a violent outburst in many northern states, reputedly masterminded by the supporters of General Muhammadu Buhari – the perennial and conservative presidential aspirant who served as Nigeria's military ruler between 31 December 1983 and 27 August 1985. While *Boko Haram*'s strategy pre-dated the 2011 general elections, the bitterness and peculiar handling of the electoral results (especially the presidential outcome) by many northern political elites aggravated (muslim-christian and north-south) tensions and, it seems, the *Boko Haram* menace. The net outcome was that *Boko Haram* cashed in on the political bitterness by directly attacking christians and destroying government structures in places like Kaduna, Kano, and Abuja.

During this period the *Boko Haram* islamists demanded the *islamisation* of Nigeria and its president (Abimbola 2010; Danjibo 2011). To send out a message of commitment to this task, the sect launched an attack on the national police headquarters in Abuja in June and on the UN compound in Abuja in August 2011 respectively.

Since August 2011 there have been almost weekly attacks in Nigeria's north-east by Boko Haram militants, planting bombs in public places or in churches. The group has also broadened its targets, away from direct revenge attacks on the state to include other representations of authority. This expansion includes setting fire to schools and attacking newspaper offices. In March 2012, some twelve public schools in Maiduguri were burned down during the night, with as many as 10,000 pupils forced out of school. Three

alleged members of *Boko Haram* were killed while trying to set fire to a school. The group has told journalists that these attacks are in retaliation for the arrests of a number of Islamic teachers from traditional *Tsangaya* Quranic schools in Maiduguri. They also declared war on the western education system in Nigeria. it could be recalled that in a 2009 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) interview, the founder of the sect, Mohammed Yusuf stated his disbelief in the concept of a 'spherical earth' and the Darwinian evolution theory and the concept of rain originating from water evaporated by the sun, on the grounds that these scientific evidences were mere claims and were not in tandem with islamic teaching and should be rejected.

As observed by Rikowski (1990), Harvie (2006), McLaren (2005) and Cole (2007), the reaction of *Boko Haram* islamists against western education could be interpreted in the context of 'politics of human resistance' to the failure of the neo-liberal system of education to provide for social inclusion, lifelong learning, higher education 'standard', or creativity in education for the development of the Nigerian society. However, should western education be abolished, what educational system will be adopted for Nigeria? If it is islamic system of education which the *Boko Haram* Sect is advocating, how possible would it be to have the country and the president islamised? Could this not be a problem of culture or civilisation which people have adopted as life guiding principles?

This is where Gellner's (1983) contention associated with culture discourse finds expression. He argued that:

> The role of culture is no longer to underscore and make visible and authoritative the structural differentiations within society (even if some of them persist, and even if, as may happen, a few new ones emerge); on the contrary, when on the occasion cultural differences do tie in with and reinforces status differences, this is held to be somewhat shameful for the society in question, and an index of partial failure of its education system. The task with which that system is entrusted is to turn out worthy, loyal and competent members of the total society whose occupancy of posts within it will not be hampered by factional loyalties to sub-groups within the total community; and if some parts of the education system, by default or from surreptitious design, actually produces internal cultural differences as something of a scandal.

From Gellner's (1983) assertions, culture is a sanctuary where right values or societal morality is upheld and if the society is trapped in a situation, like the one Nigeria is facing, it can be seen as a product of the failure of the educational system. The problem is not the liberal education system but it is about individual group quest for ethnic and religious hegemony in a multicultural diverse country like Nigeria. The quest of a multicultural society is to build a society where within the philosophy of meritocracy the individuals

are given what they deserve and this can be achieved within the context of democracy. Unfortunately, in Nigeria ethnic and religious chauvinists have hijacked the education system that is why it appears as if the liberal education has a problem. It must be pointed out that the arrowheads of the sect, particularly the founder, late Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf received Western education, in fact, he was a university graduate.

Could it be that it was the western education received or the culture which he imbibed that motivated the philosophy behind the *Boko Haram* establishment? Culture is the sum total of the ways life of a people, and for many people, it finds expression within the religious belief systems, therefore, it is pertinent to ask: can culture be divorced from religion? What then are the moral justifications of the insurgencies? In an interview with British Broadcasting Corporation, building on religio-cultural philosophy, while denouncing western education Yusuf stated 'his belief that the concept of a spherical Earth is contrary to islamic teaching and should be rejected, along with Darwinian evolution and the concept of rain originating from water evaporated by the sun' (*BBC News*, 28 July 2009).

