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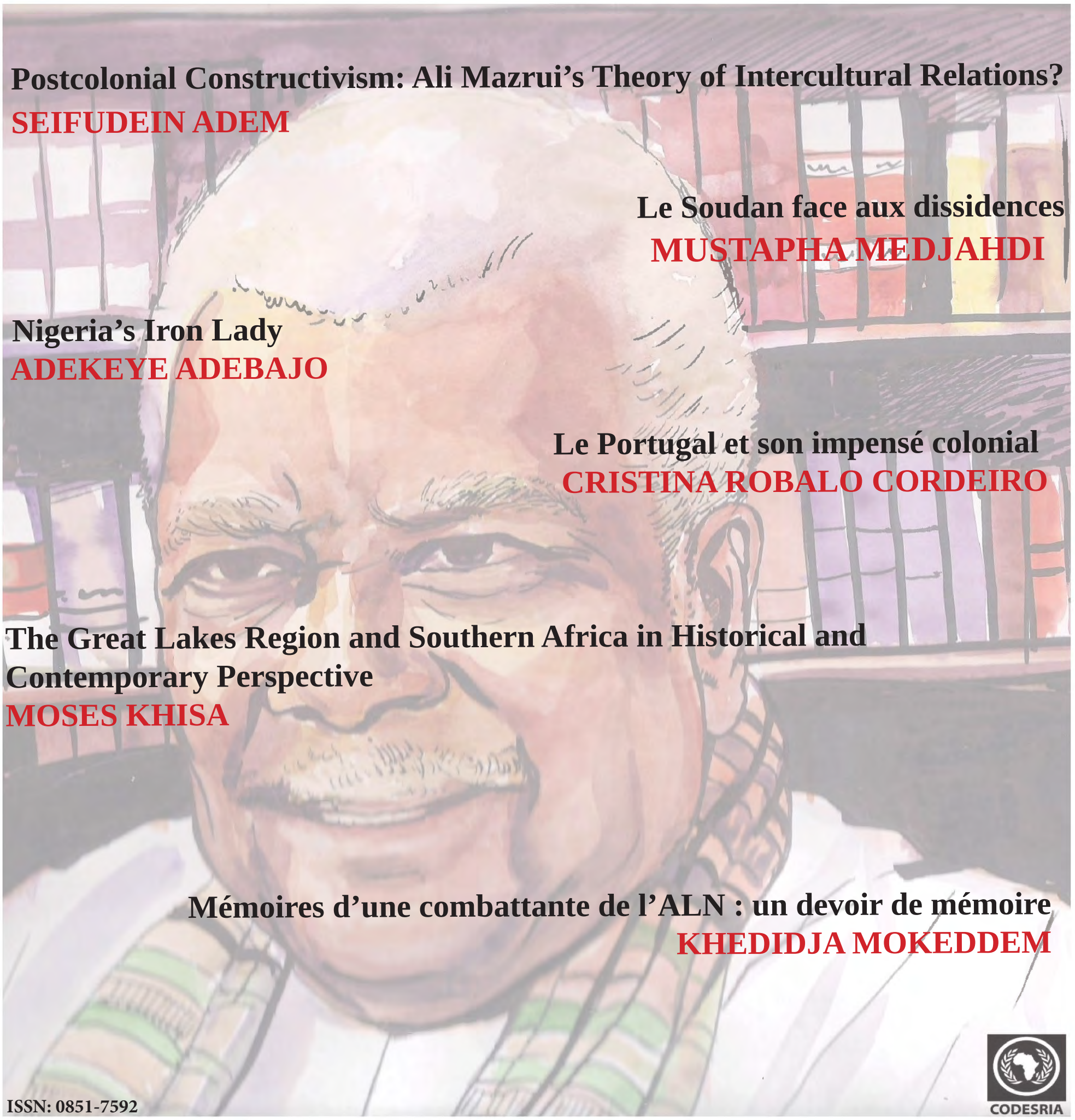

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Postcolonial Constructivism: Ali Mazrui's Theory of Inter-Cultural Relations?

Seifudein Adem

The Rise of Ali Mazrui

Ali A. Mazrui arrived in the world of scholarship in the 1960s. This was when postcolonial Africa was coming into being, when the Third World was attracting special attention from the Superpowers, and when the discipline of International Relations (IR) – and other disciplines – was seriously tackling issues of concern to the Third World, including Africa. Mazrui debated the issue of international justice versus international order with prominent scholars like Hedley Bull, who was one of the best-known IR scholars in the second-half of the twentieth century. In fact, Bull recognized Mazrui as a formidable intellectual adversary. Shortly after he published his influential book The Anarchical Society in 1977, Bull (1978:1390) wrote:

> Ali Mazrui is not only the most distinguished writer to have emerged from independent Black Africa, and the most penetrating and discriminating expositor of the ideology of the Third World, but he is also a most illuminating interpreter of the drift of world politics…[T]he issues that interest [Mazrui], the audience to whom he addresses himself, even the values he embraces, are not simply black or African or Third World, but global.

Mazrui first made a name for himself by publishing, 'On the Concept of "We are All Africans"' in the *American Political Science Review* in 1963. As it turned out, this was to be a landmark in the evolution and development of Ali Mazrui as a scholar. The article was one of the first major writings in that journal about postcolonial Africa written by a postcolonial African scholar. American political scientist Herbert J. Spiro (1967:91) noted: 'Mazrui's article identified him as a perceptive and original student of African political thought'. By publishing in the journal, Mazrui declared that he was ready to engage intellectually one of the most vibrant communities of scholars in his field. It was also significant that the article should be published in an influential journal of political science based in an increasingly influential country in the world – the United States.

Additionally, later in the decade, Mazrui (1968:69-83) published another article in another major journal, *World Politics*. The article, 'From Social Darwinism to Current Theories of Modernization', was significant for two reasons. It further problematized the North-South debate by introducing a cultural element to it. But the publication of the article was also indicative of how relatively more receptive the discipline had been not only to North-South issues but also to a different perspective which informs it.

Mainstream IR, of which Hedley Bull was a part, thus picked up Mazrui and engaged him because there was a concerted effort and genuine commitment to understanding international relations in all its complexities, including by explaining or evaluating what Donald Puchala (1998:135-157) described as: '…the significance of the embittered tone, the complex motivations, the mythological underpinnings, or the historical dynamics of North-South relations'. The relationship between Bull and Mazrui was, however, not a one–way street. According to J. D. B. Miller (1990:65-78), Mazrui, too, was a positive influence on Bull: 'Hedley Bull's contact with stimulating people like Ali Mazrui caused him to ask questions about the direction in which the Third World might be heading…' Although Mazrui's focus was, as Bull said, both Third World and global, his perspective was, and has continued to be, bottom-up. It was this postcolonial orientation in Mazrui which Bull had in mind when he described him as 'the expositor of the ideology of the Third World'.

The Decline of Ali Mazrui

Ultimately, however, it was perhaps the same bottom-up perspective about the Third World, a perspective which, to adapt a phrase from Philip Darby (1997:11-32), not only articulates Third World dissatisfaction with its lot but also attempts to change it, that marginalized Mazrui in the IR world of the 1970s and 1980s. The external manifestations of how Mazrui's relationship with Bull eventually soured perhaps symbolized the then emerging 'paradigm shift' in the mainstream discipline and the nature of its consequences. As Mazrui reminisced:

> Hedley Bull thought that I carried my anti-imperialism too far at a conference in Britain, which addressed international issues in connection with American hostages held in revolutionary Iran in the late 1970s. In my speech I argued that it was a change that Americans were hostages. Most of the time the United States held much of the world hostage to what Americans regarded as their national interest. I spoke with passion and at one stage I stopped speaking in a struggle to hold back my tears and prevent a breakdown. After questions and answers Hedley Bull came to the front and said to me with a twinkle in his eye 'You are quite mad!'(Author's Interview with Mazrui, 29 January 2010).

In the late 1970s and 1980s, a general consensus was emerging among realists and liberal IR scholars that the Third World required a different set of theories. Mainstream theory was redefining its identity as a discipline designed for 'the study of great power behavior' (Waltz quoted in Hoslti 1998:27; Mearsheimer 2001:5), effectively closing itself off to Mazrui's concerns. This was certainly not the kind of IR Mazrui (1989a:469-487) had in mind when he wrote: 'I experienced international relations as a person before I studied it professionally'. Indeed, Mazrui (2000a:276) continued to insist that: '…the power gap between the North and the South provides a central dynamic of world politics'. With the study of international relations thus 'provincialized' (Dunn 2001:1-8), it was not surprising that the stars of 'Third World' intellectuals like Mazrui should begin to dim in the discipline.

There is another reason why Mazrui was dropped by or became more obscure in the mainstream discipline. When Mazrui later engaged some of the core assumptions of IR theory, he rarely deployed familiar 'theoretical' concepts and bewildering terminologies (see, for instance, Mazrui 1976a). For instance, Mazrui (2000b:369) had observed: 'While Muslims have failed in maintaining peace toward each other, Westerners have found it among themselves. A whole new body of literature is emerging based on the premise that "democracies do not go to war against each other".' Mazrui was, of course, referring to Democratic Peace Theory. The relevance of Mazrui's contributions in this period to the theoretical debates become invisible and are not therefore readily clear unless one laboriously sifts through his sizable intellectual outputs to distil a theory out of his historical analyses.

The 1970s and 1980s also witnessed the gradual marginalization of the 'classical' method which Hedley Bull (1966:361) defined as:

> the approach to theorizing that derives from philosophy, history, and law, and that is characterized above all by explicit reliance upon the exercise of judgment and by the assumptions that if we confine ourselves to strict standards of verification and proof there is very little of significance that can be said about international relations, that general propositions about this subject must therefore derive from a scientifically imperfect process of perception or intuition.

Fact/value dichotomy became the order of the day, placing positivism on a solid ground as the dominant method of research in IR. Also as a consequence of this, Mazrui became the methodological 'Other' in the eyes of the mainstream scholars, who were, in Mazrui's (1974:67-71) own words, '… the different shades of behaviouralists in the western world…who believe that political science ought not to include normative and value preoccupations'. In any case, one of the enduring effects of the ultimate triumph of behaviouralism in IR was the reign of quantification and formal models and the steady marginalization of culture as an important variable in the study of international relations. But Mazrui refused to change his approach and kept relative distance from the theoretical exchanges which characterized this period, taking leave of absence from the so-called 'inter-paradigm' debates of the 1980s, as he apparently chose to forget the mainstream discourse, by which he was also seemingly forgotten.

It must be reiterated, in closing, that Mazrui's relative obscurity in IR would seem to pertain also to the predominance of Anglo-Saxon, top-bottom view in the academic discipline (Waever 1998:687-727). D. S. L. Jarvis (2000:2) was therefore right in pointing out: '… for a discipline whose purview is ostensibly outward looking and international in scope, and at a time of ever encroaching globalization and transnationalism, International Relations has become increasingly provincial and inward looking'. But, even more specifically, it was Waever (1997:4) who brought to our attention a possible reason for the exclusion of prominent non-Western thinkers from a book he co-authored, *The Future of International Relations: Masters in the Making*? '…if it had not been for the relative predominance of Anglo-American IR…it would have been nice to have had a chapter on [Ali] Mazrui or [Takashi] Inoguchi'.

On Postcolonial Theory and Social Constructivism

Postcolonial theory, or postcolonialism, emerged in the mid-1980s (Zeleza 2005: 12). It can be defined as a disciplined critique of power and modernity, an articulation of the dissatisfaction of the Third World with its condition of existence; the challenge and rejection of Eurocentric narratives and exposure of what they misrepresent or erase; and the formulation of alternative narratives about the postcolony (Chowdhry and Nair 2002:26; Beier, 2002:87;Matin, 2011:359; Rita-Kiki Edozie and Peyi Soyinka-Airewele, 2010:376).

Julian Go (2013:29) says postcolonial theory is 'a loosely coherent body of writing and thought that critiques and aims to transcend the structures supportive of Western colonialism and its legacies'. Philip Darby (1997:14) outlines the major endeavors of postcolonial theory as: 'emphasis placed on subjectivity, the critique of modernity, the challenge to positivism and the rejection of European universalism, the prising open of the nation-state, and the commitment to the marginal'. Extracted deliberately from wide-ranging sources, the above definitions of postcolonial theory affirm, to me, one thing. It is next to impossible to point to a single work in Ali Mazrui's scholarship spanning more than half a century in which he was not engaged in some aspect of these postcolonial undertakings. Ali Mazrui practices postcolonial theory but without, to borrow a phrase from Paul Zeleza (2005:13), 'postcolonial theory's obfuscatory language and inflationary rhetoric'.

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But Mazrui's vast scholarship also exhibits some of the attributes of social constructivism. While social constructivism is 'broadly' accepted today in the discipline, its relevance was seriously contested until very recently (Hurd 2008:301). Social constructivism has a rich variety (see, for example, Ruggie 1998: 855-885; Zehfuss 2002; Adler 2002: 94-118; Hurd 2008:298-316). Yet, like virtually all paradigms of thought about society, social constructivism too is based on specific assumptions about the nature of social knowledge, the relationship between the knower and what is to be known, and, of course, the best way of acquiring knowledge. I maintain that social constructivist assumptions inform much of Ali Mazrui's scholarship (see, for instance, Mazrui, 2007, 1976a:399, 1967b, and 1975).

Mazrui has also occasionally articulated (or anticipated) some of the major social constructivist postulates in a language strikingly similar to that of social constructivists. For example, social constructivist scholar Alexander Wendt (1999:25) wrote in relation to the role of ideas in world affairs: 'US military power means one thing to Canada, another to Communist China'. About a decade earlier, Mazrui (1989b:162) put the same notion in this way: 'Although Brazil is much larger than Iraq, Brazil's nuclear capability would be less of a global shock than Iraqi nuclear weapons. Pakistan's explosion of nuclear device would carry with it greater fears than a successful explosion by China'. Wendt (1999:31) also unveiled the useful concept of ontological security, defining it as 'the human predisposition for a relatively stable expectation about the world around them'. Wendt (1999:48) clarified the concept thus: '…along with the need for physical security, this [predisposition] pushes human beings in a conservative homeostatic direction, and to seek out recognition of their standing from their society'. In a very different context, Mazrui (1971:48) elaborated a roughly similar idea about four decades earlier; he called it 'the sense of security afforded by the familiar'.

Social constructivism emphasizes the role of inter-subjectively shared ideas, norms and values; highlights their constitutive as well as regulative roles; and refuses to privilege structures over agents, and vice versa. Mazrui tended to explain things much more than indicating which explanations are suitable and why. And yet, a Mazrui reader could feel the presence of an organizing 'theoretical' principle in his scholarship, too, one which is rooted in social constructivism. In closing, there are three things we should keep in mind about Mazrui's constructivism: to the extent Mazrui was a constructivist, first of all, he was so by default. Mazrui has never said he is a social constructivist; his constructivism predated the emergence of this school of thought as a major paradigm in IR; and, as indicated above, his constructivism had a distinct postcolonial flavor. But before we look at Mazrui's postcolonial constructivism more closely, it may be profitable to understand the relationship, or lack thereof, between Mazrui's scholarship and the other 'isms' in IR.

Mazrui and the Other 'isms'

Mazrui's theoretical contribution to the mainstream discipline of IR is minimal. This has partly to do with his position on 'theory'. The very notion of an all-encompassing theory is anathema to him. Mazrui is also generally unconcerned about the lack of 'theoretical' consistency in his propositions. He abhors, for example, the amoral fabric of realist theory. On one occasion, Mazrui (1976) described Machiavelli as 'the first great rationalizer of hypocrisy and false pretenses as a cornerstone of high policy in diplomacy and politics'. In his approach to theorizing, Mazrui subscribes, as I indicated already, to classical realism, as defined by Hedley Bull (1966:361). This is classical realism as method rather than as a worldview.

It is also worth noting that Mazrui escaped the influence of Hans Morgenthau's realism although the two were colleagues at the University of Chicago at one time and had interacted closely. Yet Mazrui (1980:1-20) does share some of the basic propositions of a variant of realism, such as the idea that nuclear proliferation is not necessarily inimical to global security. It must be noted, however, that Mazrui's argument about nuclear weapons is based on moral calculus rather than on the logic of deterrence. Mazrui (1980) is for total nuclear disarmament, but he is also against 'nuclear apartheid'; his advocacy of nuclear proliferation was premised on the assumption that 'a dose of the disease becomes part of the necessary cure'. As he later elaborated: 'Some degree of proliferation may shock the five principal nuclear powers out of their complacency. The proliferation would gradually convince them that this system of a few select nuclear powers cannot be long sustained. Therefore we should aim for global nuclear disarmament, universal renunciation of these evil weapons for everybody, not just for all but the five countries but for everybody' (1998:5-11). As of late, incidentally, Mazrui's position seems to be winning some following among empirical political theorists, too, such as J. David Singer (2008:256). In any case, Mazrui's advocacy against nuclear Apartheid speaks to the postcolonialist impulse in him.

Mazrui has also advanced arguments which are in tune with the liberal theory of IR. Indeed, it is arguable that much of Mazrui's scholarship shows such impulse, particularly as it was articulated more fully in his most ambitious book, *World Federation of Cultures* (1976a). Like liberalism, Mazrui's theory places greater emphasis on the utility of institutions.

Mazrui parts company both with realism and liberalism in important ways such as in his view that cultural groups, flexibly defined, constitute important units of analysis of world politics and that both hierarchy and anarchy co-exist in and define the contemporary international system. In Mazrui's framework, the state also ceases to be the primary and unitary actor in world politics. For Mazrui, in fact, nothing is far from the truth than the suggestion that postcolonial African states are 'like-units'. The state is just one of multiple players in world politics. Depending on the issue, indeed, a tribe could be a more significant unit of analysis than the state in his framework. Mazrui's reliance on different levels of analysis speaks to the constructivist impulse in him. As Ian Hurd (2008:306) has noted: '[For constructivists] for any given puzzle in international relations, there are undoubtedly important elements of the answer to be found at all levels of analysis'.

