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African History in Comparative Perspective

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General Background

History is as inherently comparative as it is contemporary, thus identifying the discipline as the main cutting edge of the humanities into the social sciences. There is an undeniable connection between the subject of study, the human past, on one hand, and, on the other, the historian, alive and present. Even to this important extent of the inter-temporal link between the historian and his subject, there is an acknowledgement, though more implicit than explicit, of the comparative impulse. Where, as is the case with many historians, research and/or teaching engagements are about societies and cultures other than their own, the spatial or the cross-cultural are then consciously or unconsciously combined with the inter-temporal dimensions of the comparative disposition.

However, while comparison is in the very nature of history, the prism worn by mainstream historians commits them to the exploration of the discipline as a dealing with the unique and the incurably specific. Even when working on localities within the same national state, often the main framework of their generally nationalistically predetermined preoccupations, historians as was once observed of those in Zambia (Rennie 1980) as also the United States (Woodward 1968 and Strauss 1979), behave like miners ‘too intent on their hole and too unaware of the researcher in the hole next door, also frantically digging’.

Over time and space, over-concentration and over-specialisation in specific localities and regions make appreciation of other localities and regions unattractive, thus crippling the potentials for wider regional syntheses and vital contributions to world history projects.

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This closet mind-set has been particularly noticeable in the development and growth of African historical scholarship. By Africans and Africanists alike, the latter term often used to refer to non-African experts in African studies, African history has for too long been pursued more as a concern for Africa and Africans than as one of concern for man in Africa. Originating in the 1940s when it began largely as a response to challenges of European colonialist historiography and a major intellectual effort for dealing with the colonialist denial of African human identity and supporting the emergent nationalist movements, African historical scholarship was eventually appropriated as an instrument in the service of the subsequent nation-building agenda.

The demand for postgraduate training and the associated requirement for originality of the resultant doctoral theses and dissertations, more often based on newness of data derived from primary sources such as archives and oral traditions, gave rise to a long sustained era and tradition of monographic studies focussed on relatively small and well-defined manageable areas or localities, usually of the different emerging modern states. This has meant a virtual absence of efforts at explicit comparative analyses and syntheses. Although certain general national and wider regional histories were initially produced (for example Basil Davidson on Africa, and Michael Crowder on Nigeria and West Africa), many of such general titles were derided by the new breed of professional historians who looked down on works that, rather than based on primary sources, are dependent on secondary literature.

Even when they deal with such obviously widely shared problems and experiences as state formations and expansions, slavery, European imperialism and colonialism, nationalism, regionalism and globalisation, African and Africanist historians labour without any explicit acknowledgement of the case-study nature of their otherwise excellent studies, and they are hardly known to engage in explicitly comparative research designs or to attempt to draw generalisations for wider areas than are specifically the focus of the study. The overall effect of these tendencies and trends has been the inability of most African and Africanist historians to present their works as compelling contributions to world history and permit such works to be enriched by comparative perspectives on or from other regional orientations.

The articles in this special edition of *Afrika Zamani* originate from the papers presented at the Specialised Theme One (African History in Comparative Perspective: New Approaches) empanelled at the Twentieth Congress of the International Committee of the Historical Science in Sydney, Australia, 9 to 13 July 2005.

This panel was put together in order to emphasise the comparative perspective as one of the new approaches to African historical scholarship that one would like to see adopted and systematically explored in the twenty-first century. If by the end of the twentieth century, initial doubts about African identity and the scientific viability of African historical scholarship have been effectively dispelled, there appears no further justification for persistence in the tradition of chauvinism and isolation that has tended towards a patently inaccurate and totally unacceptable vision of Africa as a unique and incomparable region of the world, and Africans as peculiar peoples. While not denying the doctrine of spatio-temporal particularity of historical events, a widely recognised antiquity of interactions with other peoples and lands, including those in Asia, Europe, the Americas and Oceania, as well as scientifically acknowledged contributions to origins and growth of civilisation plus current challenges of regional integration and globalisation, all dictate the urgency for a repositioning within wider contexts of shared experiences and the imperative of a comparative approach to research and teaching of African history in the twenty-first century.