Mamdani (2002:768) in his analogy of the relationship of common place mission between christianity and islam pointed to salient issues and likened the problematic to the United States, thus:

> …Islam and christianity have in common a deeply messianic orientation, a sense of mission to civilise the world. Each is convinced that it possesses the sole truth, that the world beyond is a sea of ignorance that needs to be redeemed. In the modern age, this kind of conviction goes beyond the religious to the secular, beyond the domain of doctrine to that of politics, Yet even seemingly secular colonial notions such as that of a 'civilising mission' – or its more racialised version, 'the white man' burden' – or the 19th-century U.S, conviction of a 'manifest destiny' have deep religious roots.

From the foregoing, it must be appreciated that the pursuit of the United States of America as imperial and as claimed has deep religious roots. If it does, it is reasonable to question, which religious ideology the United State of America is promoting? Is it islam or christianity? Is not the language of capitalism, economic domination, promoted through international financial and industrial capital? Is the collision between the West and the rest not an international relation that can be explained within Huntington's (1996b) *'Clash of Civilization'* thesis? John Perkins, the author of the book titled: *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, who, in an interview with Amy Goodman of *Endtime News Digest* in March 2005, confessed that 'we were trained to build up the American empire – to create situations where as many resources as possible flow into this country, to our corporations, and our government…

This empire, unlike any other in the history of the world, has been built primarily through economic manipulation, through cheating, through fraud, through seducing people into our way of life, through the economic hit men'.

Perkins will wish that the Holy War which the muslims are carrying around the world should not be between islam and christianity, but be directed at the Developed Countries (DCs), the exploiter, rather than Less Developed Countries (LDCs), the exploited. Perkins (2004:50) argued that:

> The concept of a worldwide holy war was a disturbing one, but the longer I contemplated it, the more convinced I became of its possibility. It seemed to me, however, that if this jihad were to occur it would be less about muslims versus christians than it would be about LDCs versus DCs, perhaps with muslims at the forefront. We in the DCs were the users of resources; those in the LDCs were the suppliers. It was the colonial mercantile system all over again, set up to make it easy for those with power and limited natural resources to exploit those with resources but no power.

The posers are, who are the developed countries and where can they be located? What indices can be used to know that a country is developed or less developed? Development scholars have not come to terms on specific indices with which development can be measured. Then, could China, Japan, and so forth, commonly known as Asian Tigers, be considered as DCs or LDCs? May be his choice of muslims at the forefront of the jihad against the DCs is informed by their consciousness of both religious and social forces operating around the world. Again, given the argument of the above speculated muslim leadership in the hypothetical global jihad, what philosophy will the revolutionary elites present as the rallying philosophy of the LDCs against the DCs? And what rallying philosophy would be implemented after the victory given the pluralism of the revolutionary movement within the context of a world divided along civilisation? Perkins assertions, therefore, amount to nothing, but wishful thinking, mere discourse of marketplace and an act of impossibility in a contemporary world.

In Africa, for example, there are reasons to attest to its lack of feasibility and impossibility. The continent is in a constant state of flux, it is in what Professor Ali Mazrui refers to as 'the triple heritage' that have helped to shape contemporary Africa: Africa's own rich inheritance, islamic culture, and the impact of western traditions and lifestyles' (Mazrui 1986). Accordingly, the coming together of the three civilisations in the continent produced the triple heritage because it reflects 'a wide variety of ideas and values drawn from different civilisations, all competing for the attention of potential African buyers' (Mazrui 1986).

These triple forces of indigenous culture, islam, and westernisation are in constant rivalry and seeking to dominate. Most policies, group actions and individual decisions in contemporary Africa are determined by this triple heritage. This means that the manifestations of various dynamics of conflicts and violence, whether ethnic or religious, find expression within the theoretical but practically demonstrable postulations. Buttressing practically the triple heritage discourse, Mazrui (1986) argued that the flux nature of the continent in this era of globalisation was ensured through the attempt to dislocate African belief system. He puts it simply thus:

> What both types of African society have shared is nearness to nature. For centuries the continent has had abundant animal life and vegetation, and the indigenous religions have fused God, man and nature. Islam and western christianity have challenged this fusion. Man alone is supposed to have been created in the image of God – contrary to indigenous African beliefs in which the image of God takes many forms. Among God's creatures, only man – according to islam and western christianity – is close to sacredness, in possession of a soul, and destined for spiritual immortality. This is contrary to indigenous African religions, which allow other creatures to share in sacredness and sometimes endow mountains and springs with a holiness of their own.