In general, it is impossible to pigeonhole Mazrui in theoretical terms, as a realist or a liberal, a fact which did not necessarily augur well for his place in IR. This is so simply because the rule of the game in North American IR became, in the words of James Der Derian (2009): 'without label, a box or a school, one does not exist'. But with his emphasis on deconstructing Eurocentrism, with his deep interest in the study of languages and their role in the 'construction of subjects', with his special attention to inter-subjectively shared ideas, norms and values, with his longstanding fascination about the issues of culture and identity formation, and with his openness about the permissiveness of normative bias in social inquiry, Mazrui's scholarship rhymes more naturally with (post-positivist) social constructivism than any other '–ism' in the mainstream discipline. But, as I elaborated above, Mazrui's constructivism has a strong postcolonial bent – giving us possibly the new paradigm of postcolonial constructivism.

Mazrui's Postcolonial Constructivism

Ali Mazrui is a postcolonial theorist par excellence. He is also a social constructivist. Unlike postcolonialism, social constructivism emerged in the West to deal with issues primarily affecting the West. If so, how could we invoke social constructivism to describe Mazrui's addressing of postcolonial concerns? How can postcolonialism and social constructivism be united in postcolonial constructivism?

Mazrui is adept at and is in favor of tearing European ideas out of their historical and cultural context and applying them to postcolonial Africa. He does not reject European ideas out of hand; he does not seek to invent for Africa a different paradigm of thought altogether if there is another alternative. Instead he often strives to domesticate and use 'foreign' ideas to deepen our understanding of the African condition. He had maintained that the best way for Africa to minimize the negative consequences of (some) Western ideas, values (and institutions) is to make them more relevant to Africa's needs. As he (Mazrui 2012) reminded us recently:

> I demonstrated how Edmund Burke, J. J Rousseau, and V. I. Lenin could be made more relevant for Africa… I applied Burke's philosophy to an African situation… I also used in an African context J-J Rousseau's philosophical distinction between the general will of all as applied to a postcolonial society. All these were efforts [to make Western ideas relevant for Africa] without necessarily disengaging from the global heritage.

Thus Mazrui downplays the Europeanism of ideas, even if he also takes issues with their (sometimes presumed) universality. He Africanizes those ideas. By doing so, Mazrui offers not only an alternative reading of Africa that is fresh but also enriches the borrowed ideas by adding a new dimension to them, and without adulterating the Africanism of his perspective in the process.

Postcolonial constructivism is thus what emerges from the cross-fertilization of Mazrui's postcolonialism and his social constructivism. Postcolonial constructivism can be simply defined as an articulation of postcolonial concerns, with a social constructivist accent; it is also a systematic interrogation of power and modernity. Methodologically, postcolonial constructivism represents a form of analysis which accommodates ethical considerations by integrating questions of justice, legitimacy and moral credibility into its concepts. In other words, empirical theory (observation) and value theory (moral judgment) are fused in postcolonial social constructivism.

Displaying a determination to unmask aspects of the 'received truth' either for the sake of knowledge (for sharpening the mind) or for transforming or, at least, influencing the course of history is one feature of postcolonial constructivism. And so is a disciplined challenge of dominant narratives, a challenge which is based on basic counter-hegemonic instincts. Apart from specific methodological and normative orientations, postcolonial constructivism has a particular interest in the role of cultural forces in world politics, the unity of the ideational and the material, the objective and the subjective, the empirical and the normative, and the local and the universal. It allows pursuit of disciplined inquiry without disciplinary restrictions and expressions of unity of opposites but without a hint of analytical contradictions.

The theory of postcolonial constructivism has a place for divergent issues and conflicting claims (see, for instance, Mazrui 1995:25; 1980). Because coherence has no special privilege in postcolonial constructivism, deviations are not systematically weeded out and paradoxes are not concealed. But how does postcolonial constructivism successfully relate contradictions in social reality without introducing outright inconsistencies to its narratives? Postcolonial constructivism accomplishes this task through several inter-related (and overlapping)

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strategies, including: classification or the usage of perceptive typologies, macro-history, and multi-disciplinary and qualitative data orientation.

Classification makes it unnecessary to screen out deviant cases, opening the door wide for seemingly conflicting observations. Mazrui has a special liking and gift for classifying different concepts, events and processes in an original way. In the positivist social sciences, the necessity of classification, even its possibility, is likewise almost taken for granted. A related issue which arises is this: if classification occupies such a central place in the positivist project, and if postcolonial constructivism is anti-positivist in its orientation, then how can we resolve the apparent tension between postcolonial constructivism and positivist social science? Let me start, first, by re-stating the three reasons why I say that Mazrui's scholarship (or postcolonial constructivism) is anti-postivist. Mazrui does not believe that a knowable reality exists out there which is driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms, that inquiry takes place through a one-way mirror in which values are prevented from influencing outcomes, and that manipulative and experimental method of inquiry is the ultimate path to knowledge. Mazrui's scholarship is thus an assault on the foundational principles of positivism.

Postcolonial constructivism deploys macro-history in search of broad changes and patterns in social processes. When Bull (1978:1) depicted Mazrui as 'a most illuminating interpreter of the drift of world politics', he was drawing our attention to Mazrui's acute sense of macro-history; Mazrui himself had made it clear quite early on when he declared his commitment to 'the study of global trends and their moral implications' (Mazrui 1976a:xix). It was also remarkable that, despite the mutual respect each had for the other, Bull and Mazrui strongly disagreed on a macro-historical issue – international justice (Bull, 1977:74, 93-94). Postcolonial constructivists thus look for not only contradictions in social reality but also for linkages between sometimes seemingly unrelated phenomena. Macro-historical orientation in research makes the endeavor more sensitive to contrasts in social reality than micro-historical perspective as it presupposes wider knowledge and does not easily let its practitioner fall prey to absolute positions or universalist claims and aspirations. With a clear sensibility to the notion that 'social reality' is too complex, postcolonial constructivism crisscrosses disciplinary boundaries with utmost ease. Mazrui's works show how totally unconcerned he had been about the imaginary boundaries between different disciplines (see, for instance, Mazrui 1994; 1991; 1990; 1983a; 1983b; 1976b and 1977).

With its emphasis on qualitative and historical method and with no a priori commitment to quantitative measurement and operationalization, postcolonial constructivism is also less constrained about the range of concepts it could use or the domain of data it could target. Mazrui relies most minimally on 'quantitative' data: his writings usually have no tables or graphs; they also generally lack footnotes and bibliographies. Postcolonial constructivism is not only accommodative of concepts which may not be operationalizable, it also rejects the notion that the data which is useful and reliable should come solely from empirical observation. In this sense, Mazrui is a 'transfactualist' (to borrow a useful term from Jackson (2010:36-37)) who 'holds out the possibility of going beyond the facts to grasp the deeper processes and factors that generate those facts'. Postcolonial constructivism is centered on overcoming rationalist limitations by allowing usage of data obtained through means other than observation and document analysis has other decisive advantages such as its openness to what pre-literate societies have to offer through non-written data. Mazrui (2001:99) has explicitly rejected the assumption, as he put it, that 'thought is not thought unless it is also written'. His own writing style is testimony to the oral-written continuum.

Conclusion

More than four decades ago, John Nellis (1974:831-833) observed that Mazrui was 'frequently and severely criticized by radical social analysts who find his traditional scholarship irrelevant and his liberal principles infuriating…'. Mazrui's 'traditional scholarship' that was under attack, was one which anchored itself in the historical method, eschewed fetishism of numbers, and accepted permissiveness of normative bias in social inquiry. The issues raised by mainstream scholars in the 1970s about Mazrui's scholarship in this way closely mirrored the fundamental schism which exists today between positivism and post-positivism. Mazrui's corpus of writings and contemporary trend in IR seem to suggest that early in his career he was, in effect, breaking a new theoretical ground of social analysis, which may be called postcolonial constructivism.

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Nigeria's Iron Lady

Adekeye Adebajo

Reforming the Unreformable: Lessons from Nigeria

by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

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On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Cape Town in March 2013, I chaired a book launch starring Nigeria's formidable first female finance minister, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, resplendent in her trademark African traditional dress and matching head-gear. She talked unpretentiously, without the affected foreign accent of some Nigerians that have spent two decades abroad. She had recently published a book titled *Reforming the Unreformable* on her time – between 2003 and 2006 – as finance minister of Africa's largest economy, the world's eighth most populous state, and its sixth largest oil-producer. She had been the architect of the deal to pay off Nigeria's $30 billion debt (the second largest such debt deal with the Paris Club of creditors at the time), and led a team of technocratic reformers seeking to tackle corruption, build efficient public and private institutions, obtain Nigeria's first sovereign debt rating, and transform the country into an emerging economy.

Without any notes, Okonjo-Iweala gave a fluent, inspiring, and intrepid 30-minute presentation, breaking down complicated economic concepts in ways that were easy for the general audience to digest. She berated Nigeria's failure to create a system of sound planning and financial management of its oil resources; described Herculean efforts to fight vested interests at great personal cost; detailed how she had used her impressive international network to achieve Nigeria's debt deal; observed that Nigeria's political class appeared to be intimidated by its economic technocrats; and brushed off concerns about women not being equal to men. Nicknamed Okonjo-'Wahala' (Trouble-maker) by Nigeria's lively press, this was a virtuoso performance to a South African audience fed on a constant staple of stereotypes about corrupt Nigerian drug-traffickers.

My impression of Nigeria's 'Iron Lady' was of an incredibly competent, courageous, and intelligent individual with a strong sense of public service. I, however, also had the impression of a diva who was aware of her own importance, clearly enjoyed her celebrity status, and came across as a 'head-of-state in waiting'. Okonjo-Iweala is not shy about blowing her own trumpet and her role in the Nigerian reform team, talking of the 'legitimacy and dynamism that I brought to the team'. *Forbes* named her among the ten most influential women in the world in 2011, while *Foreign Policy* listed her among the top 100 global thinkers in the same year. The 60-year-old technocrat's brilliant economic credentials are from the prestigious Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), obtaining her doctorate in the latter institution. It is clear that the poor grasp of complex economic issues that many of Nigeria's political leaders and parliamentary dunderheads have exhibited is what has given technocrats like Okonjo-Iweala their immense power, and a belief that they can take better decisions than the leaders they seek to advise.

In her book, Okonjo-Iweala describes in brutally frank terms the mutual antipathy between politicians and technocrats: 'We would keep away from politics, since in any case most of the politicians left a lot to be desired. In fact, I could sense that the politicians felt our team did not appreciate them and regarded them with disdain.' During the Cape Town book launch in March 2013, Okonjo-Iweala made the rather intriguing point that she eventually came to see no difference between politicians and technocrats, and noted that she had had to become a politician (while belonging to no party) in order to be able to do her job effectively. This phenomenon of political technocrats was particularly prominent during the era of the 'Super Permsecs (permanent secretaries)' of powerful mandarins under military rule in the early 1970s. It produced such prominent figures as Allison Ayida, Philip Asiodu, Abdulazeez Atta, and Ahmed Joda, who dominated General Yakubu Gowon's 'kitchen cabinet'.

Okonjo-Iweala grew up in a solidly middle-class Nigerian family with both parents being professors. Her upbringing was a happy, idyllic one full of ballet classes and piano lessons until the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970 forced her family back east, having lost all their savings. Her father was recruited into the Biafran army. Living on one meal a day, watching children dying, and sleeping on the floor of a bunker were formative experiences that made Okonjo-Iweala determined to succeed, and perhaps also contributed to her three-decade exile in graduate school and at the World Bank in Washington D.C., where she rose to become vice-president in 2002.

Okonjo-Iweala avoids such personal details in *Reforming the Unreform-*

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able and focuses squarely on her time as finance minister between 2003 and 2006. The book took her four years to write. Despite the technical subject matter, it is highly readable, rich in detail, and devoid of complex economic jargon. The story is well told and presents a bird's eye view of Nigeria's chronically underperforming and staggeringly corrupt state. Her six-month stint as economic adviser to President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000 had led to Okonjo-Iweala establishing a Debt Management Office and given her insights into the country's parlous policy-making environment. The book covers the strategies of Okonjo-Iweala's 'Economic Team'; the actual implementation of goals to address the structural constraints to private enterprise in Nigeria's economy through privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation; restructuring the civil service, trade, tariffs, customs and banking sectors; the battle against corruption; the successful and titanic struggle to achieve the annulment of Nigeria's debt; and the lessons learned from the reform process.

Okonjo-Iweala herself recognises at the outset: 'Nigeria has always been complex to govern in a way outsiders do not often understand or fully grasp'. She describes the country's three decades of military rule as 'politically and economically disastrous' and castigates Nigeria's 'kleptocratic elite' which she notes has 'a very limited vision'. The country's Lilliputian leadership had failed to invest sensibly $300 billion of oil earnings since the 1970s. Okonjo-Iweala observes that the same rapacious elite may be one of the largest obstacles to reform, as it continues to feed at the trough of a parasitic state. She describes the deleterious impact of the 'oil curse' on Nigeria's agricultural and other sectors, as well as its destruction of the country's moral and social fabric. She condemns 'white elephant' projects such as the Ajaokuta Steel Mills in which $5 billion was squandered without any concrete results.

Before embarking on her reforms, Okonjo-Iweala obtained advice from Brazil's former deputy finance minister and a World Bank board member, Amauiry Bier. In an impressive example of South-South sharing, based on Brazil's own reform experiences, she was advised to pick a like-minded 'Economic Team' to fight the tough battles in cabinet; have a comprehensive strategy; and ensure the sustainability of reforms by underpinning them with binding legislation. In crafting the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2007, Nigeria also looked to what Brazil had done and sought to adapt this example to its own legislation. The 'Economic Team' – including individuals such as Charles Soludo, Nasir Al-Rufai, Obiageli Ezekwesili, Nenadi Usman, Nuhu Ribadu, and Bode Augusto – crafted the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) which set out to tackle four key challenges: poor economic management; weak public institutions and poor governance; the failure of the state to deliver public services; and a hostile environment for private sector growth. The team sought to bring rationality to a deliberately irrational process designed to enable widespread graft.

The reforms recorded some notable successes. A controversial Excess Crude Oil Account (ECA) was created to ensure that savings for the future could be used to stabilise the management of Nigeria's finances. The country's rapacious state governors, however, questioned its constitutionality. Half of the country's revenue has to be shared by the federal government with its 36 states, the federal capital territory, and its 774 local government bodies. To increase transparency, Okonjo-Iweala published monthly in national newspapers the funds that state governors and local governments received, in order to empower their constituents to be able to hold them more accountable. Another major achievement of the reforms was the liberalisation of Nigeria's antiquated telecommunications sector in 2003, allowing private mobile phone operators like South Africa's Mobile Telephone Networks (MTN) and Nigeria' Glo to provide services to millions of Nigerians. Banking reforms also saw the consolidation of banks from 89 to 25 and the increase in their capital base from $15 million to $192 million. A competitive bidding process for contracts saved the country about $1.5 billion in two and a half years.

The climax of this rich story is undoubtedly the historic debt deal after a successful two-year effort between the Nigerian government and the Paris Club between 2003 and 2005. Okonjo-Iweala deserves the most credit for this impressive achievement. Before the debt deal in 2002, Nigeria's annual debt service to the Paris club of $3 billion would have represented a third of its overall budget; ten times the national health budget; and five times the education budget. Okonjo-Iweala negotiated a $1 billion annual payment to restore Nigeria's fiscal credibility. Following marathon all-night negotiating sessions in Paris in October 2005, the deal was struck, with Nigeria paying $12 billion and being relieved of $18 billion of debt. The agreement led to Nigeria's first-ever sovereign credit rating, and non-oil sector foreign direct investment doubled from $2 billion to $4 billion following the accord.

Okonjo-Iweala is honest in admitting that her reform efforts could have benefitted more from cultivating cabinet members and consulting more with civil society and the civil service. This suggests that rather than proceeding through intellectual argumentation and rational persuasion, it was often assumed that 'vested interests' would block reforms. Changes were therefore often pushed through with the assistance of the notoriously autocratic president, Olusegun Obasanjo, without proper intellectual debate and disagreement or wide consultation with key interest groups. It is almost as if some of the genuine opposition to reforms is treated as treasonous, and critics of reform are sometimes unfairly branded as being part of corrupt 'vested interests'. Astonishingly, Okonjo-Iweala admits that the reformers actually stopped trying to gain the support of senior civil servants in their efforts to reform the civil service. It was no surprise that this particular effort at reform failed spectacularly. The reformers often come across in the book as a secret society and cabal of unaccountable priests championing a religion of neo-liberal reform. Such dogma was, however, not to be challenged, and anyone who tried, was branded a heretic to be burned at the stake.

The NEEDS strategy – like the continental New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) championed by leaders like Olusegun Obasanjo and South Africa's Thabo Mbeki – turned out to be a top-down plan imposed on the country without proper and widespread consultation and buy-in from critical civil society actors. The Nigerian civil society actors in the book remain mostly nameless and faceless. Their criticisms of NEEDS is never spelt out or explained. One does not have a sense that there was any serious engagement with these groups. The core of Nigeria's intelligentsia is caricatured as 'inclined towards socialism', as if this somehow made this minority (certainly not a 'core', as Okonjo-Iweala asserts) less patriotic. She tends to lump all opponents of reform together, sometimes blurring the line between opportunistic vested interests and genuine intellectual opposition. The views of Nigerian and African economists and think-tanks are also completely absent from the book, even as Western scholars like Columbia University's Jeffrey Sachs are admiringly cited. Indigenous solutions to these deep-seated problems clearly do not seem to have been taken as seriously as external advice.

Okonjo-Iweala seems to have an exaggerated faith in external civil society and other actors, many of whom, such as Ann Pettifor of the Jubilee 2000 campaign, she cites adoringly. Some of these individuals, like the Irish pop stars Bono and Bob Geldof, in fact trivialise African anti-poverty causes, disempower Africans, and expose the poverty of genuine leadership in these critical areas. Okonjo-Iweala's key reform allies, from whom advice is often sought, also appear to be external actors: the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); the British Department for International Development (DFID); the Commonwealth Secretariat; and the Washington D.C.-based Centre for Global Development.

In terms of other reforms, the author frankly concedes that customs reform was an 'outright failure'. There were also glaring supervisory and regulatory failures that led to a severe banking crisis in 2008/2009 which nearly destroyed Nigeria's financial sector. This industry was exposed to be as riddled with greed and corruption as any other in the country, with lavish lifestyles and spending being sustained with the funds of ordinary depositors. The worst banks were identified as Afribank, Finbank, Intercontinental Bank, Oceanic Bank, and Union Bank, which collectively had $7.6 billion in bad loans, while accounting for 40 percent of Nigeria's bank credit. The 'panacea' of privatization also turned out to be a mirage. Okonjo-Iweala herself concedes that its success was mixed, as vested political interests were able to influence the outcomes of these processes to feather their own nests.