The comparative perspective is compelling on other grounds. One is in the ever-increasing indications that the days of the so-called 'data revolution' of the 1960s and 1970s would appear numbered. It is not that there are no new data to be discovered or that every corner and cranny of every African nation has been covered for its own local history. It is, rather, that the future is one of interest less in detailed local histories, however well researched and written, than wider regional syntheses and analyses that would permit African historians to get into a sustained dialogue with other social scientists, including historians of other lands and peoples. Unlike in the 1950s, when the main challenge was in the observable insufficiency of historical source material, the end of the twentieth century has been marked by an incredible accumulation of processed data, thanks to the massive and sustained exploration of not only archival and oral sources, both within and outside the continent, but also of phenomenal progress made in such ancillary sciences as archaeology and linguistics.

Apart from the impressive works carried out by African scholars themselves, based in the several universities and specialised research institutions established in the new independent states (notably Ibadan, Nigeria; Legon, Accra, Ghana; Dakar, Senegal; Makerere, Kampala, Uganda; Dar-Es-Salam, Tanzania; Cairo, Egypt; and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), there was in the 1960s through the 1970s a mushrooming of mostly history-biased African Studies Programmes in Europe, North America and Asia as well as the establishment of specialised learned societies such as the African Studies Associa-

tions of both the United States of America and of the United Kingdom, following such earlier African examples as the Historical Society of Nigeria founded at Ibadan in 1955. This era of ‘data revolution’, which witnessed a virtually unending production of monographic publications on so many culture areas and major historic regions of Africa, would appear to have begun to ebb and wane in the 1980s, giving rise to an ever-increasing quest for works of broader sweeps or syntheses at both national and wider regional levels. While the publication in 1980 of *Groundwork of Nigerian History* by the Historical Society of Nigeria may be taken to illustrate the response at a national level, the achievement a few years later of the eight volume *UNESCO General History of Africa* exemplifies the efforts at a wider regional level. These efforts must be advanced in the twenty-first century to a global level, and enriched by explicitly comparative perspectives and specific research designs.

But as has been more fully discussed by Przeworski and Teune (1970), comparative history, strictly so identified, including the solicited perspective on Africa, poses significant conceptual and methodological challenges, focussing largely on the need to draw generalisations and make general statements about social realities contrary to the disciplinary canon that such realities are meaningful only in the context of specific spatio-temporal locations. In comparative history, the doctrinal position is further complicated by the factor of emotionalism which on all sides tends towards the denial of comparability, for example, between Africa and Africans on the one hand, and on the other, lands and peoples of other regions, especially those of present-day post-industrialised societies of the North.

Take, for example, the issues of European imperialist partition and subsequent divergent colonial regimes, two of the three major conceptually overlapping themes in African comparative historical experiences on which significant works have been done, the third inter-related theme being the question of modern state boundaries as critical factors in regional integrated processes. First, the themes of European partition and differential colonial rule. Although the overlapping subjects of European partition and differential colonial rule enjoyed early and tremendous attention by African and European historians, the pioneers were not so attentive to the advantages of a comparative focus. Thus, in spite of the possibility and profitability of situating the African experience within a global context of the history and politics of territorial partition and parallel nationalisation processes, including the many important manifestations in contemporary Europe and other continents, African and Africanist historians continued to lament about Africa as if it was the most badly, if not the only, partitioned continent, and Africans as if they were the only partitioned peoples. The issue of comparability has to

await the availability of confirming in-depth case studies of the African and European situations such as those undertaken by this writer (Asiwaju 1976, 1984a, 1984b and 2001), William Miles (1990, 1994 and 1998) and Peter Sahlin (1989). Our *Boundaries and African Integration: Essays in Comparative History and Policy Analysis* (2003) is a collection of previously published writings on the subject, focussing mainly on the Western European and North American comparative perspectives on Africa.