From the foregoing, Mazrui (1986) posits that the Africans were in harmony with nature until the arrival of these religions that have played out to distant them from their belief systems. These cultures have rather caused more confusion rather than actually meeting their respective messianic orientation and mission of civilising the world. The trauma Africans are facing is the lack of exact direction to locate life-guiding principles. However, he pointed to Africa's triple heritage of indigenous, islamic and western forces, and argued that it can serve as a catalyst for growth and development when properly harnessed. Unfortunately, the interplay of these cultures has greater implications for intergroup relations at all layers of the society. In many situations, this has given rise to frustration, aggression, conflicts and violence in Africa.

This also explains that in virtually everything, invisible cultural hands of the triple heritage interplay in the process of societal relations, but with 'others' making assiduous efforts to counter it or over play one culture over the others. Here, indigenous culture is being suppressed by islam and christianity, though all have commonplace of purpose which is geared towards civilising the world, and are in constant confrontation. This also relates to what Huntington (1996b) explained in his *'Clash of Civilization'* thesis. The triple heritage makes Africa a confused continent and Nigeria a confused country, and of course, explains the virulence of conflicting religious and ethnic relations across the continent in recent times. Ethnicity and religion as essentials of ethno-cultural diversity in Africa and in Nigeria are not natural

but socially constructed phenomena geared towards specific or variegated objectives of a few people masquerading themselves as carriers and campaigners of universal opinions of a given community.

Recently, the Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III, Mallam Adamu Ciroma, Chief Edwin Clark, the National Security Adviser (NSA), Col. Sambo Dasuki (rtd), northern governors and the *Ohaneze Indi Igbo* among other people and groups, called on the federal government to negotiate and grant the *Boko Haram* islamists amnesty as was done with the Niger Delta militants by the former president, the late Musa Yar'adu. Many people view the call for the amnesty to the radical islamists as the brain child of the Sultan of Sokoto (*Frontiers News*, Monday, 15 April 2013; Daniel 2013; Niyi 2013).

The Sultan's position on amnesty for the radical islamists, however elicited a negative reaction from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and other christian clergies and adherents. In a communiqué, CAN disapproved the proposal, claiming that the Sutan goofed because *Boko Haram* presents a different case scenario from the experience of the Niger Delta militants, who were granted amnesty (Ifowodo 2013). This response is a reflection of the experiences of the christians, both indigenes and residents in the northern Nigeria which is captured in a data CAN presented to the United States Secretary of States, Hilary Clinton, to buttress why she must not visit Nigeria. The data reads thus:

> Out of the 137 religious-motivated violent incidents we tracked, 88.3% were attacks on christians, 2.9% were attacks on muslims, attacks on security agents 4.4%, sectarian clashes 2.2% and extra-judicial killings were 2.1%. The US Terrorism report 2011 indicates a total of 136 terrorist attacks in Nigeria. It is inconceivable therefore that muslims were the primary victims of a jihadist group whose intent is to islamise Nigeria. This year 2012 alone, there have been 49 security incidences of which 80% have targeted christians (http://news.naij.com/5117.html, 9 August, 2012).

Also, President Goodluck Jonathan turned down the request for amnesty for Boko Haram claiming that you cannot grant amnesty to faceless people. The amnesty granted to the militants in the oil-rich Niger Delta region was possible because they presented themselves and engaged the federal government in negotiation. He stated thus:

> You cannot declare amnesty for ghosts. *Boko Haram* still operates like ghosts. So, you can't talk about amnesty for *Boko Haram* now until you see the people you are discussing with. When you call the Niger Delta militants, they will come; but nobody has agreed that he is *Boko Haram*; no one has come forward. If amnesty can solve the situation, then, there is no problem. But, nobody has come forward to make himself visible (*Niger Reporter*, April 12, 2013).