She notes that 'Nigeria had become synonymous with the word "corruption"'. The mechanics and incidents of corruption in the country are vividly described in the book: monitoring and evaluation officials bribed to authorise incomplete projects; 'leakages' in the Budget Office and Accountant General's office due to poor record-keeping; senior civil servants sharing the ill-gotten interest on government deposits with officials in commercial banks; 'ghost workers' collecting salaries and pensions of non-existent staff; legislators inflating budgets; profligate public enterprises being treated as personal egg nests; private bankers engaging in 'insider trading' and squandering depositors' funds; General Sani Abacha stashing $505 million of stolen money in Swiss bank accounts and raiding the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for $2.2 billion which was carried away in trucks; the money-laundering (nearly 2 million pounds) governor of Bayelsa State, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, jumping bail from London and escaping back to Nigeria disguised as a woman; the governor of Delta State, James Ibori, jailed in London for fraud and money-laundering; TSKJ consortium (including French, Italian, American, and Japanese firms) paying $180 million in 'kick-backs' to win a $2 billion gas contract in 1995; and Siemens paying bribes totalling 10 million Euros to Nigerian government officials between 2001and 2004.

One of the author's most interesting insights is the fact that state governors in Nigeria have almost complete autonomy in managing billions of dollars in state funds. The fact that they have immunity from prosecution for criminal acts while in office often results in a culture of impunity. There is thus a disconnect between state revenues, service delivery, and these governors being held accountable by their constituents for widespread theft of state resources. It would have been useful to obtain from the author more concrete ideas (rather than the nebulous suggestion of 'a less permissive Nigerian constitution') to reform such a fundamentally pernicious system. Okonjo-Iweala's remedies for tackling corruption – mustering political will; focusing on the

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most damaging corruption; developing measurable indicators for success; and withstanding personal intimidation – also seem rather academic and do not seem capable of addressing this cancer systematically at its roots. Part of the obvious problem which Okonjo-Iweala is unwilling to spell out is that fish rots from the top: many of the political leaders with whom she is working are part of the problem of corruption she is seeking to tackle. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) arraigned five governors in 2007, convicting two; Nigeria's Inspector-General was convicted and sentenced to six months in jail; while several billions of naira in stolen money was recovered. The EFCC was, however, clearly used selectively by Obasanjo as a political instrument to intimidate and neuter his opponents.

This rich narrative demonstrates the importance of cultivating influential people in order to achieve key goals: in this case, the annulment of Nigeria's debt in 2005. US President George W. Bush and his Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; British Premier Tony Blair and his Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown; Mexican finance minister, Francisco Gil-Diaz; World Bank president, Jim Wolfensohn; the IMF's first deputy managing director, Anne Krueger; deputy German finance manager, Caio Koch-Weser (Okonjo-Iweala's former boss at the World Bank); senior deputy Director-General in Japan's finance ministry, Kiyoshi Kodera (a former World Bank colleague); Secretary-General at the Paris Club secretariat, Emmanuel Moulin (a former alternate World Bank Executive Director); and the World Bank's Nigeria country director, Hafez Ghanem – all play an instrumental part in Nigeria's debt drama. It was almost as if Okonjo-Iweala's two-decade career at the World Bank had prepared her for this historic role.

In one particularly memorable passage in the book, the author recounts a visit to the White House in May 2005 during which President Obasanjo struggles to convince George W. Bush to back the annulment of Nigeria's debt. Okonjo-Iweala steps in, realising that she may never get such an opportunity to state Abuja's case. Her points about Nigeria being a poor, infrastructure-starved country with a large population catches Bush's attention, and he asks for a letter setting out Nigeria's arguments, eventually obtaining American support for the debt deal. In another colourful passage, Okonjo-Iweala demonstrates great determination and resourcefulness in ambushing Italian finance minister, Domenico Siniscalco, in the Swiss ski resort of Davos. She button-holes him by grabbing his jacket, explains her mission, and manages to gain his support for Nigeria's debt annulment over a cup of tea.

For all her undoubted brilliance, Okonjo-Iweala has several blind spots. Her criticisms of the World Bank and IMF's diabolically devastating twenty-year socio-economic experiments – the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) – on African guinea-pigs from the 1980s, involving large-scale enforced cuts in health and education and consistently wrong advice, and conducted in an utterly unaccountable manner that often undermined the democratic wishes of African populations, are extremely muted. Many of the officials of these institutions are often technically gifted but staggeringly ignorant about the political, social, and cultural environments in which they are operating, leading them often to cause more harm than good. Okonjo-Iweala unsurprisingly comes across as an ideological proselytiser for World Bank doctrines of growth, 'good governance', property rights, and private enterprise. Her economic orthodoxy – and what critics dub 'trickle-down economics' that is obsessed with growth – has earned her many enemies on the intellectual left, though she often acted more pragmatically in government, not hesitating to promote state intervention when she thought it the right course to take.

Though a competent economist, Okonjo-Iweala can sometimes come across as politically naive. Critics have charged her with lacking a political antenna: she received much blame for the bungled effort to eliminate oil subsidies of $8 billion in Nigeria in October 2004. She had underestimated the widespread anger and cynicism of the Nigerian public towards a corrupt and corpulent political class that was not trusted to spend any surpluses resulting from removing oil subsidies in the public interest. (Six people were killed in the ensuing demonstrations). She again came in for scathing criticism when she pushed for removal of oil subsidies in her second stint as finance minister in January 2012, which led to nation-wide demonstrations, and the government of Goodluck Jonathan eventually negotiating a compromise.

Okonjo-Iweala sometimes describes issues such as the impact of the removal of fuel subsidies on the poor and massive retrenchments of workers in cold, technical language that is devoid of empathy. It is almost as if workers are units of labour rather than real people with flesh and bones, and families to feed. In April 2014, she declared that the Boko Haram terrorist threat had been 'isolated' in Borno and Yobe states. The group certainly had a much wider reach. In terms of gender issues, Okonjo-Iweala also appears to promote the fight by individual leadership rather than by waging specific gender-focused battles, opening her up to charges that, like the original 'Iron Lady' – Britain's Margaret Thatcher – she is no different from her power-seeking male colleagues, and often fails to promote the cause of women systematically.

Okonjo-Iweala also pulls her punches in her complex relationship with President Olusegun Obasanjo, euphemistically talking about him as sometimes using 'strong-arm tactics' to describe an autocratic leadership style. She tried unsuccessfully to resign a few weeks into the job in 2003 after Obasanjo announced publicly the moving of the Budget Office from the finance ministry to the presidency without consulting her. A compromise was eventually reached, and Okonjo-Iweala withdrew her resignation. Obasanjo would undermine his finance minister again in failing to support the reform of Nigeria's corruption-riddled port system. She was moved from finance to foreign minister by Obasanjo in June 2006 after – according to her account – she blocked powerful businessmen and their political patrons from the president's ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) from obtaining import licences for rice and other products (which would have hurt poor Nigerian rice farmers being encouraged to produce locally), allegedly in order to raise funds for the 2007 election.

Okonjo-Iweala seemed almost to distance the president from his own decision. It would have been interesting to know the extent to which she felt betrayed by the notoriously vindictive Obasanjo, having helped to steward the most important achievement of his presidency – the debt deal of 2005. Okonjo-Iweala cites Obasanjo condemning Nigeria's public enterprises as incompetent and corrupt without noting that many of these agencies had been set up under military regimes in which he had served in the 1970s. In another memorable incident in the book, Obasanjo banned – 'with immediate effect' – imports of glass bottles to Nigeria following a complaint from a local manufacturer during a meeting in the presidential mansion of 'Aso Rock', without any prior analysis or consultation. (The decision had to be partly reversed within six months). Despite taking off his military khaki to don civilian presidential robes, Obasanjo surely has to take some responsibility for some of Okonjo-Iweala's trenchant critiques of the two-decade mismanagement of military regimes and the corruption under his own civilian regime.

A prodigious and skilful networker, Okonjo-Iweala's stellar international reputation was confirmed when she ran for the president of the World Bank in 2012 at the urging of many of Africa's leaders and her international backers. She received the endorsement of the prestigious Western establishment publications, T*he Financial Times* and The Economist, as well as prominent economists like Indian-American Jagdish Bhagwati, who praised her 'enormous competence and renowned wit'. Shamefully, the World Bank and the IMF have been headed for the past seven decades by an American and European respectively.

After serving as the widely-respected Managing Director at the World Bank (its second most powerful position) between 2007 and 2011, Okonjo-Iweala returned to Nigeria in the enhanced position of minister for the economy and finance. Her 'second coming' has, however, not proved to be as messianic as the first, perhaps confirming the observation that there are no second acts in life. Okonjo-Iweala has struggled to have the same impact in her second stint as finance minister. The great debt deal – the marquee achievement of her first term – is being reversed under her very nose, as Nigeria's external debt rose to $9.7 billion and its domestic debt to a massive $57.9 billion by December 2014. Her impeccable integrity of the first term has been increasingly questioned. Accusations have increased of her turning a blind eye to graft to pursue greater political ambitions.

In February 2014, the governor of Nigeria's Central Bank, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, blew the whistle on an alleged $12 billion (from an initial claim of $20 billion) in missing funds from the accounts of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). Okonjo-Iweala investigated and noted that the missing amount was closer to $10.8 billion, and demanded a forensic audit of the NNPC. Many asked how a finance minister could be in the dark about the apparent disappearance of a sum amounting to Nigeria's entire budget in 2002. Okonjo-Iweala was clearly rattled by the political damage to her international reputation. In an interview with the BBC following these claims, she lost her cool, noting: 'It would be very easy for me to sit at the World Bank and earn a nice salary and criticise. I gave up a comfortable career to come here...'. In a fit of *folie de grandeur*, Okonjo-Iweala appeared to depict her service as a favour to the country. This was clearly not her finest moment.

Despite these difficulties, the finance minister's second term has not been completely devoid of achievements. Like the fabled tell-tale 'Amebo' in Nigeria's grand drama of a 'Village Headmaster', she blew the whistle on the damage of oil bunkering to the national fiscus, revealing, in February 2012, that such theft resulted in the loss of $1 billion a month (155,000 barrels a day) to the treasury. For her outspoken courage, Nigeria's 'Iron Lady' has had to endure some difficult personal incidents. Her 83-year old mother was kidnapped for five days in December 2012. The traumatised 'Iron Lady' revealed a religious side, praying successfully for her mother's safe return.

So, was Okonjo-Iweala successful in 'reforming the unreformable'? Though clearly steeped in the dark arts of bureaucratic intrigue after two decades in the snake-pit that is the World Bank, Okonjo-Iweala and her band of reformers lacked the necessary political power to move a country as diverse and complex as Nigeria to adopt her reforms in a sustained manner. If one assesses her efforts in terms of the goals of the comprehensive strategy of NEEDS set out by the reformers, the results are not encouraging. Nigeria still suffers from poor economic manage-

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ment and poor governance; the country's public institutions remain weak, while the state is still failing woefully to deliver public services in areas such as electricity and water. The author herself notes that Nigeria would require $10 billion annually in infrastructure investments – the amount that the country spent on food imports in 2010, even though it clearly had the capacity to feed itself. Despite $1 billion annually being channelled into poverty reduction programmes (a condition of Nigeria's debt annulment deal), such programmes have clearly failed to have any appreciable impact on relieving the misery of the country's teeming masses. This is despite widespread youth unemployment, even as 70 per cent of Nigerians are 30 years old or younger.

Okonjo-Iweala admits that her team of reformers underestimated how much time it would take to implement and embed their reforms. She also concedes that they had tried to take on too much at the same time, and should have better prioritised and sequenced the reforms. A decade after Nigeria's historic debt deal, poverty and inequality continue to be unacceptably high in Nigeria, with an estimated 70 per cent of the population of 160 million living below the poverty line. The country's public health and education sectors have crumbled, as has much of its infrastructure. Corruption remains as rampant and embedded in economic life as it was a decade ago. The economy, it seems, is growing, but the people are clearly growing poorer!

For all the loud talk of Nigeria being one of the world's fastest-growing economies since 2003, Nigerian economist Adebayo Adedeji's caution in the 1980s – while serving as the Executive Director of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) – against an approach of 'growth without development' that resulted from the two Bretton Woods institutions' Structural Adjustment Programmes, does not seem to have been heeded. Even Okonjo-Iweala concedes at the end of her book that the jury is still out on whether her reforms had launched Nigeria on the path to sustainable growth and development. Particularly since her doctorate at MIT focused on regional economic development and she served as Nigeria's foreign minister for three months between June and August 2006, it would have been useful to have seen in the book a strategy for harnessing Nigeria's domestic development efforts to those of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Despite these shortcomings, Nigeria's 'Iron Lady' should be credited for her incredible achievement in annulling the country's $30 billion external debt and for bringing some sanity to the country's financial management. Ever the optimist having survived the trauma of living through a civil war, Okonjo-Iweala's faith in Nigerians seems undiminished: 'This is an entrepreneurial country. Everybody's hustling'. Moving from the local to the continental level, the author also recognises the potential of Pax Nigeriana in noting: 'When Nigeria succeeds in transforming itself, it will transform Africa'.

The Great Lakes Region and Southern Africa in Historical and Contemporary Perspective

Moses Khisa

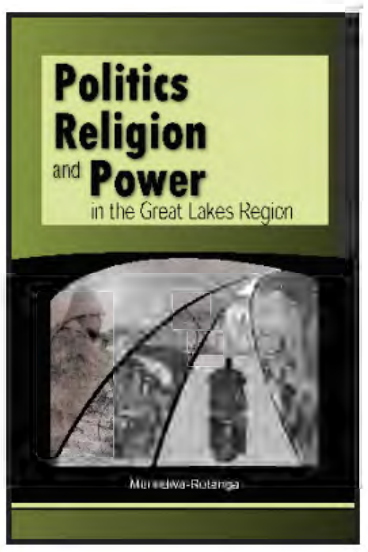
Politics, Religion and Power in the Great Lakes Region
By Murindwa-Rutanga
CODESRIA (in association with Fountain Publishers, Kampala),
2011, $10, ISBN 978-286978-492-5 (CODESRIA), 987-9970-25-070-7
(Fountain), 270 pages

Region-Building in Southern Africa: Progress, Problems and Prospects
edited by Chris Saunders, Gwinyayi A. Dzinesa and Dawn Nagar
Centre for Conflict Resolution, Wits University Press and Zed Books, 2012, $40,
ISBN 978-1-86814-576-8, 370 pages

Introduction

The two volumes under review offer rich insights into the checkered histories but also the present and future prospects of the Great Lakes Region (GLR) of east and central africa and the Southern Africa region. The volumes lay out in greater depth the varied social struggles and political contests that have defined the two regions in quite important ways. These volumes have intersecting and contrasting thrusts. While Murindwa-Rutanga's P*olitics, Religion and Power in the Great Lakes Region* (hereafter PRP) is largely steeped in historical inquiry – the precolonial and colonial power struggles and the role of religion, with rather limited glimpse into contemporary implications – *Region-Building in Southern Africa* (hereafter RBSA) starts off with a somewhat truncated historical reference but proceeds to give considerable attention to contemporary attempts at 'region-building' in Southern Africa. On balance, the former volume has a more scholarly orientation while the latter is more policy-focused. Taken together, however the two volumes complement one another in offering novel historical analyses and contemporary insights on the two regions.

This essay takes each volume in turn, starting with PRP, showing what each title promises and delivers, and the extent to which the authors do justice to the stated project. The review essay has three parts. The first part highlights PRP's central claims, pointing out how it advances our knowledge of the Great Lakes region but also underlining some lapses that inevitably attend every scholarly work. In the second part, I turn to the second volume, highlighting the same set of issues. In the third and final part, I offer concluding reflections and recap the major findings and key messages conveyed by the two volumes. At the core of both volumes is the colonial origin of contemporary power dynamics in the two regions.



Precolonial antecedents to anticolonial struggles

PRP is an important addition to the huge corpus of scholarship on anticolonial struggles across the African continent,-showing how colonial conquest recast and reconfigured power dynamics and social relations. The book is a timely intervention against the backdrop of revisionist histories that have sought to downplay the enormous impact that colonial conquest wrought on African communities. Undoubtedly, there is a plethora of scholarship by anthropologists, historians, and political scientists on the subject of colonial rule and postcolonial legacies. One may then be tempted to wonder what a new book on the same subject has to offer. Well, there is quite a bit that the author of PRP laudably achieves and brilliantly exposes, both methodologically and empirically, as I will show below.

PRP 'focuses on the European invasion of the GLR. It analyzes the factors that underlay the invasion, the demarcation process that followed and the indigenous people's responses to it. The book uncovers the different forms of conflicts – endogenous and exogenous, popular and individualized, legitimate and anti-establishment, anti-imperialist, passive and militant, benign and virulent…' (pp. 6-7). The concept Great Lakes Region, Murindwa-Rutanga writes, was coined by the colonialists to refer to the territory in east and central Africa endowed with a heavy concentration of large lakes and rivers (p. 8). A great deal of colonial conquest involved social reengineering, including renaming natural resources such as water bodies.'In effort to export their history as they created their legacy, the British colonial invaders renamed four of these lakes after their English rulers. These were: Lake Nalubale, which became Lake Victoria – the largest lake in the world with fresh water; Lake Rwitanzigye, renamed Lake Edward; and Lake Katunguru, which became Lake George. Another lake on the border between DRC and Uganda was renamed Lake Albert' (ibid).'