Responding to pressure the president set up a 26 man committee to advise on the modalities and processes towards the amnesty exercise for *Boko Haram* islamists. This decision by the federal government was applauded by many Nigerians as a giant step towards ending restiveness in the country, particularly in the northern Nigeria (*Leadership Newspaper*, Wednesday, April 17, 2913). However the peace-making process has been rejected by the sect, (*BBC News 2013*) stating their strong commitment to their religious ideology and reprisals against the federal government thus:

> We are surprised that today it is the Federal Government saying it will grant us amnesty. Oh God is it we who will grant you amnesty or you are the one to grant us amnesty? What have we done? If there is room for forgiveness, we are not going to do it until God gives us permission to do it. Have you forgotten your sin, have you forgotten what you have done to us in Plateau, the state you called Jos. We emerged to avenge killings of our muslim brothers and the destruction of our religion. Was it not in Plateau that we saw people cannibalising our brothers? (*Niger Reporter*, April 12, 2013).

Reflecting on the Niger Delta case scenario is centred on communitarian nationalism, where the disenchanted people through the militants make demands on the multinational companies operating in the region and the federal government, on behalf of the Nigerian state for her *rentier* character with predatory role as a passive recipient of petro-dollar without any serious concerned for the welfare of the people of the oil-rich communities (Aghalino 2004:119). Historically, Aghalimo (2004:113) stressed failed promises offered to the citizens in the Niger Delta in exchange for their lands for oil exploration that was at the core of the militancy in the region:

> At the onset of the oil industry, the people of the Niger Delta bubbled with expectations; they were highly enthused as to the prospect of the transformation of their region. Their hope was robust, as this was ignited by promises of gainful employment, provision of basic amenities, better quality of life and assurance of establishment of cottage industries that would employ their sons and daughters. To be sure, the oil industry made a dozen barrel of promises; raised the expectation of the people to an unprecedented height. This optimism, probably explains the initial warm and convivial disposition of the people of the region to the oil firms. Without a prospect for the transformation of their lives, the people of the oil-rich Niger-Delta could not have given such unfettered reception to the oil industry, having earlier been hoodwinked by colonial masters. With time, the people discovered to their chagrin that, the industry was not committed to fulfilling the promises made to the people. There is an explosion in the number of youths who have obtained higher education who, as it were, feel they should be absorbed as pledged by the oil firms and the federal Government. The local elite seem not

to have access to plump jobs in the oil industry; rather, the major ethnic groups appear to have hijacked the oil industry. Besides, it is claimed that the revenue from the region has been used to transform cities like Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna, Port Harcourt and Enugu. The people of the Niger delta have always referred to these cities as Isoko.' It is not out of place to stress that, it is the combination of the educated elite, angry unemployed youths and their parents, frustrated by diminishing opportunities in the oil industry, as well as the stagnant development in the region that seems to be the plausible underlying factors in the anti-oil protests in the Niger Delta.

This assertion points out that Nigeria is highly dependent on the rent from the oil-rich economy in the Niger Delta region. Bagaji, Achegbulu, Maji and Yakubu (2011:38) asserts that 'Nigeria exports approximately 50 percent of its crude oil to the United States, which means approximately 10 percent of the oil imports of the United States come from Nigeria'. However, Omotola (2006) and McNamee (2013) revealed that Nigeria's dependence on oil accounts for over 80 percent of the country's foreign and domestic earnings to finance the internal economy. Despite this evidence the Niger Delta condition has not been better off, rather it keeps worsening every passing day. Omotola (2006:30) indicts self-seeking politicians, who through their nefarious activities account for the incessant political instability in the country. The scholar condemned this practice which has become deleterious for the coexistence of Nigeria as a country that professes 'unity in diversity'.

What could explain the dimension of the militancy or insurgency in the Nigeria? Lewis (2002) identified some factors which include 'poverty, unemployment, social dislocation, cultural polarisation, and a large pool of disaffected young men' which helps to foster radicalisation. To buttress his argument, he argued further that in northern Nigeria, at least fifty million muslims have lived for decades in unsteady equilibrium with a roughly equal number of christians.

Ordinarily, the poverty thesis used by many Scholars, namely Lewis (2002) among others to explain the situation in northern Nigeria does not adequately explain the causal factors for the restiveness in the country. Although it may cause the restiveness, but again, it may not be volatile as those instigated by elites' competition to capture state power and the control of economic resources. Other people from other parts of the country are also poor but have not taken arms against the state without objective reason for their pursuit or against other people as reason for them being poor.

Restiveness is not peculiar to the north or the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Igbo people of the south-east Nigeria have severally contested that they were going to secede from the Nigeria federation (Elaigwu 2005). It could be recalled that since the end of the Civil War, the Igbos have found themselves

displaced from the inner circle of government, even though a handful of them were reinstated into the government service. In contemporary Nigeria. Igbo resurgence to ethno-cultural identity has intensified with the rise of *Boko Haram* islamists to defend their race anywhere in Nigeria. Some of these identity prone organisations include the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Igbo People's Congress (IPC) and the National Union of True Igbo Movement (NUTIM) among others. These organisations at several occasions protested against injustices meted to their people across the country. They have often threatened to quit the Nigerian federation if the situation does not improve (Alubo 2003; Elaigwu 2005; Onuoha 2011).

Accordingly, the Igbo race hold tenaciously to the belief that, just as it was before the civil war began in 1967, the activities of the *Boko Haram* islamists is targeted and directed at them, even though no particular ethnic group has been singled out by the islamists. However, this perception is prompted by the philosophy and objectives pursued by the islamists, which is to uphold islam and its teaching. The Igbo ethnic group controls the informal sector of the economy not just in northern Nigeria but throughout the country. They constitute an estimated population of one-third of northern Nigeria and majority are christians (Lenshie and Atando 2013). The implication is that the Igbo race must embrace islam and the shariah or otherwise, evacuate the northern Nigerian territory.

Several insurgencies which have caused the death of many people, both christians and muslims alike have triggered threats of reprisal attacks in southern Nigeria. Amaize and Oyadogha (2013) reported that the MEND have threatened that they were going to kill muslim clerics, bomb mosques from May 31, 2013, to save christianity in Nigeria from annihilation by the northern islamists. The spokesman of the militant group, Jomo Gbomo, was quoted thus:

> On behalf of the hapless christian population in Nigeria, MEND will, from Friday, May 31, 2013, embark on a crusade to save christianity in Nigeria from annihilation. The bombing of mosques, hajj camps, islamic institutions, large congregations in islamic events and assassination of clerics that propagate doctrines of hate, will form the core mission of this crusade code named Operation Barbarossa. … We may only consider a ceasefire of Operation Barbarossa if the christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, the Catholic Church and Henry Okah, one of the few leaders in the Niger Delta region we respect for his integrity, intervenes. Also, the assurance for a cessation of hostilities targeted at christians in their places of worship, made privately or publicly by the real *Boko Haram* leadership will make us call off

> this crusade. We have no problem with their attacks on security agencies including the prisons, for their role in extrajudicial killings, torture, deceit and corruption.

This declaration stems from the fear of uncertainty and the conspiracy of silence, which northern leaders have adopted not to condemn the insurgent activities of the *Boko Haram* islamists. However, what remains a puzzle is whether the ethno-cultural identity is detrimental to the survival of democracy in Nigeria. Apparently, ethno-cultural identity does not constitute in any way a misnomer. Ethno-cultural identities reflect the pluralist nature of democracy across the world, because it assists in shaping and redirecting the focus and energies of government towards political integration, effective governance and inclusive citizenship. Ethno-cultural identity becomes pervasive when it is manipulated to serve some specific social relations of production and distribution of resources. For example, the problem with ethno-cultural resurgence as it is manifesting today is rooted in the political economy of Nigeria, which many elite and group gladiators take advantage of for their self-aggrandisement. This explains why the government is finding it difficult to deal with the problem of insurgences in Nigeria. Explaining in an interview the difficulty faced by the government in addressing security challenges in Nigeria, Sani (2012) told *People Monthly* tabloid thus:

> Some are profiting from it as security contractors, some are profiting from it as defence entrepreneurs, some are profiting from it through scams that come in form of peace talks. …our resources are being plundered in the name of insurgency. State governors are allocating huge sums of money in the name of security while depriving other sectors like education, health and infrastructure, and …we also have persons from the side of government and then other persons that purport to be from the side of the insurgents that are also milking this country dry in the name of dialogue.