The GLR was an area of intense and heated colonial rivalry, which on several occasions brought the major European colonial powers to the brink of war. What unfolded in the colonization of this region was its transformation into a theatre of vicious inter-imperialist struggles which nearly led to a grievous imperialist war and the anti-imperialist struggles which thrived in various forms (p. 65). Murindwa-Rutanga ably dissects these two forms of conflict, the inter-colonial rivalry and the anti-colonial resistance. As colonial powers jockeyed for territorial control, the indigenous peoples exploited the mobilizing force of religion to fight the invaders. The author finds that in the absence of organized state power to protect and defend the local people militarily, religion was a readily available substitute (p. 22). The conflict was compounded by the role of foreign African agents employed to impose colonial rule. While anticolonial leadership in much of the area that PRP covers came from indigenous religions, colonial administrative manpower was imported in the absence of established centralized political systems. As the author notes, '[t]here was no broad, visible, organized political structure in the area, which British colonialism could manipulate to introduce, promote, and protect British interests through its demagogy of protectionism called "indirect rule"' (p. 93). Administrators and soldiers were thus imported from Britain, Buganda, Ankole, Tanganyika, and India.

The mounting colonial rivalry in the area reached fever-pitch levels by 1910, best captured in a telegraph by the Bel-

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gian commander to the Acting Governor of the Uganda Protectorate:

> Last warning to commanders of British troops: By numerous letters I have informed you that I consider any forward movement of your troops [as] tantamount to an attack on our position. My force… will open fire from now, and you will take on yourself along and entirely the heavy responsibility of the armed conflict which you are provoking.

The British on their part reacted to this stern warning by informing the 'Belgian government immediately that the British forces in Mfumbiro [the contested area] had been ordered not to make any forward movement without instructions directly from London…' But the author's meticulous investigation finds that the British were issuing this pacifist assurance when in fact preparing for war with a standby force of 800 King's African Rifles. In any event, a major World War on African soil was averted through a series of treaties, including the Anglo-German Treaty of 1 July 1890 and 26 August 1910, the Boundary Agreement of 19 May 1909, and the Anglo-Belgium Congo-Uganda Boundary Agreement of 14 May 1910.

Contemporaneous with heightened imperial rivalry, there arose a series of especially religious-inspired anticolonial movements, the most important being the Nyabingi Movement. This Movement is the central focus of PRP. The author traces the Movement's evolution from its formative stages to the peak of its activities in parts of Rwanda and Burundi, northern Tanganyika, eastern Congo-Zaire, and in parts of central, western and southwestern Uganda. 'Despite increased state repression, massacres, imprisonment and deportations, Nyabingi resistance continued flaring up between 1910 and the mid-1930s' (p.102). The movement was anchored on Nyabingi indigenous religion, which the British administrators and other colonial authorities found to be mystic, troubling, and difficult to comprehend. Thus a colonial official was to lament with a sardonic tone of resignation, 'Nyabingi is a female spirit which is the god and religion of these people, and therefore the difficulty in eradicating the beliefs is extreme…' (p. 113). In everyday life, Nyabingi was associated with a female spirit, believed to be living under the earth and appearing 'with rapid transformative powers into feminine personalities (p. 106).' The movement produced a long list of female *abagirwa* (priestesses), including the one time influential commander Muhumuza. Others were Kaigirirwa, Wahire, Chandungusi, Mukeiganira, Nyinabatwa, and Kanyanyira, who were either killed in battle or captured and deported to far-flung places.

In sum, in the early years of establishing colonial administration in the GLR, imperial rivalry raged on at the same time that a people's anticolonial struggle under the Nyabingi Movement intensified. Through careful archival research and life-stories, Murindwa-Rutanga meticulously shows the relentless and protracted resistance put up across the areas of southwestern Uganda, Burundi, the Congo-Rwanda-Uganda borders and Tanzania, in the end engulfing and entrapping at least four major colonial powers: Britain, Belgium, France, and Germany. 'There were serious, long and bloody resistances emerging under the leadership of various personalities, with different historical origins, training, and experience…' (p. 112). The unrelenting resistance forced the colonial authorities to make concessions including exempting certain areas like Butare, Bufundi, and parts of Bufumbira from taxation (p. 153).

The movement's leadership employed a range of strategic and tactical maneuvers, posing a serious dilemma to the colonial forces. Most important was the planning and timing of their struggle to coincide with imperial rivalry, their capacity to incorporate various sections into the movement, and their ability to sustain the struggle for long spells (p.112). Although the movement was indigenous and steeped in tradition and folklore, it benefitted from external developments, especially the First World War, getting new leadership from World War returnees and obtaining the enemy's military hardware, planning, and commanding (p. 222). However, by 1939, the movement had considerably weakened (p. 190). The author identifies several reasons for its defeat, including weak organization and lack of broader unity of peasants in the region, the failure to neutralize collaborators, either politically or militarily, and the crude pre-capitalist weapons and military methods (Ibid). Also, successive defeats, massacres, tortures, imprisonments, public executions, and deportations demoralized resisters (ibid).

The Book's Strengths and Weaknesses

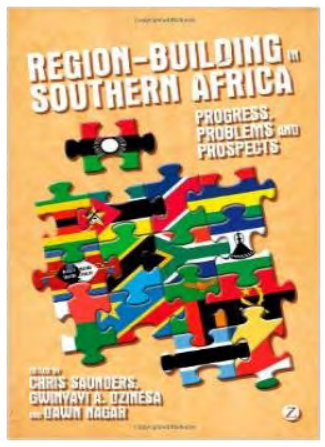
This book's invaluable contribution to the study of colonial rule and anticolonial movements in Africa cannot be overemphasized. The author offers a remarkable analysis of the mobilizing role of religion and the course of resistance in the GLR inspired by the Nyabingi Movement. The author aptly notes in the concluding chapter that 'The Nyabingi Movement is a concrete testimony to people's persistent struggles to defend their rights and independence.' This point is worth belaboring because of the claims especially by official colonial historians who tended to distort the way colonial rule was received in different African communities. Murindwa-Rutanga's study brings out persuasively the manner in which indigenous Africans reacted with hostility to colonial invasion and waged protracted popular struggle against it. Secondly, PRP brilliantly illuminates the organizing role of indigenous religions, which brings to the fore a less appreciated role of African religions as distinct from the usual romanticized sorcery and witchcraft that had fascinated for long Western-Eurocentric scholarship.

Equally important to note is that, using official archival sources, Murindwa-Rutanga has written a work of social history that is nothing short of subaltern historiography in its orientation, analytical rigor and methodological thrust. To brilliantly write subaltern history using official sources is truly admirable. The author is quite impressive in his ability to carefully and patiently read official colonial documents and bring out crucial messages, voices, and even silences seldom intended by the authors. In the end, he skillfully weaves a narrative that straddles the worlds of social movement literature, social history, and the legacies of colonial rule.

Finally, PRP shows the early forces and contestations that forged and shaped the GLR. In a sense, the author's project parallels that of 'region-making' undertaken in the second volume under review by pointing to the early formation of the contemporary GLR. This is ably highlighted in the last page of the book's concluding chapter. Murindwa-Rutanga writes, 'this study has demonstrated that the real contestations for colonization of the GLR, as it is currently known, took place largely in the Kivu-Mulera-Rukiga-Mpororo region. All the contestations and negotiations marked the forging of the Great Lakes States as they are known today' (p. 229). This is by far the boldest and most important statement of this work, yet it is the one that poses the biggest problem for the book. Like many ambitiously written books, this book's undoubtable strength also turns out to be its weakness.

The curious reader will feel a bit disappointed that the book starts off quite promisingly as a study of the Great Lakes Region but quickly narrows down to southwestern Uganda with rather limited and isolated reference to developments across the borders in Burundi, Rwanda, Congo, and Tanzania. The author needed to demonstrate more persuasively how the movement reverberated across the vast GLR and the extent to which it shaped political developments, especially in the aftermath of its defeat. It would have greatly enriched the book's project had the author taken time to trace the lasting legacies of the movement. For example, did the Nyabingi Movement have any bearing on subsequent agitations for independence and proliferation of post-independence social and political movements, including Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement, which the author only cursorily alludes to?

Relatedly, some readers may feel hard done by the author's conspicuous silence on contemporary political developments in the GLR since the book's concluding chapter alludes to the role of Nyabingi in forging today's states of the GLR. Social and political movements, including those steeped in religious belief like the Nyabingi, have sprung up in post-independence times, contesting precisely the same misrule, oppression, and exploitation



that spurred Nyabingi fighters. Since the author makes mention of today's GLR states in the book's concluding chapter, it would be expected of him as a citizen-intellectual not to stop at outlining the excesses of colonialism and local resistance but also comment on contemporary political mismanagement including the despicable orgies of election rigging, political repression, and kleptocracy.

Region-Building in Southern Africa

The authors and editors of RBSA commendably assembled an impressive set of articles that offer incisive insights into the colonial antecedents to regionalism in Southern Africa: from the false starts to the promises and prospects as well as the continuing push for a bloc that remains under the shadow and towering influence of the region's economic and military hegemon – South Africa. Although some contributors to RBSA allude to the rising power of Angola, post-apartheid South Africa nevertheless remains the foremost benefactor in a region where the majority of states are materially impoverished. The anti-colonial and anti-apartheid provenance of southern African regionalism is unmistakable. The struggle against white minority rule in South Africa and Rhodesia, coupled with the protracted resistance against the lingering Portuguese colonial presence in Angola and Mozambique, provided the initial impetus for southern African unity. The regionalism started with the lose association of the Mulungushi Club, later transformed into the Front Line States (FLS) in 1975. This initial endeavor was primarily a political and military collaboration against late colonialism and white minority rule. Taking off from this early formative stage, the authors and editors of RBSA trace the traipsed evolution of arguably Africa's largest regional grouping, encompassing 'the entire southern half of the African continent as well as island-states off the East African coast' (p.6).

Outline of the Book

RBSA is a comprehensive volume, covering a wide range of themes in regional integration under the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

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The book has five major parts. Part one, 'Historical Legacy,'has chapters by the distinguished Kenyan scholar Gilbert Khadiagala and Kaire Mbuende, a former Executive Secretary of SADC. Khadiagala offers a broad but remarkably incisive introduction to the origins and processes leading to the formation of SADC in 1992.Mbuenda on his part gives an 'insider's view' of the workings and failings of SADC. Part two (with four chapters) on 'Governance and Military Security' covers a wide range of topics: SADC's decision-making architecture (by Chris Landsberg), elections and conflict management (by Khabele Matlosa), peacekeeping (by Chris Saunders), and gender and peacebuilding (by Elizabeth Otitodun and Antonia Porter). The third part of the book shifts to addressing economic integration issues proper. Its three chapters include Dawn Nagar's assessment of three initiatives under SADC: the Southern African Power Pool, the SADC Free Trade Area, and the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan. The other two chapters, one by Richard Gibb and the other by David Monyae, examine SADC's Customs Union and its development finance institutions, respectively.

In part four (with four chapters), Scott Drimie and Sithabiso Gandure discuss the problem of food insecurity, noting that although SADC Heads of State and Government adopted the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in May 2004, progress is hindered by weak institutional policy frameworks. The second chapter on HIV/AIDS and human security by Gwinyayi Dzinesa argues that 'in Southern Africa, HIV/AIDS has deepened and prolonged household poverty' (p. 200). As such, the region 'remains the global epicenter of the HIV/AIDS pandemic…' (p. 210). In the other two chapters, one on migration and xenophobia by the eminent Cameroonian scholar Francis Nyamnjoh and Patience Mususa and the second on climate change by David Simon (two subjects that animate global debate), the subjects are analyzed in the context of a region that has had a fair share of migration and climate change problems. Nyamnjoh and Mususa address the 'hard questions about the politics of citizenship in the region [and] the impact of neoliberal economic policies on livelihoods' (p. 216). Simon on his part analyzes SADC's policy on climate change, noting that 'the first substantive and clear attempt by SADC to integrate climate change into its programs and activities was not made until 2008…' (p. 238).

In the final part of the book, three authors – Mzukisi Qobo, Nomfundo Xenia Ngwenya and Garth le Pere – respectively assess the contrasting influences on SADC of three major external players: the European Union, the United States, and China. Qobo argues that SADC's many decades of over-dependence on the EU has created a client relationship and 'effectively locked SADC into Brussels' sphere of influence' and that the rise of emerging powers such as China, India, and Brazil has prompted the EU to consolidate its hold and increase its global market share relative to the rising powers (p. 251). As regards US-SADC relations, Ngwenya highlights the nuances in shifting US foreign policy in the region from the Cold-War era through the Clinton, Bush, and Obama years. She notes the rising strategic place of Angola that is likely to disturb South Africa's special relationship with Washington. Finally, on Sino-African relations, le Pere argues that the historical dependence on the EU and US has recently been mitigated by China's entry into Africa, providing different menu options and an alternative to the 'Washington Consensus.' But while Beijing spoke of engaging with African institutions on a multilateral basis, its Africa policy has been largely bilateral, 'a divide and rule tactic' (p. 289).

In the concluding chapter, the editors draw from the foregoing sixteen chapters of the book to end with a prescriptive message for more region-building to tackle the region's practical problems. In sum, the book undertakes a sweeping assessment of a complex set of issues in southern Africa with SADC as the pivotal player. Since its formation in Windhoek, Namibia in 1992, underscored by the editors in the introduction, 'SADC has been the most important regional organization in southern Africa. It has constructed an elaborate structure to deal with economic, political and security issues…'(p. 16).

What the Book Accomplishes

This volume has many accomplishments; I will focus on only a few. First, part one of the book, especially the chapter by Khadiagala, brilliantly traces southern African regionalism back to the1960s and the informal Mulungushi Club (later FLS) of Presidents Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere. Khadiagala's chapter is complemented by the 'insider-view' chapter by SADC's former Executive Secretary, Kaire Mbuende. But as an anticolonial alliance, the collapse of Portuguese rule in Angola and Mozambique, and the end of Ian Smith's white minority rule in southern Rhodesia meant that the FLS had somewhat run its course. Thus, it was transformed into the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1980 and later the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The transformation of FLS into SADCC and finally SADC, and '[t]he reemergence of South Africa within SADC marked a decisive transformation from a decolonization-driven regionalism to functional integration…' (p. 33).

A key message in Khadiagala's chapter, and indeed the entire volume, is that Southern African regionalism has parallels with the European Economic Community/Union (EEC/U). The latter, which started as the European Coal and Steel Community, was forged as a lasting solution to a security complex involving Franco-German rivalry, especially over the Rhine industrial frontier. Since the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, control over the Rhine area had remained a source of potential and actual armed hostility. Indeed, it was a major contributory factor to the outbreak of the Second World War. Therefore, the solution to the high-politics of securing geopolitical strategic interests was sought in the realm of low politics – in functionalist economic integration. RBSA too suggests that economic integration, perhaps inadvertently, was born out of the high politics of fighting colonialism, apartheid, and white minority rule. But whereas the EU project was seen as a bulwark against armed conflict, SADCC and later SADC was intended to foster collective development based on historical political solidarity and security cooperation. Basing economic integration on security cooperation was a point of strength but also a problem. This leads me to the second key element of RBSA: quite apart from the EU integration process, the SADC gradualist integration has an inverted logic; it is a case of putting the cart before the horse.

While the EEC, and closer home the East African Community, started as an economic cooperation to cure political and security problems, SADC started as a security/political cooperation, which later gravitated towards economic cooperation. The Mulungushi Club and FLS were primarily anticolonial/anti-apartheid security cooperation arrangements while SADCC moved the cooperation to an economic level. The 1992 SADC Treaty sought to merge the two and achieve both political cooperation and economic integration, but little progress has been made so far. Little wonder therefore that SADC's progress has been hampered by, among other things, the influence of individual national political leaders, state-centric approaches, and a less empowered secretariat. The elite group that started as the Mulungushi Club created a legacy of elite camaraderie that continues to hamper the growth of independent and credible regional institutions.

If the FLS forum was built around credible political and security considerations, the end of colonialism and apartheid meant that successful economic cooperation and integration would necessitate a kind of convergence of economic interests. This is something that the authors of RBSA fail to confront directly. By taking this tack, the book would have yielded theoretical insights especially in accounting for why the neo-functionalist approach has not succeeded in the manner that it worked with the EEC/EU. What is more, it appears that the shared need for accelerated socioeconomic development among southern Africa states is a necessary but not quite a sufficient condition to compel individual nation-states to fully embrace the agenda of full political and market integration. This political economy dynamic deserved more space in such an authoritative book than it was granted. In the absence of overarching cross-border economic interests, southern African states are engaged in individualized dependence on external patrons, especially China today, meaning that in turn the regional integration project has tended to be subordinated to foreign interests and calculations – something sidelined in RBSA.

By Way of Conclusion

The two books offer contrasting and rich insights into two important regions of Africa. While Murindwa-Rutanga's historically grounded work sheds light on European colonial rivalry over what became the GLR and the resultant indigenous resistances, especially the Nyabingi Movement, RBSA is a more contemporary analysis and policy-oriented study of previous as well as ongoing attempts at forging a regional bloc against the backdrop of a shared political and historical experience. Thus, if the first volume gives the reader important lessons in scholarship, such as the author's meticulous use of official sources to weave a subaltern historical narrative, the second volume offers practical and invaluable policy lessons on the progress and prospects of regional integration. Regrettably though, both volumes fall short on the account of making a direct and persuasive link between the past and the present, between historical insights and contemporary realities. PRP dwells on how the Nyabingi Movement became a defining development in the making of the GLR but says little about its contemporary legacies. By contrast, RBSA starts off by acknowledging the historical bases of region-building in Southern Africa but grants little attention to how it is precisely that same history that explains not only the prospects for the region but also the impediments to its progress.

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Salvaging Mogadishu from Ruin and Rubble

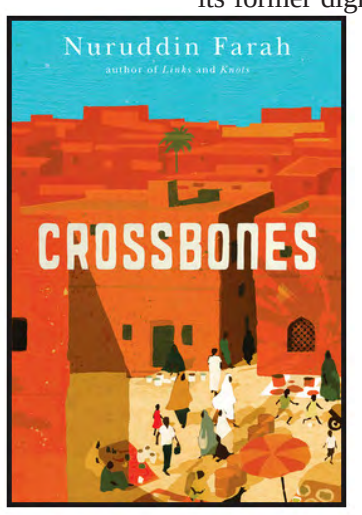
Geetha Ganga

Crossbones
by Nuruddin Farah
Riverhead Books (New York), 2011, Paperback $11.59 Hardcover $20.07 Pages 389 ISBN-10: 9780143122531 ISBN-13: 978-0143122531

For decades, exiled author Nuruddin Farah has dreamt, written and carried Somalia, 'the country of his imagination,' throughout his nomadic existence. His eleven novels, one non-fictional study of the Somali diaspora, articles, essays, broadcasts and interviews bear testimony to this fact and are literary manifestations of the tragic turn of events in postcolonial Somalia. He was forced to flee Somalia, after having incurred the wrath of Mohamed Siyad Barre, for his satirical and critical remarks against the Barre regime in his second novel, *A Naked Needle* (1978). Today, Farah has earned a distinguished and rightful place for himself among Anglophone-African writers and internationally. *A Naked Needle* is one of his least Somali novels and a very silly work, (when compared to his later works that engage explicitly with Somali politics, culture and society), as Farah puts it across in a conversation with Kenyan author and journalist Binyavanga Wainaina.

Farah's trilogies entitled, *Variations on the theme of an African Dictatorship* (1978-83), *Blood in the Sun* (1986-93) and the latest, *Past Imperfect* (2004-11), are fictionalized accounts of the chaotic and turbulent periods of Somali history – the autocratic and tyrannical regime of Siyad Barre (1969-91), the war with neighbouring Ethiopia over disputed Ogaden (1977-78) and the pitfalls of nationalism, the neocolonial dependency of the 1980s, the civil war of 1991, and the subsequent state-collapse of Somalia in 1992. On a broader basis, the books deal with the culture of silence and fear imposed by dictators on the people and other representations of dictatorship, the pitfalls of nationalism and how foreign aid can thwart cultural development and cause an erosion of self esteem in people's psyche and much more. The three books comprising the *Past Imperfect* trilogy – *Links* (2004), *Knots* (2009) and *Crossbones* (2011), historicize Somalia's post-collapse era starting from the abrupt withdrawal of the U.S. troops in 1993, and the UN forces in 1995, in Mogadishu to the infighting that followed much later between the Transitional Federal Government and the hard-line Islamist factions.

An overwhelming sense of foreboding and gloom descends on *Crossbones*, the final book of the trilogy, as the narrative revolves around the disappearance of a young Minnesota-based Somali lad, rumoured to have joined the Al-Shabaab, the booming piracy business off the shores of Somalia, the alleged collaboration of pirates with Al-Shabaab, and the impending Ethiopian invasion of Somalia of 2006. The Somalis' resentment towards their "age-old enemy Ethiopia," "the bully next door," further complicates matters in the Somalia contextualized in *Crossbones* (120). The Somali radical religionists are waiting for a confrontation with Ethiopia in the hope of pitting the Muslim world against Christian-led Ethiopia, in spite of the fact that Ethiopia has a stronger military power, is an ally of the United States and has definitely more chances of gaining an upper hand in the face-off (25). The Muslim world is clearly at a crossroads as they split into radicals and moderates and it is against this turbulent background that the narrative of *Crossbones* is set. Clearly, there is no place more dangerous than Mogadishu considering the circumstances, especially for journalists reporting the war. Malik refers to the numerous slain journalists as 'heroes of obtrusiveness' as they are a highly endangered breed (247).



Farah's novels are generally set in Mogadishu against specific historical time-frames, However, in the latest, *Past Imperfect* trilogy, Mogadishu gains more prominence as it stands as a metaphor for the political vacuum and hollow authority of stateless Somalia. So, when diaspora-returnees Jeebleh of *Links*, Cambara of *Knots*, Jeebleh and Malik, of *Crossbones*, are made to (re)visit Mogadishu, after decades, a deliberate strategy on the part of Farah, they are startled and emotionally pulverized as Mogadishu is nothing short of an inferno, having borne so much of the brunt of the violence and mayhem during and after the civil war. Things have fallen apart and Mogadishu, the erstwhile centre cannot hold any longer and is a breeding ground for warlordism, religious extremism, militancy, various kinds of criminality and mindless violence just as tartar-infested and 'diseased gums are rich with pockets in which germs find homes ...' (112). In *Secrets* (1998), the final instalment of the *Blood in the Sun* trilogy, which is largely Farah's complex artistic response to his personal visit to Somalia after many years, he is speechless at the Somali obsession with lineage and genealogy. Hence, in *Secrets*, we see the termite-eaten fundaments of the Somali nation's state-structures on the verge of collapse owing to the clan-eat-clan politics of the early nineties that degenerated into the civil war. The civil war led to more clan-based animosities and violence.

Several Somali poets and songsmiths have sung the glories of the Mogadishu of the past whilst bemoaning its present devastated state. Lidwein Kapteijns shows how these poems by representing Mogadishu's past in many ways also envision and try to influence the future. Mogadishu becomes the site of memory-making for the future because of its centrality to history. One of the most popular and celebrated Somali poets, Hadrawi, has a verse that runs thus: 'You, umbilical cord of my country, nerve centre of my people, Mogadishu how are you?' (Kaptjeins: 40). One might argue that Nuruddin Farah's novels do something similar for different time periods.

The stark and grim images of the protracted warfare are inscribed on the city, observes Farah and is now deprived of its former dignity and glory and devoid of character. Note Farah's own shock and dismay at Mogadishu's sad plight: in his own words: '…I am aware of its unparalleled war-torn decrepitude: almost every structure is pockmarked by bullets, and many homes are on their sides, falling in on themselves' (Farah, *The City in My Mind*).

In an analytical study of 'ruins' in war and post-war Lebanese novels, Ken Seigneurie, contends that ruin and rubble provide key links in an implicit narrative and are indicators of atrocities committed in the past, ruin in the present and, most importantly, necessity for action, to prevent what happened from happening again, a future utopia. 'As metonyms of the past, ruins can be memory's and art's point of contact with historical experience' (Seigneurie:18). Farah's nostalgic written piece, on the Tamarind Market, one of the prominent landmarks of Mogadishu, in the good old days, reads like a dirge as he laments the murder and death of the spirit of cosmopolitanism, once a unique and distinct feature of Mogadishu.

In Farah's opinion, what has killed Mogadishu's cosmopolitanism is nothing but intolerance (58). While a synagogue in neighbouring Djibouti, inhabited by a Muslim majority, is preserved by its tolerant residents, the ancient Catholic cathedral in Mogadishu was looted and razed to the ground during the early phase of the civil war. An Italian bishop, head of a Catholic-funded orphanage, one of the oldest institutions in the city, was killed. An Al-Shabaab-operative had desecrated the Italian cemeteries after they gained power in the early 2000's, by digging up bones and scattering them around in a sacrilegious manner. Television programmes aired on al-Jazeera featuring Somalis had in the foreground ruins of the 12th century Arbaco Rukus mosque, destroyed in the 1991 civil war (99). Thus we see not only violent histories emerge out of this chaos and destruction but also a cultural retrogression problematized in *Crossbones*.

The Bakhaaraha Market area, the prime location of the war has emerged as a public monument and artifact as evidenced by the visit of the Task Force Rangers, of the infamous 'Battle of Mogadishu', to commemorate the twentieth anniversary and, as an act of remembrance, revisited the war sites and wreckage, around this area which is also a recurring theme of the *Past Imperfect* trilogy. Hence we find, Jeebleh of *Links*, Cambara of *Knots*, Jeebleh, Malik and Ahl of *Crossbones*, go around the city to survey, contemplate and to tarry around the ruin and rubble and also to learn of things firsthand, in contrast to the biased and partisan outsider perceptions of the ongoing conflict in Somalia. 'Standing by the ruins' or 'stopping by ruins', in Seigneurie's opinion, is one of the ways in which societies address the dark chapters in their history.

Besides, their visits to Mogadishu are timed when the city is tossed among the warlords, religionists and the American and Ethiopian interventionists, though sadly there is hardly any difference among the religionists, warlords or the Federalists as opined by Bile, an old acquaintance of Jeebleh, in both *Links* and *Crossbones*. Journalist Malik's impromptu remark, 'Mogadiscians have seen warlords of all varieties…', sums up the bitterness and disillusionment experienced by the Somalis caught in the crosshairs of various tendencies (225, 57).

However, the Mogadiscio that Koschin, the central protagonist in *A Naked Needle*, inhabits was totally different from what Jeebleh gets to see of the same city twenty four years later.

> Mogadiscio had known centuries of attrition; one army leaving death and destruction in its wake to be replaced by another and another and yet another, all equally destructive: the Arabs arrived and got some purchase on the peninsula, and after they pushed their commerce and along with it the Islamic faith, they were replaced by the Italians, then the Russians, and more recently the Americans… (*Links* 14-15).

Links is set in a Mogadishu with tell-tale marks of the American 'intravasion'. Jeebleh, the central protagonist sees for himself 'the bullet-starred, mortar-struck, machine-gun showered' three-storey building and pieces of metal of the black hawk helicopters that were shot down during the infamous Battle of Mogadiscio of 1993, the subject of the film *Black Hawk Down*, showing the war from a totally American perspective (*Links*: 71).

But when Malik, the journalist in *Crossbones* with expertise in reporting from the major conflict areas of the world – (Afghanistan, Congo and Iraq), wants to focus his concentrated energy 'on boning up everything Somali,' he encounters a city that is 'disoriented by fresh ruins from the latest confrontation between the warlords and the Courts ...' (26). As in a typical war novel or a film that lingers over houses with their insides caved in or a bullet-riddled statue, Malik, in deep contemplation, muses over the rubble which 'seldom divulges the secret sorrows it contains' (26).

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What is most tragic about the victims of civil war or natural disasters or calamities, according to Nuruddin is that often no one knows how many have perished. What is worse, 'One never gets to hear the last words that passed their lips, or what, in the end, caused their death: a falling beam, a failing heart, a spear of bullet-shattered glass. Or sheer exhaustion with living in such horrid circumstances day in and day out?' (26). Sadly, forensic technology is unable to help in such matters and inadequate documentation on the dead intensifies the tragedy.

As the governance of the city passes from one hand to the other, Mogadishu, acquires a different dimension and character which in turn is reflected in 'the attitudes of the city's residents, their dress habits and even… diet… depending on the politics of the country's competing factions (Farah, *The City in My Mind*). Hence, in *Links*, Jeebleh is privy to the great-divide in Mogadiscio, indicated by a green line demarcating the territories controlled by the two major warlords, Mohammed Farah Aideed and Ali Mahdi. And, by the time veiled Cambara of *Knots* is in Mogadiscio, the power-scales have tilted towards the Islamists and the Union of Islamic Courts, UIC, imposing rigorous cultural codes and taboos, especially on women, but also making up new ones.

A pervasive sense of authoritarianism enforced by the puritanical-religionists is strikingly evident in the first few pages of *Crossbones*, even as Cambara, propped in a body tent which appears more like a theatre prop or just a mere costume, saunters along the run-down East Wardhiigley district of Mogadiscio. Crossbones contextualizes the time period during which the UIC took over the reigns of Mogadiscio, in the early 2000, and had expanded the rule of Sharia law making veiling *de rigueur*. Women in trousers and less restrictive dresses were whiplashed for supposedly sabotaging the Islamic way of life and 'American-inspired bra contraptions' were condemned.

Beard-sporting youth clad in white robes are a common sight in the Mogadiscio depicted in *Crossbones* while some others are in military or 'ill-matched uniform assembled from various post-collapse loyalties' (26). Overall, Mogadiscio's political contours have changed, suggesting 'an empire of a different thrust …' at work in Somalia (25). One hears echoes of the general frustration of many Somalis oppressed by the religionists through Bile's words when he states that he prefers a spineless secular state to a religionist one run by a bearded cabal (120). It is important to state here that are several variations among the Islamists' and not all are radical or violent as al-Shabaab.

Is statelessness a boon or a bane is the pertinent question raised in *Links*. The immense potential of women as peace brokers is the central underlying theme of *Knots*, dedicated to the cause of women, while *Crossbones* is a narrative that is interwoven with recent news reports on Somali pirates. Furthermore, the diaspora engagement towards peace and reconstruction is also suggested in these books.

Jeebleh of *Links* reappears along with his journalist son-in-law Malik in Mogadishu and, in the process, attempts to debunk several myths pertaining to piracy off the Somali coast. Dumping of charcoal and toxic wastes, illegal fishing around Somalia's coast are all issues that need to be highlighted and Farah wonders who are the real pirates and locates the stories in Puntland, one of the piracy towns in order to unearth the rackets behind the expeditions and trace the involvement of organizations in the developed countries who get the lion's share from the proceeds.

Crossbones adds to the existing rich international popular culture on piracy, including the recent film *Captain Philips* (2013). Farah has always contested and challenged prevalent stereotypical images of Somalia and Somalis and wonders if it is right to call the Somalis, *burcad badeed*, sea bandits. He attempts to provide the Somali version of the piracy stories in circulation, as they have been rendered voiceless. 'We are cast as villains of the piece and no one listens to our side of the story' (215**).**

Infuriated by the media's penchant for cheap sensationalism, Farah's literary mouthpiece, Malik, wishes to write about every aspect touching the lives of the Somalis**.** (In *Gifts,* the irate journalist Taariq chastises and lambasts the media for its internationalization of Somalia's poverty and starvation). He finds fault with the Western interpretation of the Muslim world and wonders if it is in the genetic make-up of Muslims to terrorize. Time and again, Farah has expressed his dismay and distaste at the subjection of Somalia to media overexposure, 'the intimate affairs of this nation are fodder for gossip, shock, amazement and newspaper headlines elsewhere but not to the victims of strife' (319).

The stories of YoungThing and Taxliil are the stories of Somali youngsters living outside Somalia and turning towards radical Islam. YoungThing is 'small in stature' but 'huge in ambition' and is barely able to walk with his explosives-stuffed bag. Yet, at this tender age, he is clearly 'aware of the huge difference between martyring oneself, and making a blunder of things and getting oneself killed' (*Crossbones*: 1). By depriving YoungThing of a name and thereafter an identity, Farah indulges in a certain amount of caricaturing to convey the fact that people lose their sense of self-direction and a sense of identity when a nation begins to murder itself: 'nervous, self-murderous, on edge' (293). BigBeard, TruthTeller, FootSoldier and KalaSaar are a few other characterizations; they do not sound like the names of individuals but are rather pointers to a degrading culture in stateless Somalia.

In the early 1990s, the functioning principle was the 'primacy of the clan', which was replaced by 'the primacy of religion,' and *Crossbones* is a work of art that is representative of this major paradigm shift within Somali political history. The killer becomes a *mujahid*, and if killed, a martyr. Ahl, who has lost his son Taxliil, to the Al-Shabaab tries in desperation to trace his son's whereabouts and engages in a conversation with one of the locals KalaSaar, burrowing into the structures of the militant group. They try to find a clear distinction between words like 'insurgents' and 'terrorists'. They theorize about the discontent Somali youth who are indoctrinated into becoming suicide-bombers. The reason for this is self-hate, which results in 'the nation murdering itself, and in the process of doing so, the individual committing suicide becomes a metaphor for the death culture' (*Crossbones*: 315). In the earlier novels of Farah, the family unit becomes a microcosm of the country's political upheavals.

Farah takes to task the nation's politicians, intellectuals, its clan elders, the imams, its rudderless youth and mainly the women who have foolishly let their nation down very badly. The veil-wearing submissive Somali women of the present generation are retrogressive, unlike the progressive Somali women who were at the forefront of politics in Somali nationalist history. He even reproaches the present generation and the so-called intellectuals for a lack of a vision for a better tomorrow: 'We're culpable in that we, who think of ourselves as educated secularists, have not inspired the younger generation, who are responding to our failure with rebellious rejection of everything we have so far stood for' (314). This is Farah's prognosis for ailing Somalia**.**

Jeebleh's empathetic 'listening' while his traumatized friends narrate their war-stories during the infamous Battle of Mogadishu, the traditional practice of communal eating in *Links*, story-telling and healing in *Knots* and Taxliil, reuniting with his parents after renouncing militancy in *Crossbones,* are joyful little tales superimposed on the war and horror stories of Mogadishu. Farah tries the same with himself. Disturbed at the denigration and shame Mogadishu has been put through in the last two decades, Farah superimposes images of the city's peaceful past over the city's present crass and crude realities, to stay at peace during troubled, uncertain times.

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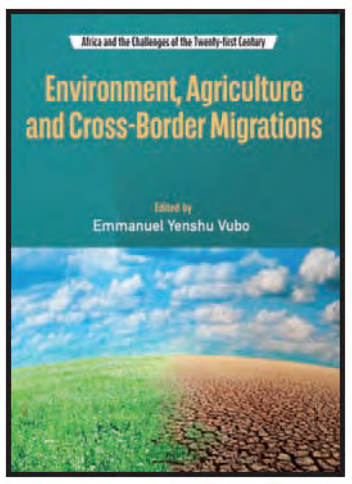

Environment, Agriculture and Cross-border Migrations

Edited by Emmanuel Yenshu Vubo

This book brings together contributions on the challenges of the environment, agriculture and cross-border migrations in Africa; key areas that have become critical for the continent's development. The central theme running through these contributions is that Africa's development challenges can be attributed to its human and natural ecology. Contrasted with the Cold War epoch, current developments have ushered us into a world of long and uncertain transitions characterized by a search for new pathways including investment in large-scale agriculture by big finance, attempts to revitalize existing agriculture and reworking of social policy. A major twist relates to environmental questions, especially climate change and its global effects, leading to all forms of cross-border migrations and the emergence of new areas of strategic interest such as sub-regional developments as in the Gulf of Guinea. This book provides some intellectual clues on how to interpret these emerging predicaments and chart a way forward into a new era for Africa.

ISBN : 978-2-86978-604-2 **Pages: 172**

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Le Soudan face aux dissidences

Mustapha Medjahdi

Ouvrage collectif : *Sécession du Sud-Soudan : dangers et opportunités,* Éditeur : (*Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies*), Centre arabe de recherche et d'étude des politiques, première édition 2012, 470 pages, ISBN 978-9927-4003-1-5, en langue arabe, prix 16 dollars

L'ouvrage « Sécession du Sud-Soudan : dangers et opportunités» contient treize contributions réparties en trois chapitres. Le premier s'intéresse aux prémices de la discorde, le deuxième chapitre regroupe les différentes contributions qui évoquent les effets extérieurs, sous l'angle de l'ingérence, tandis que le troisième est consacré aux résultats et aux défis auxquels le Soudan et la région doivent faire face, dans la mesure où cette sécession n'est, aux yeux des auteurs, que le début d'une nouvelle ère, un processus d'émiettement « qui ne fait que commencer ».