Therefore, it is deducible that the country is at the crossroads. Evidence across the country reveals that Nigerians are so sceptical and suspicious of one another that the slightest provocation could result in violence. These fears are manifest at all levels of intergroup relations, and it is responsible for the resort to ethno-cultural identity as alternative for individual and group security, recognition and acceptance within the Nigerian geopolitical space. This divisive tendency makes nonsense of the national project because individuals and groups see themselves from their respective ethnic mirrors rather than nationalists. Much more glaring are the evidence as captured by Karl Maier in his most revered book on Nigeria: *This House Has Fallen: Midnight in Nigeria*, published in 2000.

Ethno-Cultural Identity Resurgence in Nigeria: Is the Problem with the System or the People?

This question is confrontational and pertinent to rethink and appreciate the virulent manifestations of ethno-cultural identity in contemporary Nigeria as an alternative safety net for the perceived disaffected and disenchanted citizens through non-inclusive democratic governance. Democracy is a system of government which upholds human pluralism, and within this context, promotes human choices as primacy for its survival. The spread of democracy across the world, for example, the women and youth in Saudi Arabia clamouring for inclusive-participatory democracy, as well as the recent events in north Africa and the Middle East, popularly called the Arab Spring, are geared towards expanding the space for democratic participation within a given label of social and cultural background. The much desired spread of democracy after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 reflects Fukuyama's (1992) assertion that:

> [L]iberal democracy may constitute the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution and the final form of human government, and as such constitute[s] the end of history… there would be no further progress in the development of underlying principles and institutions, because all the really big questions have been settled... we are now at a point where we cannot imagine a world substantially different from our own.

However, the democratic system of government in many countries, especially in developing countries in Africa has come under serious ethno-cultural contest. In countries like Nigeria where this is happening, there is an internal struggle between the oppressors of the oppressed. This can be understood in two categories: the first category, the oppressor implies 'the rich elites' citizens' and the oppressed implies 'the poor ordinary citizens' (Slaughter 1975). The second category is the civilisational or cultural clash between western and the Arab civilisations on African soil, each seeking to dominate, conquer or exert influence over the other, while also making effort to oppress the African civilisation (culture and traditions). At this juncture, the African civilisation is the oppressed whereas western and Arab civilisation in which Africa is victimised are the oppressors (Mazrui 1986; Huntington 1996b).

The former reflects that the struggle among oppressors, – 'the rich elite citizens', centres on the objectives of capturing state power and influence in governmental decisions and actions. The oppressed, the disaffected and disenchanted citizens become the recipient of their individual and collective actions and inactions. To achieve this, they construct both the transcendental and mundane myths within the premises of religion and ethnicity to motivate

sectional interests and reaction that can turn out violently. With this circumstance, they undermine democratic values. The latter reflects the struggle for and against ideological hegemony. Historically, the struggle dates to the colonial era, particularly when the *jihadists* conquered, though not without resistance, the non-muslim communities in northern Nigeria and brought them under islamic subjugation (Ihuegbu 2002; Lenshie and Johnson 2012).

The same was the experience of the entire country when British colonialists entered Nigeria. This brought Nigeria under the control of two dominant and competitive civilisations over African civilisation. The effect is the violent conflicting relations the continent is experiencing in contemporary times. With this circumstance, could it be that democratic system has failed in Nigeria? Is the problem not with the people? Careful consideration of the basic tenets of democracy, make it obvious that democracy has no alternative. At the individual, group and societal levels, democracy allows every individual to speak, criticise and disagree with others. It tolerates individual and group interests and separate ideas and ideologies. It believes in the method of persuasion and peace at both internal and international spheres. It promotes social welfare, upholds the dignity of human personality, individual and collective rights, liberty and equality of various social forces in the society, and method of resolving conflicts through non-violent means (Mahajan 1988:795-796).

The principles of democracy are sacrosanct, they do not change over time and space across the world. Therefore, the problem with democratic government in Nigeria may not be the system, but the people either as individuals and/or groups. This is because they constitute the major non-state actors in intergroup relations domestically and internationally. The nature and manner of individual and group interaction determines the peaceful or chaotic nature of the society. Usually, individual and group attitudes are motivated basically by their respective orientations. However, their orientations are carried out and directed by certain group of individuals, usually called the elites. These elites include political elites, military elites, traditional elites, and religious elites. The elites are the drivers of political, economic and social consciousness and actions in the society. This is done to distract the masses from collaborating against them and to render them powerless and subservient (Slaughter 1975; Varma 1975).