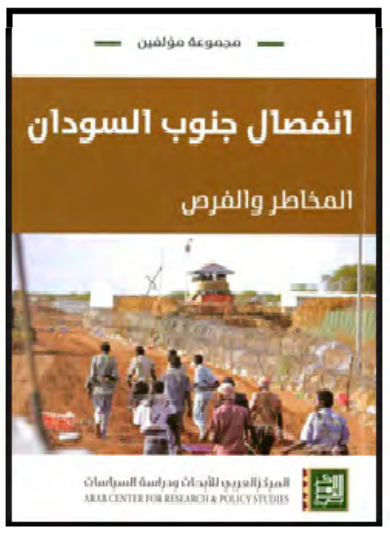
Les auteurs semblent être unanimes sur l'importance stratégique du Soudan (Nord et Sud), non seulement pour la région arabe, mais également pour l'Afrique entière. Cela explique l'intérêt de ce livre dont les auteurs partagent un souci intellectuel et une sensibilité pour des questions liées au devenir de la région menacée par des conflits récurrents. Ils considèrent que les défis sont doubles, ceux auxquels les deux États (après la sécession) doivent faire face et ceux qui relèvent de l'ordre sécuritaire dans la région. En effet, l'État naissant au sud est déjà menacé par l'absence d'un minimum de conditions de viabilité, et cette fragilité pourrait le pousser à la satellisation par des puissances extrarégionales ; cela semble évident du moment qu'il doit prendre en considération des choix politiques indissociables des raisons qui l'ont poussé à faire sécession.

Du côté du Soudan nord menacé par des guerres sur la marge au Darfour à Kordofan et dans la région du sud du Nil bleu, les défis sont multiples ; les contributions ont mis l'accent notamment sur les incidences économiques après la perte de la partie sud qui contient les trois quarts de la richesse pétrolière que le Soudan produisait et exportait au cours des dix dernières années. Plus encore, la réussite de cette séparation peut inciter d'autres territoires à l'autonomie, comme le Darfour lui-même, et sans doute les territoires au sud du Nil bleu et les monts de la Nouba dont les représentants locaux mènent un combat contre le gouvernement central de Khartoum. Il y a bien entendu d'autres problèmes notamment celui de la dette, les frontières entre les deux États, la région de Abiai, et la question de la nationalité qui se pose pour les habitants du Sud originaires du Nord et les citoyens du Sud qui viennent du Nord.

Un pays à la croisée des chemins

Avant d'évoquer la sécession comme résultante d'un parcours historique, les travaux regroupés dans la première partie s'intéressent à la situation qui prévalait au Soudan bien avant la scission. Les auteurs abordent la situation dans le pays à partir de plusieurs entrées : les élites, le religieux, le culturel, l'échec dans la gestion des différences, ainsi que le rôle des pays arabes dans cette crise.

C'est ainsi qu'El Nour Hamad, auteur de l'article : « Sécession du Sud-Soudan : vue d'ensemble au seuil du changement » consacre une grande partie à la question culturelle. Pour lui, celle-ci est extrêmement importante, le danger résidant dans la politisation de l'identité dans une société qui regroupe un grand nombre de groupes sociaux, de différentes appartenances ethniques, africaines et arabes, en sus de la multiplicité des langues, des croyances et des pratiques religieuses. C'est ce qu'Abdellah El Fekki Bachir explique dans sa contribution : « L'échec dans la gestion de la diversité ». Il s'appesantit sur l'exploration du processus historique qui a conduit à cette pluralité ethnique, avant qu'elle ne devienne une réalité vécue au quotidien. Le danger ne relève pas de l'existence de cette diversité qui peut être, pour plusieurs raisons, perçue comme une richesse, mais dans l'échec de la gestion de ces différences. Si El Fekki a accordé beaucoup d'importance à l'histoire qui concerne la gestion de cette pluralité au Soudan depuis 1956, El Nour Hamad impute, quant à lui, l'échec au régime, ce qui semble évident du moment que l'auteur faisait partie de cette élite soudanaise qui voyait dans l'arrivée d'un militaire au pouvoir une réussite. Cette dernière était portée par le rêve, elle espérait reproduire au Soudan la belle histoire égyptienne de l'époque de Djamal Abde-Nasser.



Sa critique ne s'arrête pas là, il décrit aussi une scène caricaturale à l'issue de la séparation où on voit le régime annoncer la fête pour la population du nord, sous prétexte qu'avec la séparation rien « n'empêche maintenant l'application de la Chariâa ». Ceci pour montrer comment le dogmatisme religieux, dans lequel le régime s'est enfermé, peut mener à une telle inconscience.

La dissidence : les effets de l'environnement arabo-africain

Sur la question du rôle des pays arabes, peu soucieux de l'importance géostratégique du Soudan et les dangers que peut faire peser sa fragmentation sur la région (arabe et africaine), le constat est qu'au niveau des discours politiques, il y a une reproduction des visions hégémoniques vis-à-vis du Soudan. Selon El Nour Hamad, une partie de l'élite égyptienne est restée prisonnière de la tendance coloniale de l'époque Khedioui, et elle n'est pas parvenue à renouveler ses attitudes et ses approches bien que les donnes aient changé, et que la région soit caractérisée par un contexte nouveau. Ces effets paradigmatiques, qui reproduisaient des visions anciennes, ont fait oublier le plus important, les conséquences néfastes de l'émiettement du Soudan non seulement sur ses deux États, mais sur toute la région arabe et africaine.

Sur le plan identitaire, le discours dominant des élites arabes n'était pas sans danger sur ce pays, dans la mesure où elles considéraient le Soudan comme pays exclusivement arabe et occultait dans ses discours les autres composantes africaines. Cela amenait les citoyens, qui ne se considéraient ni arabes ni musulmans, à se sentir étrangers dans leur propre pays. Ce discours, qui plaisait au régime en place, cachait la diversité qui, à défaut d'être bien gérée, générait des mécontentements, et par conséquent des révoltes. Abdelouahab Al Afendi, dans sa contribution : « Les Arabes et le Sud du Soudan entre l'absent et le négatif », explique de manière plus détaillée l'intervention des pays arabes dans la question soudanaise. Il critique ce rôle qui a pris deux formes, une absence totale ou bien une intervention négative par laquelle certains régimes arabes ont choisi de régler leur compte avec le régime soudanais sans se soucier de l'avenir du pays et de la région. C'est ainsi que certains passages invitent à une nouvelle pensée en ce qui concerne la manière par laquelle l'intervention doit se faire dans des pays où cohabitent des Arabes avec d'autres appartenances qui, selon l'auteur, doit être réfléchie et positive. Idjlal Raafat, dans son texte : « Conséquences de la naissance de l'État du Sud sur la situation à l'intérieur et sur les pays de la région », met l'accent, non seulement, sur les migrations incontrôlées dans la région, mais encore sur les incidences sur l'unité de l'Éthiopie, et sur l'économie du Kenya. Il réserve aussi une partie importante de l'analyse à la fameuse question de l'eau et là, il imagine un certain nombre de scénarios possibles que pourrait connaitre la situation à l'avenir, et cela bien entendu suite aux changements qui ont touché le Soudan.

Centre et périphérie des relations menacées

La crise soudanaise, aux yeux des auteurs, ne peut être analysée sans prise en considération des rapports entre le centre et la périphérie. La première application de cette distinction entre les deux concerne les pays arabes eux-mêmes, puisqu'il est fait la distinction entre ceux qui occupent le centre (il s'agit des pays ayant des frontières avec d'autres pays arabes seulement), et les autres, ceux qui se situent à la périphérie comme le Soudan et la Mauritanie, par exemple. Ces États s'étendent géographiquement dans des aires différentes et regroupent, par la nature de leur situation géographique, des ethnies, des cultures différentes, sans oublier d'autres différences liées aux questions linguistiques et religieuses. Cette relation ne peut pas fonctionner, selon les auteurs, de manière normale sans une compréhension mutuelle de part et d'autre (pays arabes et pays africains) des enjeux auxquels ces pays sont confrontés et sans élargir le sens du dialogue et d'inter-culturalité avec les pays limitrophes comme l'Érythrée, l'Éthiopie, le Sénégal, le Mali, le Cameroun, le Niger, et le Tchad.

La deuxième entrée, relative à la dualité centre/périphérie, prend une autre signification. Il s'agit en fait des rapports entre le centre et la périphérie à l'intérieur du pays lui-même. C'est ainsi que les contributions incitent à repenser l'État dans son rapport avec la gestion de ses régions, celles qui se situent au centre et les autres dans la périphérie, aux différences et divergences qui existent à plusieurs niveaux et qui sont liées aux questions culturelles, et aux différences ethniques, religieuses et linguistiques. Et si ces éléments paraissent, pour les auteurs, extrêmement importants, c'est parce qu'ils sont devenus l'objet de conflits récurrents en Afrique et dans le Monde Arabe. Pour eux, l'échec dans la gestion de ces différences se pose comme problème primordial, et la sortie de la crise du Soudan avec un minimum de dégâts exige un fondement nouveau basé sur l'égalité et la justice dans la distribution du pouvoir et de la richesse entre les régions du centre et ceux de la périphérie. Le défi pour vivre ensemble dans un État uni dépend de la disparition du sentiment d'injustice en matière de distribution de la richesse et du pouvoir, et c'est ce sentiment d'ailleurs qui a déclenché la guerre au Sud.

Effets de l'ingérence

L'éclatement du pays s'est fait « de manière limpide et dans une légitimité incontestable » du moment qu'il s'agit de l'application d'un droit absolu, le droit des habitants du Sud à l'autodétermination, ce qui a été accepté par les deux protagonistes (du Nord et

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du Sud) lors des accords de Naivasha (signés au Naivasha, Kenya le 09 janvier 2005) pour la paix au Soudan et qui ont mis fin à la plus longue guerre civile entre le Nord et le Sud du Soudan. L'annonce de la sécession du Sud fut déclarée au moment où les manifestations en Égypte revendiquant le départ du régime Moubarak étaient à leur paroxysme. Ce constat amène El-Nour Hamad à faire le rapport entre les évènements en Égypte et l'application des accords de « Naivacha 2005 ». Il pointe du doigt l'administration américaine, qui elle-même, soutenait le régime Moubarak et menait en même temps le gouvernement du « Salut » soudanais, les yeux fermés, à la signature et l'application des accords sur la séparation. Cette dernière, aussi limpide qu'elle apparaissait au début, ne mène pas aux résultats escomptés, mais plutôt directement aux conflits armés à cause des questions de frontières, de pétrole (dont 75% revient au Sud) et des droits des populations au Sud originaires du Nord et ceux du Sud qui vivent au Nord après la dissidence. Même si les accords de Naivasha ont réussi à éteindre le feu de la guerre entre le Nord et le Sud, ils ne demeurent pas moins sans danger. Ils n'ont pas seulement divisé le Soudan en deux parties, ils ont enclenché un processus grave en encourageant les rebellions et les revendications séparatistes. Ils ont propagé une conviction que seules les armes sont en mesure de procurer le pouvoir, l'égalité et la justice dans la distribution des richesses, seules les armes garantissent une patrie et une vie meilleure.

Il est clair que l'administration américaine a joué un grand rôle dans les accords de paix et Israël a soutenu ce processus pour en tirer les bénéfices liés à l'exploitation des eaux et aux rapports de forces dans la région. Des contributeurs comme Amani El-Taouil dans : « La position américaine vis-à-vis du Soudan : trajectoires de réactions et nature des plans », et Mahmoud Moharib dans : « L'intervention d'Israël au soudan » se sont penchés sur cette question. L'idée centrale des contributions est que l'ingérence et l'intervention étrangère qui sert les projets et les intérêts des pays étrangers ne réussissent que s'ils trouvent un milieu propice, c'est à dire un milieu caractérisé par des conflits internes auxquels aucune solution adéquate n'a été suggérée et appliquée pour la concorde nationale.

L'analyse est entamée à travers deux entrées, la première repose sur l'arrivée du Front national islamique au pouvoir, tandis que la deuxième prend en considération le cours des évènements historiques internationaux, notamment depuis l'arrivée des Américains d'origine africaine aux postes de responsabilités au sein de l'administration américaine et l'intérêt que portent ces derniers à l'Afrique. C'est à partir de là que la relation entre l'administration américaine et le Mouvement populaire de la libération du Soudan qui adoptait le projet de la séparation a connu un changement qualitatif. Tel projet que le comité du Congress pour l'Afrique a non seulement soutenu mais qu'il a encore élargi à la reconnaissance du droit à l'autodétermination pour d'autres régions « considérées comme marginalisées». C'est ce sentiment de marginalisation qui a permis au leader du Front populaire John Garang de gagner des voix pour la cause et d'intégrer le plus grand nombre sous l'égide du Front (notamment dans les régions au sud du Nil bleu et les Monts du la Nouba).

Dans ce contexte beaucoup d'éléments et d'évènements jouaient contre le régime central au Soudan notamment l'impact qu'a eu l'attentat contre le président égyptien « Moubarak » en Éthiopie et qui a fini par l'inscription du Soudan sur la liste des pays qui soutenaient le terrorisme. L'embargo économique imposé par l'administration, à l'époque du président américain Bill Clinton, a affaibli le pays et a poussé les leaders du Soudan, sous l'effet des conséquences économiques à mettre fin à la guerre et à accepter les négociations qui déboucheront sur la sécession du Sud du Soudan. On n'oublie pas, bien entendu, les attentats contre les ambassades américaines en Tanzanie et au Kenya qui semblaient constituer un avertissement pour le régime soudanais soupçonné et accusé d'avoir une main dans l'effervescence qui caractérisait la région. On se rappelle aussi l'attaque contre l'usine de la production des médicaments à Khartoum, accusée de produire des armes chimiques sans aucune preuve tangible. Les Américains ont joué un rôle important aussi dans les négociations de la paix et la mise en œuvre des procédures qui conduiront droit vers la scission. L'évolution de la situation de la guerre du Darfour a abouti à la mise en place de la Cour internationale et cela en faveur des sudistes qui bénéficient d'une supériorité démographique et numérique relative. Cela s'aggrave avec la nature du pacte fragile qui liait les deux parties en conflit, favorisant ainsi la séparation et non pas la conciliation.

Dans la sixième partie de l'ouvrage, Mahmoud Mouharib, met en exergue l'intervention des Israéliens dans ce conflit. Il confirme que les contacts qui existaient déjà ont connu une évolution après 1954 entre le parti de la Nation (El Oumma) et Tel Aviv. Selon l'auteur, une réunion (arrangée par les services secrets britanniques) a permis le contact entre des représentants de ce parti et des responsables du côté israélien, comme le signalait le premier ministre israélien dans ses mémoires, ce qui peut être compris comme continuité de la relation aux plus hauts niveaux entre les deux parties, et qui explique pourquoi le parti de la Nation a bénéficié de l'aide financière de Tel Aviv sous forme de prêts après la rencontre avec Sadek El Mahdi. L'auteur signale aussi la densité des communications entre les deux parties à l'heure de l'attaque contre l'Égypte en 1956 tandis que les contacts avec les rebelles du Sud n'ont commencé qu'en 1963. C'est à partir de cette date qu'Israël commence à fournir des armes aux séparatistes et de l'aide pour qu'ils puissent consolider leur position face au régime central. Bien entendu, l'émiettement du Soudan permettra à Israël de mettre un pied sur le territoire du Nil. Les interventions, comme le confirme Madoui Tourabi, dans la huitième partie, visaient « le contrôle et la mainmise sur les parties du conflit et permettaient de paralyser le Soudan qui représente un risque stratégique potentiel pour Israël, les États-Unis d'Amérique et pour l'Europe ».

Le retour à l'unité est-il possible ?

Malgré sa reconnaissance du droit à l'autodétermination et à la séparation aux habitants du Sud, Chafi Khodr, l'un des contributeurs de cet ouvrage, ne considère pas l'évènement comme une fin de l'histoire. Si cette séparation s'est réalisée aujourd'hui, un autre épisode peut intervenir et réunir les deux parties. Il rappelle la chute du mur de Berlin qui a réuni les Allemands. Toutefois, cela n'est possible que si les deux parties inscrivent leurs relations bilatérales dans un projet commun qui sert l'intérêt des deux peuples, un projet caractérisé par le bon voisinage, l'arrêt de toute forme de violence et de discours de la haine, assurer le droit à la mobilité, la résidence, le travail et le droit à la propriété, en somme réunir toutes les conditions favorables à une vie commune dans la paix et la sécurité. « Reconstruire un Soudan uni est toujours possible, la balle est dans le camp des porteurs du projet d'un Soudan nouveau, les grandes idées ne meurent pas, même si la mort emporte les grands hommes ». Les chances sont là, même si cela paraît être un rêve lointain, les sudistes en baptisant le nouvel État « État du sud de Soudan » veulent dire qu'une unité est toujours possible. Toutefois, est-il possible que les deux peuples déclenchent une révolution contre les concepts et les discours qui nourrissaient et alimentaient la haine ayant conduit à la séparation?

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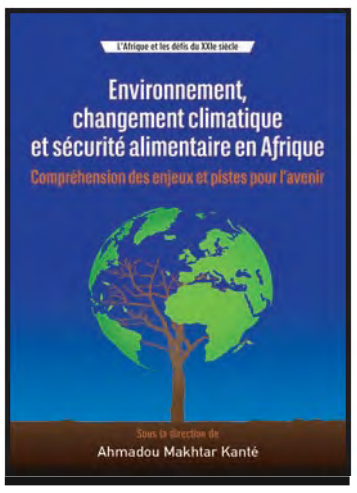

Environnement, changement climatique et sécurité alimentaire en Afrique

Comprehension des enjeux et pistes pour l'avenir

Ahmadou Makhtar Kanté

Ce volume contient des contributions portant sur les questions environnementales et climatiques traitées à l'aune de critères sociologiques, économiques, politiques, juridiques et éthiques. Chacun des intellectuels, à sa manière, a montré que pour inquiétants qu'ils soient, les enjeux environnementaux et climatiques opèrent comme une opportunité encore faiblement exploitée par les acteurs de la pensée afro optimiste. Nul doute que le lecteur se rendra compte que ce livre témoigne de la façon dont des intellectuels africains du XXIe siècle portent le souci de l'environnement et du changement climatique et comment ils explorent des pistes de réflexion critique pour un sursaut adapté et des réponses durables pour une Afrique moins émettrice de désespoir et plus résiliente.

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Le Portugal et son impensé colonial

Cristina Robalo Cordeiro

Eduardo Lourenço, *Do Colonialismo como nosso Impensado*,
organização e prefácio de Margarida Calafate Ribeiro e Roberto Vecchi,
Éditions Gradiva, Lisbonne, avril 2014,
ISBN 9789896165758.

Le Portugal a son penseur. Eduardo Lourenço (né en 1923). Dans la grande diversité de son œuvre d'essayiste, il ne s'est en somme consacré qu'à l'étude de son pays, dont il s'est fait le confesseur ou plutôt le psychanalyste. Le quarantième anniversaire de la « Révolution des Œillets », coup d'État militaire qui, en avril 1974, a mis fin au régime dictatorial de Salazar, a incité deux chercheurs, Margarida Calafate Ribeiro (de l'Université de Coimbra) et Roberto Vecchi (de l'Université de Bologne) à rassembler, avec la collaboration de l'auteur, quelque vingt-cinq textes, dont cinq inédits, qui tous ont trait à la relation profonde, complexe, ambiguë des Portugais avec le colonialisme. Le premier de ces écrits date de 1960, le dernier de 2000, la Note préliminaire, « 40 années de retard », ayant été rédigée par Eduardo Lourenço en février 2014 : nous avons donc là plus d'un demi-siècle de réflexion sur ce que d'autres appelleraient trop vite « l'idéologie » coloniale mais que notre historien-philosophe, avec ses éditeurs, préfère, reprenant le titre d'un ouvrage précédent, désigner comme « l'impensé » du Portugal.

Et à vrai dire, le colonialisme portugais, même à l'époque où il fleurissait dans les discours officiels, était moins un système raisonné et durement appliqué (comme la plupart des colonialismes européens) qu'un « fantasme », une formation imaginaire, un rêve, devenu cauchemar à partir des années 60. Au-dessous ou en-deçà de cette politique gouvernementale plus ou moins consistante, il y avait la réalité vécue des centaines de milliers de Portugais enracinés depuis des générations – disons même depuis des siècles – à Timor, à Goa, au Mozambique, à S. Tomé et Principe, en Angola, en Guinée, pour ne rien dire du Brésil, devenu État indépendant dès 1822. Ainsi, « l'Empire portugais » **a de beaucoup précédé l'impérialisme**, idéologie concomitante de l'industrialisme : en 1974, le Portugal est encore une nation agricole et la mentalité de son peuple, celle de gens simples, probes et souvent analphabètes, encadrés par un clergé traditionnaliste et respectueux (sinon complice) du régime, à la fois, paternaliste et policier de l'État-Nouveau (institué en 1926). Paradoxalement ou non, c'est l'armée, engagée dans la « guerre coloniale » (mais on préférait officiellement ne pas utiliser cette expression) et convaincue que c'était là un combat perdu, ce sont les militaires, « les capitaines d'avril », qui ont renversé le régime et ouvert la voie à l'émancipation des colonies asiatiques et africaines.

Ainsi, c'est une fois dépossédé de son Empire que le Portugal a été mis en face sinon du fait, en tout cas du concept colonial. Plutôt donc que de comparer la situation du Portugal colonisateur, spolié de ses territoires d'outre-mer, avec celle de pays européens comme la France ou la Belgique, il serait plus exact de le rapprocher des divers royaumes musulmans qui durent quitter la Péninsule Ibérique après souvent cinq ou six siècles d'implantation. Le rapprochement est d'autant plus juste que c'est à l'extérieur de ses limites nationales actuelles que le Portugal a multiplié les œuvres et les preuves de son génie civilisationnel (qui s'intéresse à l'architecture portugaise trouvera beaucoup plus à voir sur **la côte africaine** ou, bien sûr, au Brésil qu'au Portugal même…). S'il y a une exception portugaise, elle se trouve dans cet anachronisme qui explique, pour une bonne part, l'aspect déphasé, décalé de la conception qu'il a longtemps entretenue de sa place dans le monde et en Europe même.

De cette inadéquation fondamentale, il semble qu'Eduardo Lourenço ait eu la conscience nette très tôt dans sa vie de chercheur. Étudiant, en histoire et philosophie, puis assistant, de 1947 à 1953, à l'Université de Coimbra, il occupera ensuite plusieurs postes d'enseignant au Brésil et en Europe pour enfin se fixer à Nice où il terminera sa carrière. Cette position d'expatrié n'explique évidemment pas, à elle seule, l'objectivité du regard (clinique) qu'il a porté, tout au long de ces décennies, sur sa patrie, sa langue et sa culture. Son tempérament intellectuel, sa formation universitaire, puis sa longue fréquentation des milieux culturels européens, allemand et surtout français, ses lectures assidues de Camus, de Sartre et de Freud, ses voyages, tout un très riche tissu de contacts et de circonstances ont aiguisé sa vision et affermi son interprétation du « mal portugais », de ce mal national dont la célèbre « saudade » – ou mélancolie – est le symptôme le plus voyant.

De même qu'il arrive qu'un romancier reste fidèle d'un bout à l'autre de sa production à un petit nombre de personnages, desquels il ne cesse d'approfondir l'étude psychologique et qui sont autant d'images de lui-même, Eduardo Lourenço, dont la curiosité est cependant universelle, s'est concentré, dans un mixte évident d'attraction-répulsion, sur l'âme lusitanienne, sur sa genèse et son destin. Il va sans dire que cette âme, il l'a trouvée d'abord en lui-même et qu'il lui a (presque) suffi de s'auto-analyser pour mettre au jour les complexes qui ont fait du peuple portugais, à la fois, un nain et un géant, ou, pour rappeler l'ambivalence chère à l'auteur, à la fois un Don Quichotte et un Sancho Pança. Âme partagée, âme double, hésitant selon les moments de son histoire entre un excès d'orgueil (superbement illustré par l'épopée nationale que sont les *Lusiades* – 1572 – de Camoens) et un excès d'humilité nationale tel qu'y fait volontiers écho la chanson populaire.

Cependant cette dualité ne permet pas de rendre compte des contradictions internes où le pays se débat encore, tandis qu'il est devenu membre à part entière de la Communauté européenne. Ces contradictions persistantes, pour être internes, trouvent leur origine à l'extérieur, dans les avatars de ce qui fut d'abord une aventure maritime avant de devenir un destin impérial. Aussi, pour tenter de comprendre, écrit l'auteur dans la Note préliminaire, « l'ontologie d'un Pays qui, dans la plus grande partie de son histoire, s'est construit à l'extérieur », il convient d'examiner les particularités du colonialisme portugais. C'est à partir de cette projection du pays sur le monde qu'on obtiendra la meilleure image, ou plus précisément la meilleure « imago » d'une nation qu'on se risquerait à dire totalement « imaginaire » si elle n'avait pas un jour pourtant, dans une sorte d'état de grâce, modifié le cours de l'histoire.

Eduardo Lourenço n'hésite pas à parler d'*onirisme* pour désigner l'ensemble des représentations composant le colonialisme portugais, dont le régime de Salazar a fait moins une doctrine (malgré quelques efforts théoriques) qu'une « narration » au sens que le mot a pris aujourd'hui, c'est-à-dire une reconstruction fantasmatique, sinon délirante, du passé justifiant toutes les aberrations d'une politique en totale rupture avec la réalité du moment. Alors que toutes les autres puissances européennes avaient, depuis (au moins) dix ans, renoncé à leurs colonies, le Portugal s'obstinait à croire qu'il lui serait possible de sauver son Empire. Observons en passant que cette « mythologie coloniale » a donné lieu, sur le plan de la création littéraire, et à travers maintes métamorphoses, à des œuvres de premier plan (citons les noms de Saramago, Lobo Antunes, Lidia Jorge, Almeida Faria) : on chercherait en vain du côté français de semblables « rejetons de l'inconscient » colonial…

Le lecteur du recueil se plaira à suivre, au long de quarante ans de réflexion continue, les lignes de force d'une pensée singulièrement hostile à la « mauvaise foi » (dans l'acception sartrienne du mot), au mensonge à soi-même. Si les éditeurs, après un très méritoire travail de dépouillement d'archives (à commencer par celles d'Eduardo Lourenço lui-même) ont, très naturellement, opté pour une présentation chronologique des textes, ils ont cependant voulu mettre en relief des phases distinctes de la pensée critique d'Eduardo Lourenço, phases déterminées par des dates significatives de l'histoire du Portugal contemporain.

La première, constituant un « seuil », évoque « les contours et images impériales » tels qu'ils se présentaient jusqu'en 1960, le Brésil, nation multiraciale, servant alors de « caution au colonialisme portugais ». Caution cependant fragile à une époque où l'Afrique du Sud n'est pas encore prête à renoncer à l'Apartheid dont la formule trouve de nombreux défenseurs dans les colonies portugaises.

La deuxième période commence en 1960, année des indépendances dans l'Afrique dite française ou belge. Les premiers mouvements d'insurrection dans l'Empire portugais sont galvanisés par ce vent de liberté et, malgré un invraisemblable déni de réalité, le régime de Salazar essaie de les réduire en envoyant, de la Métropole, des contingents de soldats de plus en plus nombreux. C'est au cours de ces années, qui vont de 1960 à 1974, que la « Critique de la mythologie coloniale », titre du chapitre I, élabore ses concepts-clé, opposant la (bonne) « conscience nationale » à la réalité de la crise coloniale, dans des textes mordants restés inédits jusqu'à ce jour.

Un troisième chapitre : « Dans le labyrinthe des épitaphes impériales (« 1974-1975 et après », regroupant neuf écrits, dont un inédit : « la Non-Décolonisation ») évoque par, son titre, le curieux travail de deuil qui a fait suite au retour des anciens colons en métropole. Travail resté latent et inachevé que l'analyste s'efforce d'éclairer sans se faire du reste beaucoup d'illusions sur la capacité de ses concitoyens à prendre acte de la réalité de leur perte, tant la « fiction » continue alors à exercer son « empire » sur les esprits.

Après le deuil, l'héritage ou plutôt les « Héritages vivants », comme s'intitule le dernier ensemble de (neuf) textes. Comment le Portugal, entrant dans la Communauté Européenne, allait concevoir son identité maintenant qu'il était ramené aux dimensions exiguës de son territoire national ? Cinq cents ans après la découverte du Brésil, promis à devenir une super-puissance, c'est sur la langue portugaise que se reporte le rêve portugais d'universalité. C'est pourquoi il faut « célébrer le Brésil » et les grands pays africains lusophones.

En rejoignant enfin l'Europe, nous ne sommes pas sortis de l'imaginaire ni de l'impensé : reste la tâche, proprement philosophique, d'une « décolonisation complète de la pensée et de l'imaginaire hégémonique » (selon l'excellente formule de la préface). Tâche qui revient à l'Europe elle-même autant qu'au Portugal. L'œuvre entière d'Eduardo Lourenço s'est attachée à cette décolonisation intellectuelle. Entreprise colossale de déconstruction dépassant les forces d'un penseur (« à coups de marteau ») longtemps resté isolé dans sa propre patrie! L'opportune publication de ce recueil peut être entendue comme un appel à de nouveaux collaborateurs, au Portugal et en tout lieu.

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Mémoires d'une combattante de l'ALN : un devoir de mémoire

Khedidja Mokeddem

Mémoires d'une combattante de l'ALN, Zone autonome d'Alger
par Zohra Drif
Chihab Edition, Alger, 2013, 607 pages
ISBN : 978-9947-39-057-3

Présentation du livre

Ce livre mémoriel écrit par Zohra Drif n'est, ni une œuvre d'historienne ni une autobiographie mais un hommage à celles et ceux qui ont sacrifié leurs vies pour que l'Algérie vive librement. C'est la disparition de Samia Lakhdari, dans le silence un juin 2012, qui a motivé Zohra Drif à écrire ce livre qui s'inscrit dans le contexte sociohistorique de l'Algérie colonisée. En effet, l'auteure sublime une douleur due à la perte d'une compagne de vie et d'armes une « Moudjahida légendaire » dont le combat est méconnu et peu mesuré. À ce titre, Zohra Drif tend à saluer et à rendre hommage aux femmes algériennes qui ont joué un rôle important dans cette révolution. C'est aussi une reconnaissance à ses parents et à Madame Czarnecky, professeure de philosophie, qui ont été à l'origine de sa conscience et de son engagement pour la cause de son pays.

L'ouvrage est dédié également à Boualem Oussedik, Ali El Hadi, Mustapha Fettal, et à Abdellah Kechidaà qui revient le mérite de l'adhésion de Zohra Drifau Front de libération national (FLN).

Dans cet ouvrage, Zohra Drif donne la parole à son histoire personnelle, à celle de sa famille et des Algériennes et des Algériens. Elle profite de cette occasion pour rendre visible une identité nationale échafaudée sur la base d'amour, de fraternité, de valeurs, de sacrifices, de révoltes partagées au sein du groupe de la Zone autonome d'Alger. C'est aussi une commémoration de faits, de circonstances, d'ambiances et surtout de la présence des êtres de chair et de sang dans leur vérité et leur humanité : Larbi Ben M'hidi, Yacef Saadi, Ali, dit « la pointe », Mustapha Bouhired et tant d'autres.

L'auteure met à jour les différentes étapes du parcours révolutionnaire d'une combattante « poseuse de bombes » et ne manque pas d'invoquer, dans le détail, les terribles conditions et le climat de peur, de persécution et de torture vécu par la population algérienne et ses leaders.

L'écriture du livre obéit à une chronologie qui décrit la généalogie familiale, les années de jeunesse et enfin sa trajectoire de militante, il est composé de neuf chapitres : « Dans le giron familial » ; « Prise de conscience » ; « Les premiers contacts avec le FLN » ; « Au cœur de l'action armée » ; « Dans la Casbah, au cœur de la résistance » ; « L'internationalisation de la question algérienne » ; « Grève des 8 jours » ; « Arrestations et assassinats de combattants de la Zone Autonome d'Alger » ; « Arrestation de Zohra Drif ». Suivent des annexes, photos, et documents divers, et un index des noms.

Sa naissance et sa famille

Née à Tiaret, dans la plaine du Sersou, un Ramadhan 28 décembre, 1934. Zohra Drif est la deuxième d'une fratrie de cinq garçons et deux filles. Son père Ahmed a obtenu le diplôme de la medersa de Sidi Abderrahmane d'Alger, après avoir fait un premier cycle de formation à Sersou, puis l'équivalent du deuxième cycle à la zawiya de Sidi Boumediene de Tlemcen. En parallèle, il suivait une formation universitaire à la faculté de lettres d'Alger. Cette formation lui a permis d'accéder au poste prestigieux de Cadi. Sa mère Saadia, fille de Hadj Djelloul, fut mariée très jeune, au père de Zohra Drif en 1930. Six ans après leur mariage, les parents de Zohra s'installèrent à Tissemssilt, (Vialar à l'époque coloniale) loin de leurs deux familles. Cette décision d'indépendance par rapport à la famille élargie constituait une révolution contre l'ordre social de l'époque.

Son instruction et sa vie de lycéenne et d'universitaire

Ainsi Zohra Drif doit à sa famille la femme instruite et cultivée qu'elle devint. Durant sa scolarité, Zohra Drif a voyagé entre deux cultures : celle qu'elle quittait le matin pour aller à l'école, qui est celle de l'Algérie avec toutes ses composantes (langue arabe, islam, coutumes et traditions arabe) et son style de vie, son histoire et sa mythologie, et une autre culture française extérieure à la maison. Ce morcellement entre ces deux mondes qui lui sont différents et étrangers, était dur à vivre pour l'enfant que fut Zohra; cependant cela ne l'a pas empêché d'accomplir sa mission de bonne élève indigène parmi les Français. Elle franchit le stade primaire avec excellence ce qui lui a permis l'accès au meilleur lycée d'Alger : le lycée Fromentin en 1947. Sa vie de lycéenne a été marquée par la rencontre des amies de la vie et du « Djihad » Samia Lakhdari et Mimi Bensmain. Encore adolescentes, elles affirmaient un sens de solidarité qui ne pouvait pas être marchandé. Elles étaient au courant de tous les évènements nationaux et internationaux. Ainsi, malgré le traitement raciste à leur égard, et l'animosité de certaines enseignantes et camarades de classes françaises, cela n'a pas empêché ces trois Algériennes d'avoir leur Bac (section philosophie) l'été 1954 avec une bonne appréciation ce qui leurs a permis de passer à l'Université de Ben Aknoun d'Alger. Cela a coïncidé avec le déclenchement de la Guerre de libération nationale. Une vie complètement nouvelle pour notre auteure et ses amies. Elle était devant d'immenses responsabilités : celle de gérer son autonomie et sa liberté et celle de préserver sa réputation de jeune fille « intacte » et « irréprochable », deux situations auxquelles elle n'était pas préparée jusque-là.

Il était de son devoir de protéger l'honneur de la famille et de son village, par sa bonne conduite et son respect des coutumes et traditions. Sa mère la mettait en garde contre les fréquentations masculines ; cela l'installa dans une timidité et une rigidité difficile à fondre..

Sa vie d'élève et d'universitaire était chargée à la fois d'émotion, d'activité politique et culturelle. Son adhésion au FLN et sa conviction que l'université ne lui apprenait rien sur son pays n'encouragea pas Zohra à continuer ses études, Samia également.

Les facteurs de sa conscience nationale et politique

Beaucoup d'éléments ont contribué à la construction de l'identité patriotique de Zohra Drif d'abord, le rang social dont jouissait sa famille ; un père instruit qui, très tôt lui enseigna l'histoire de son pays, une mère qui enracina en elle qu'elle n'était pas et ne sera jamais française même si elle étudie la culture française. Son frère Kader qui était affilé aux Scouts Musulmans, la mettait au courant de tous les évènements internes et externes. Ensuite, sa rencontre avec les parents de Samia Lakhdari et les femmes du « hammam ». Dans cet espace, les femmes lui enseignaient que les héros algériens s'appelaient des « moudjahidines » et, quand ils tombent au champ d'honneur, c'étaient des martyrs « chouhadas ». Le hammam fut un lieu de souveraineté féminine par excellence, où les femmes se côtoyaient dans une communion solidaire. Dans cet espace, tous les pouvoirs étaient atténués, ceux des hommes et des Français. Elle sortait du hammam persuadée, plus que jamais, que le FLN existait vraiment dans la conscience des Algériennes et des Algériens, contrairement à la propagande de la presse coloniale.