The virulent ethno-cultural resurgence in Nigerian democracy is considered as a factor in the failure of the system to provide the needed societal requirements. This problem was a poser for Ake (1993) when he asked the question: *Is Africa democratising?* The question is more significant in contemporary Nigeria. The rise of Niger Delta militants, *Boko Haram* islamists and other ethnic militias is conceived to be as a result of the failure of the

democratic system in Nigeria. What are the conditions motivating this perception. This excruciating factor of democratic system is captured by Oluwafemi and Orji-Ugbagha (2013) thus:

> The return of democracy after a prolonged military rule should have been the beginning of a new era for the nation if only the politicians that took over the leadership of the long-tortured nation were prepared to tow the part of honesty in governance. A leader that is honest and sincerely committed to the task of rebuilding his country on the path of truth would definitely assemble a cabinet of men and women in the image and likeness of himself.

It becomes clear that the missing link in the democratisation process in Nigeria is the absence of honest and sincere commitment to the Nigerian project. Omotola (2006:30) indicts self-seeking politicians, who through their nefarious activities account for the incessant political instability in the country thereby undermining the professed emblem of 'unity in diversity'. Oluwafemi and Orji-Ugbagha (2013) argued that 'the successive military administrations that imposed themselves on the nation dwelt on cutting corners … they entrenched such a depth of corruption that subtly became adopted as a replacement of the culture of hard work and dignity of labour. …no civilian administration since the return of democracy in the Fourth Republic has made any attempt to create a place for this country in the comity of developing economies'. The reason for the failure generates from perceived sectional, political, economic and social deprivation within the larger Nigerian federation.

However, even though it appears that democracy in Nigeria is in crisis, this does not imply that it has failed. This is because no political system that emerged out of human ingenuity is free from crises. The people subscribing to even islamic theocracy must appreciate that the system also has its internal disabilities. It was internal crises that led to the collapse of many islamic empires. The Oman Empire for example, was very notable and powerful but internal corruption led to its collapse. Even in contemporary times, several islamic kingdoms, empires and states are suffering from governance crises. Many of them are democratising signalling that democracy has no substitute that can reflect human dignity and livelihood in a multicultural or plural society. What then is the problem associated with democracy? The democratic system suffers deficit when in the process of nurturing it, human attitudes and activities are not moderated or when there is democratic extremism (Mahajan 1988:795-796). This implies a circumstance where individuals and groups are permitted the latitude to act on and react to issues in the state without any serious formal regulations guiding their conducts. In other words, it implies a system where there are laws but the laws have no effect on the behavioural pattern of the people within the democratic system.

One major factor that creates the tendency for extremism is corruption. In a corrupt system, rules do not apply. The manifestation of violent ethno-cultural identities in Nigeria is an antithesis to democracy, which cardinal principle hinges on ethnic and religious pluralism. Therefore, the absence of peaceful coexistence and internal solidarity points to the corruption of the democratic system for which the elites are responsible. There is no doubt that the over two decades of military rule in Nigeria exalted corruption to a higher pinnacle of national ethos. Notable military government often accused of this character were the Ibrahim Babangida (1986-1993) and Sani Abacha's (1995-1998) regimes (Lenshie 2006; Lenshie and Ayokhai 2011). Politicians, who took over after the military exited from power, could not change the political character of the Nigerian state. Alawusa (2011:13) advanced that:

> …the present crops of politicians have failed to make the desired and necessary impact on the lives of the citizenry; they have failed to discharge their constitutional obligations in the sense they have proved incapable of mitigating the long sufferings of the ordinary people. More annoying is the fact that in spite of the huge amount of money that accrued from the sale of crude oil, especially in the past decade, the people are left to fend for themselves without basic social needs. No water, no electricity, no quality of education for children, no good motorable roads and no standard health care services as our hospitals are nothing more than glorified mortuaries.

Timawus (2012:22) corroborates this when he argues that the numerous problems arising from ethno-cultural resurgence of identity in Nigeria stem from gross incapacitation of the political system to make provision for social security of the citizens, particularly in the northern Nigeria. Politicians when elected into office soon become demigods and turn public treasury into personal reserves. How can such unhealthy scenario not occur when they have refused to open space for citizens to interact and set up agenda for the government? How can the country not be rendered ungovernable while majority of Nigerians are living below poverty line? How can the situation be salvaged when the system rewards school dropouts more than what a professor earns in his entire life time (Timawus 1999).

Apart from the problem of social provisioning, another problem is associated with the Nigerian electoral process. Many Nigerians are disenchanted with the manner in which various elections have been conducted. For many people, elections in Nigeria have never been free and fair. Historically, there is no election results declared that have not been contested, no matter how free, fair and creditable they were adjudged. Evidence from the past elections such as the 1965, 1979 and 1983 buttresses this assertion (Ademoyega 1981; Kurfi 1983). In the same vein, all other

elections such as the annulled 12 June, 1993 presidential election, 2003 and 2007 presidential elections as well as the April 2011 presidential election, were all contested. In fact, the 2011 presidential election in Nigeria was considered the best run but the worst hit by violence. The cause of it was the rejection of the election results by one of the candidates, General Muhammadu Buhari who publicly denounced the outcome, claiming it was wantonly rigged to ensure President Goodluck Jonathan's victory.

The post-election violence resulted in the loss of lives and property of innocent citizens, and since then the country has remained ungovernable. With this it can be said that the democratic system is not the problem. The actual problem is the people, especially the elites, who are drivers of public psyche. People are often manipulated and divided along the lines of ethnic and religious differences.

As the forthcoming elections draw close, the political atmosphere is looming with lots of political strategies geared towards defeating the incumbent, who recently secured the permission in the country's highest court to contest in the forthcoming round of election. A vital factor in the political engineering is the current security challenges in northern Nigeria that has remained untamed by the federal government.

Conclusion

Nigeria's political atmosphere presents an ever increasing level of virulent ethno-cultural resurgence of identity. The elite's manipulation of ethnicity and religion tends to affirm Awolowo's (1966) thesis that 'Nigeria is a mere geographical expression'. It also lends credence to Akpan's (1978) thesis that, 'Nigeria's federalism is an accidental foundation by Luggard' and indeed, Soyinka's (2009) postulation that 'Nigeria is a nation space'. Implicitly, it reveals that Nigeria is a colonial creation, its people were neither created nor invented by the colonialists (Odofin 2003). Colonialism in Nigeria, as it was throughout Africa, brought the people, who were hitherto independent into permanent socio-economic and political intercourse. After five decades of independence, Nigerians have not come to terms with the need to coexist as a nation. In the last decades, what the country has witnessed is a constant manipulation of ethnicity and religion, with the implications of violent engagements among various competing elements struggling for space, recognition, power and security.

This point underscores the pervasiveness of ethno-cultural diversity in Nigeria and how it affects the development of democracy and its ability to take root and be sustained. This diversity which by nature is a blessing has been mismanaged. Democracy requires moderation and the expansion of social and economic space for citizens. It also requires a mechanism for

accommodating divergent interests and the capacity to make democratic institutions more inclusive and responsive to citizens. This can address disenchantments resulting from elitist democratic deficits played under the façade of ethnic and religious politics in Nigeria (Mutfwang 2003:110). For democracy to be consolidated in Nigeria, people's concerns such as the promotion and protection of civil rights and liberty must be guaranteed on the bases of equality (Janda, Berry and Goldman 2000:35; Otoghile and Terkimbe 2011:78-91).

Another issue to deal with is election. Elections in every democracy are a litmus test of the will, yearnings and aspirations of the people. It is the starting point and not the end of it. Election in this country has always been marred by a lot of irregularities and controversies. The problem of election is associated with poor electoral mechanism and manipulations. This must equally be addressed. Group claims and counter claims in Nigeria find expression within this premise of democratic deficits created by elitist democratic practices. The virulent manifestations of ethno-cultural identity are by and large an elitist struggle for power and resource control. The rise of *Boko Haram* radical islamists can be explained within this context.

To bring an end to these misnomers, people's confidence must be restored through enhanced accountability and responsiveness to all and sundry, irrespective of ethnicity, religion and ideology. Also, political and educated elites, who play upon the sentiment of identities to which individuals and groups subscribe, must redirect their ideologies towards rational appeals. This will be decisive for the forthcoming elections in Nigeria. Importantly, citizenship education must be taken serious. Ethnicity and religion must be de-emphasized in all affairs of the country. Lastly, it is strongly suggested that a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) be convened to discuss and rectify the problems bedevilling the corporate existence of Nigeria as a country.

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