La défaite de la France à Diên-Biên Phu, la libération du Maroc, de la Tunisie et du Madagascar, enlèvent l'illusion de la France invincible. Le massacre des « indigènes » de Skikda août 1957 ont également été un moteur dans son engagement patriotique.

Son passage à l'université étai aussi un élément fondateur de cette identité nationale.

Enfin, parvient le contact avec le FLN grâce à la rencontre avec Boualem Oussedik, Ali El Hadi et Mustapha Fettal. Au début de leur recrutement dans le FLN, la mission de Zohra Drif (dite Farida) et de son amie Samia Lakhdari (dite Nabila), consistait à un travail social. Versées dans les groupes armés du FLN à la fin de juillet 1956, Zohra Drif et Samia Lakhdari connurent l'heureuse opportunité de rencontrer les leaders du déclenchement de la guerre de libération nationale. Après la tentative des « Ultras », d'incendier la Casbah le 14 juillet 1956, et l'attentat de la rue de Thèbes, le FLN multiplie ses actions armées et emmène la guerre en « territoire ennemi », d'où les bombes de Milk Bar et la Cafeteria à la fin du mois de septembre 1956 que Zohra Drif et son amie Samia Lakhdari ont posées. Cela constitua la première opération de combat armé des deux amies.

Conclusion

Le livre est émouvant et riche en informations, Zohra Drif a réussi à communiquer son émotion au lecteur. On sent sa sincérité lorsqu'elle raconte la vie au quotidien de toutes celles et ceux qu'elle a côtoyés : les héroïnes et héros, les habitants de la Casbah. Ce livre facile à lire se caractérise par un regard, à la fois, perspicace et impressionnant sur le passé. Une démarche qui a permis à Zohra Drif de produire un roman biographique, avec des personnages vrais, vivants, mettant la dynamique sociale au cœur de l'histoire. L'œuvre jouit d'une valeur documentaire socio-historique sur une période précise de l'histoire, ce qui lui donne le mérite d'avoir sa place dans l'écriture de l'histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine.

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Lorsque l'exil et la mémoire transforment une parole énonciative : un clin d'œil d'Alain Mabanckou

Kahina Bouanane Nouar

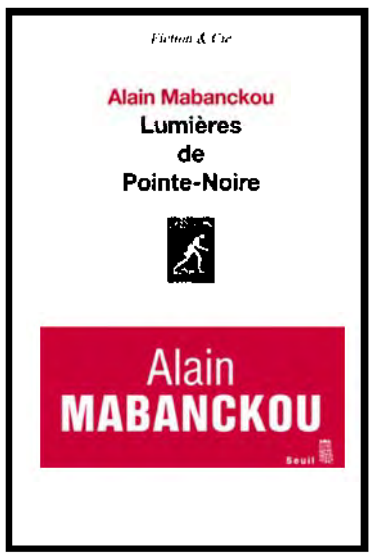
Lumières de Pointe-Noire
Par Alain Mabanckou
Edition le Seuil, Paris, 2013, 304 pages

Alain Mabanckou[1], jeune écrivain congolais, commence à être connu et reconnu dans le monde entier pour ses œuvres issues du terroir avec une portée universelle. Ce compte rendu porte sur son roman intitulé *Lumières de Pointe-Noire,* paru en Janvier 2013, qui peut s'installer dans le second volet d'une trilogie inaugurée par *Verre Cassé*. Afin de mettre en scène la pertinence du roman *Lumières de Pointe-Noire*, nous avons pensé qu'il serait plus attrayant de le mettre en corrélation avec un autre texte appartenant au même auteur. Dans *Mémoires du porc-épic*, il est question de la symbolique des animaux qui anime fortement le second texte, dans le sens où, ils s'entremêlent dans la symbolique des valeurs humaines.

Dans le second texte, il s'agit d'une histoire singulière que va vivre, durant des années, un personnage nommé Kibandi qui, après son initiation à l'âge de 10 ans, se dédouble d'une part, en son alter ego animal, un porc-épic, et d'autre part, en un *autre lui-même*, personnage semi-humain. Alain Mabanckou nous fait découvrir une Afrique mystérieuse, énigmatique, ironique et déroutante, avec des personnages insolites dont les aventures tiennent le lecteur en haleine. Le personnage de ce roman est le porc-épic, tout d'abord parce qu'il apparaît dès le titre du roman : *Mémoires de porc-épic.* Ce récit met en avant un double néfaste qui, à la nuit tombée, réalise les pulsions maléfiques de l'homme qu'il hante. L'auteur a choisi le porc-épic, cette rondeur hérissée et répugnante généralement détestée par les humains. L'animal raconte comment il devient le « double nuisible » d'un jeune garçon de dix ans et met ses piquants au service des pires penchants de son maître. *« Le porc-épic a consacré toute une vie de rongeur à exécuter les basses besognes assassines du terrible Kibandi »*. Il va ainsi exécuter quatre-vingt-dix-neuf missions, et son maître demeure de plus en plus avide de bestialité.

Au bout de plusieurs missions accomplies jusque-là sans état d'âme ni remords apparents, le porc-épic, épuisé, fait preuve de lucidité et de sensibilité : *« […] Le chagrin, la pitié, les remords […] je les éprouvais après chaque mission que j'accomplissais, j'ai senti à plusieurs reprises des larmes couler de mes yeux »*.

Pourquoi ce texte ? Et quelle est la parenté établie entre le premier annoncé, au début de ce compte rendu, et le second, celui du porc-épic ? En fait, il apparaît que certains éléments semblent antinomiques entre les deux textes ; la parenté peut être établie dans la mesure où, il ne s'agit point d'animaux maléfiques, cependant, le sens figuré de l'animal laisse largement place au sens propre où l'on aperçoit le sentiment d'exil et l'émotion mémorielle qui transfigurent et transcendent le roman. Au centre du roman, on retrouve la description d'une mère. Une allure grêle au regard triste traverse la narration et habite tout le texte, cette maman est décrite dans une atmosphère mélancolique et tendre à la fois. L'auteur traque les souvenirs fantômes de celle qu'il n'a vue ni vieillir, ni mourir. Depuis fort longtemps, la présence de cette femme, Pauline Kengué, *« modeste paysanne originaire de Louboulou »*, hante la mémoire de l'auteur. Au retour au pays après vingt-trois ans d'absence, Alain Mabanckou rend visite à de nombreux membres de sa famille : tantes, oncles de toute une tribu gentille et méchante (tout comme les animaux), et se réinstalle en se réappropriant le paysage de son enfance, la cabane où il vivait avec *« maman Pauline »*.



Dans cette même lignée thématique, nous pensons à l'avant dernier roman d'Assia Djebar *La disparition de la langue française*[2], dont le principal personnage, Berkane, revient en Algérie après cinquante ans d'absence et de vide. Il est dévoré par l'exil et tente de réactiver sa mémoire. Le récit de Mabanckou convoque cette intense émotion, ce leitmotiv mémoriel qui vient également en miroir de son précédent roman *Demain j'aurai vingt ans,* et accomplit un bel écho à l'œuvre de Dany La ferrière[3], *L'Enigme du retour.* Le lecteur examine la dimension spatiale et temporelle selon un dispositif cinématographique, dans le sens où chaque partie renvoie à une dénomination de film. Au bout de ce voyage quelque peu labyrinthique, sa démarche devient plus clairvoyante dans la mesure où il comprend et intériorise le fait que son pays, qui vit en lui, n'est plus le sien, mais l'auteur demeure fidèle sur un plan mémoriel et émotif.

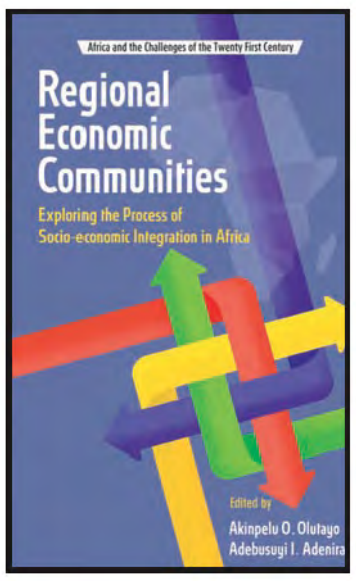
Ce texte témoigne d'un fils égaré qui revient au Congo afin de (re)voir et (ré)entendre la voix et la mémoire de sa maman après vingt-trois ans d'absence, répondre au dernier vœu de sa maman, ce jour de 1989 où ils savaient, tous deux, qu'ils se voyaient pour la dernière fois : *« l›eau chaude n›oublie jamais qu›elle a été froide »*, se souvient-il.

Ce roman est un hommage à sa mère, glorifiée, « maman Pauline », à qui ce tendre écrit de mémoire et d'amour est destiné. Il n'a peut-être pas fait le déplacement, toutefois, « En réalité », écrit Mabanckou, « je redoutais le face-à-face avec cette femme que j'avais laissée souriante, pleine de vie ». La douleur envahit le roman, aussi bien dans le premier que dans le second récit. Le mal est et devient le leitmotiv des personnages humains et inhumains de l'auteur.

Pour conclure, l'auteur s'est immergé dans son passé, tracé quelques repères avec le présent, a réussi plus au moins à (re)convoquer les souvenirs, (re) trouvé les senteurs, les sorciers, les animaux, embrassé les âmes, mortes et/ ou vivantes, « il a rendu grâce au ventre et à la terre qui l'ont porté ». Au moment de rentrer, Mabanckou n'est pas allé au cimetière, il ressuscite en mots, avec autant de maux, le lien africain et peut être universel, qui foisonne entre un fils « unique » et sa mère…

Notes

1. Né en 1966 à Pointe-Noire (Congo-Brazzaville), Alain Mabanckou se décrit comme Congolais de naissance, francophone de nature et Américain d'adoption. Il découvre la littérature au lycée en lisant les poètes romantiques, puis des romanciers comme Joyce ou Céline. Après des études de droit en France, il entre comme juriste, à la Lyonnaise des eaux, et publie des recueils de poèmes. Son premier roman s'intitule *Bleu Blanc Rouge* (1998), et son premier succès, *African psycho (*2003). En 2002, Alain Mabanckou devient professeur de littérature francophone à l'Université du Michigan où il enseigne en français et en anglais. En 2005, son roman *Verre cassé* figure déjà dans la dernière sélection du Renaudot et obtient plusieurs récompenses, dont le Prix RFO du roman. Après trois ans dans le Michigan, Alain Mabanckou rejoint en octobre la prestigieuse Université de Californie à Los Angeles (UCLA). Le lundi 6 novembre 2006, le prix Renaudot 2006 lui est attribué pour *Mémoires de porc-épic*. Ses productions les plus récentes sont les romans *Black Bazar* (2009) et *Demain j'aurai 20 ans* (2010), un recueil de poèmes *Tant que les arbres s'enracineront dans la terre* (2007), un essai *L'Europe depuis l'Afrique* (2009), et un livre pour jeunes *Ma Sœur Etoile* (2010).
2. Paris, Albin Michel, 2003.
3. Écrivain, et scénariste canadien d'origine haïtienne, vivant au Québec.



Reginal Economic Communities

Exploring the Process of Socio-economic Integration in Africa

Akinpelu O. Olutayo and *Adebusuyi I. Adeniran*

This book examines how existence of overlapping regional-based institutions has presented a daunting challenge to the workings of various RECs on the African continent. Majority of the African countries are members of overlapping and, sometimes, contradictory RECs. For instance, in East Africa, while Kenya and Uganda are both members of EAC and COMESA, Tanzania, which is also a member of the EAC, left COMESA in 2001 to join SADC. In West Africa, while all former French colonies, such as Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and Benin Republic belong to the ECOWAS, they simultaneously keep membership of the UEMOA, though unrecognized by the African Union (AU). Such multiple and confusing memberships create unnecessary duplication and dims the light on what ought to be priority. Various chapters in this book have therefore sought to identify and proffer solutions to related challenges confronting the workings of the RECs in different sub-regions of the African continent. The discourses range from security to the stock exchange, identity integration, development framework, labour movement and cross-border relations. The pattern adopted in the project engages devolution of related discussions from the general to the specific; that is, from the continental level to subregional case studies.

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Quelle place pour le sport dans l'identité africaine ?

Tayeb Rehail

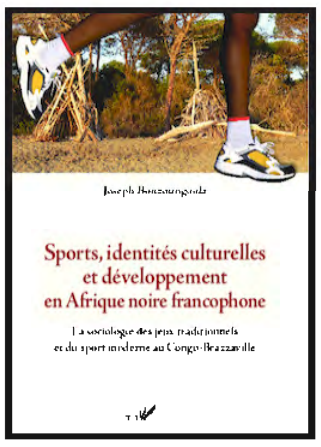
Sports, identités culturelles et développement en Afrique noire francophone, la sociologie des jeux traditionnels et du sport moderne au Congo-Brazzaville,

Par Joseph Bouzoungoula,
Édition l'Harmattan, Paris, 2012, 200 pages, ISBN : 978-2-336-00439-6,
Prix 20 Euros.

Bien que cet ouvrage soit présenté d'emblée comme inachevé, il propose un certain nombre d'analyses et de réflexions sur l'organisation du sport moderne en Afrique noire en général, et au Congo Brazzaville en particulier. S'appuyant sur une approche socio-historique, l'auteur y analyse également l'évolution organisationnelle du sport et des pratiques corporelles traditionnelles de la période coloniale jusqu'à nos jours.

Considérées comme héritage colonial, c'est à 1884 que remontent les premières activités sportives au Congo Brazzaville introduites par les commerçants et marins européens. Mais il ne faut pas oublier qu'avant cela, il existait des formes de jeux corporels traditionnels propres aux habitants de la région et à leur identité culturelle. Ces derniers, qui prennent leurs sources dans les racines proprement africaines, permettent la découverte d'un ensemble de valeurs morales (traditionnelles) spécifiques aux capacités organisationnelles des habitants de la région.

La puissance colonisatrice, par l'intermédiaire des administrations, des colons et des missionnaires, a tenté d'imposer son type de civilisation dans tous les domaines de la vie, et en particulier dans celui du sport et de l'éducation physique[1]. Si par exemple, les militaires (et colons) ont introduit le sport comme loisir (et entraînement), les maîtres et les missionnaires, dans une action destinée à transformer la société locale, voulaient éduquer par l'Éducation physique et sportive (EPS). Nous pouvons dire que la pénétration du sport a surtout été favorisée par le système scolaire (au début du XX^{ème} siècle), alors que les jeux corporels non traditionnels, jugés en marge de la modernité (par le système colonial), ne pouvaient être enseignés ou transmis par l'école.



Le sport moderne fut un vecteur efficace de transmission des valeurs culturelles du colon qui exerçait une politique de domination et d'assimilation des indigènes en vue de les « civiliser » et les intégrer dans la vie moderne ou occidentale. Dans ce cadre, la France a appliqué une politique d'organisation en matière de sport et d'éducation physique qui était assimilable à une mission civilisatrice appliquée dans toutes les colonies de l'époque dites de l'Afrique Équatoriale Française (A.E.F.) et l'Afrique Occidentale Française (A.O.F.), sans tenir compte des réalités endogènes à caractère culturel de chaque pays assujetti.

S'il n'y a pas de doute ici que le sport tel qu'il est pratiqué aujourd'hui est un apport colonial, nous pouvons voir néanmoins qu'en tant qu'instrument dominant du colon, ce dernier n'a pas pris en compte les réalités culturelles locales (jeux corporels traditionnels), autrefois accessibles à toutes les couches sociales locales, et comme l'a noté Gouda : « *Cette civilisation a opéré et agit comme si ces sociétés étaient sans passé, sans histoire, sans personnalité ni identité* »[2].

Le déploiement du sport a occasionné l'érosion des pratiques corporelles et leur non-intégration dans les différents plans d'épanouissement du sport institutionnalisé entrainant leur relégation. Les pratiques physiques traditionnelles, pendant et après la période coloniale, sont liées à d'autres évènements de la vie clanique : cérémonies, fêtes, initiations, jeux, loisirs, chasses et même guerres. Elles sont restées l'apanage des groupes sociaux non-urbanisés.

À l'accession de son indépendance, acquise le 15 Août 1960, le Congo Brazzaville commence à adhérer aux organismes sportifs internationaux afin d'exprimer sa souveraineté (identité, maturité, …). Commencent alors à paraître, à partir de 1960, des textes règlementaires concernant l'éducation physique et le sport. Pour son rayonnement florissant sur le plan international, le pays va imiter l'organisation du sport faite pour un autre peuple, une autre culture, une autre économie, et butera sur des difficultés économiques importantes qui marqueront sa vie sociale et économique, laissant émerger la pratique du sport dans des installations toujours « archaïques » et insuffisantes.

Le sport s'organise alors en fédérations et associations sportives (au nombre de vingt-trois en 2008). Par ailleurs, depuis sa création, le ministère des sports a fait l'objet de quarante et un remaniements en 50 ans (de 1958 à 2008), avec changement de ministres et de dénomination du ministère[3].

Le sport, considéré comme un des ferments possibles de la création du sentiment national communautaire, devait incarner des valeurs identitaires et participer ainsi à la naissance de la nation[4] en créant une mémoire collective à travers des victoires au niveau international.

Les jeux traditionnels tels « le kongo », « le Mpongo » et autres sont revalorisés et érigés en fédérations de jeux traditionnels au début des années 1970. Sachant que les jeux traditionnels jouent une fonction importante pour le travail en équipe, l'apprentissage de la vie en société, la notion de compétition, le dialogue, le respect des règles, la différence des sexes, voire la conservation des valeurs traditionnelles. A peu près au même moment (1972), le football a commencé à péricliter, alors que ce sport très populaire était qualifié par les anciens de « jeu des paresseux », du fait qu'il prenait trop de place dans les rythmes sociaux et éloignait les jeunes générations de la vie traditionnelle faite de cueillette, de chasse, de danse, de travail de la terre…

Notes

1. Voir Gouda S., *Analyse organisationnelle des activités physiques et sportives dans un pays d'Afrique noire : le Bénin,* thèse de doctorat du 3éme cycle Université Joseph Fourrier, Grenoble, 1986.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Voir, page 134.
4. Voir, page 169.

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