These direct involvements and actual experience in comparative historical research in Africa point to some of the ways of meeting the methodological challenges that are posed. These include, first and foremost, the obligation to carefully define the units and levels of the analyses. As may be illustrated with the pioneer Yoruba case study, acknowledged as the model for the more distinguished follow-up work on the Hausa, and fascinatingly complemented by the European case history of the Catalans astride the Franco-Spanish border in the eastern Pyrenees, the specific focus is on two leading European imperialist state systems, the French and the British, as both simultaneously operated in an African 'laboratory' environment of significantly homogeneous culture and shared historical antecedents – the Western Yoruba astride a specific segment of the Nigeria-Dahomey (now Benin) border during the heydays of colonial rule in West Africa. Comparative research in history, as in the other social sciences, is meaningful only and only if and when it is sharply focussed. The case studies all focussed on the experience of partitioned peoples and culture areas, and also showed that once the units and levels of analysis are clearly defined, a comparative research design in history can be pursued to achieve the same kind of originality as non-comparative single-system undertakings, based on maximum exploration of primary sources and data derived from archives and oral evidence.

The lived experiences of a comparative focus on African historical scholarship has also demonstrated that, as in other comparative social inquiries, the over-arching concern is with the possibility of making general statements or drawing generalisations. There is no other way of making sense of the adoption of a case-study approach, based on assumption of core commonalities or unities in the diversities of the social realities in focus. There is also a demand for certain conceptual clarifications of which, perhaps, the most challenging is the issue of 'comparability' and the associated requirement about 'measurement' or 'standardised language'. Comparative history takes the historian from the familiar direction of specialisation in given areas of the world at some particular era, and puts him on a new and more challenging plane of expertise that enables him to participate distinctly in an inherently multi-disciplinary debate and dialogue for improved understanding and possible resolution of some well-defined social problems and

issues. The focus is less on Africa, Nigeria or the Yoruba, than identified as well as defined problems that are confronted and can be examined (see Asiwaju 2004) in terms of manifestations in other social systems. It is in this important sense that the attraction is more in thematic and synchronic analysis than a mere chronological account of historical events.

The concern of comparative research with the possibility and, in fact, the duty to make general statements about social realities, runs through our own research career. Thus, although some attempts were made in the pioneer Yoruba case study to draw some generalisations about African historical experience of differential colonial regimes, the dearth in the 1970s of similar full-scale case studies even of the French and British styles, to say nothing of other colonial types in Africa, made such efforts understandably cautious and timid; and it was, indeed, the search for a wider base for drawing generalisations more confidently that led to follow-up comparative research works, resulting in the publication in 1984 of the now well-known edited volume titled *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries 1884-1984* (1984), and a series of other in-depth studies, more recently put together and published as a book under the title of *West African Transformations: Comparative Impacts of French and British Colonialism* (2001). The works by others, notably those of William Miles and Peter Sahlin (the one on Africa, Asia and Oceania, and the other on Europe) have since been added to those of several other authors, notably Oscar Martinez (1986 and 1994) and Blatter and Clement (2000) who have worked on European and North American comparative perspectives to strengthen our quest for generalisation, if not theorisation, about the special experience, not just of 'partitioned Africans', but, even more globally, 'trans-border peoples' or 'Border Communities', 'Caught in the Middle' in the 'era of globalisation', so well captioned in an elegant book co-edited by Demetrios Papademetriou and Deborah Meyers and published recently, in 2001, by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

It is essentially as an advocacy for this explicitly comparative focus on African historical scholarship, which has remained more the exception than the rule in the twentieth century, that a session on African History in Comparative Perspective was organised for the Twentieth Congress of the International Committee of Historical Sciences at Sydney, Australia, in July 2005. Contributions were solicited around issues broadly defined to include:

- Conceptual and theoretical concerns, notably concepts and methods of comparative history as have been or may be applied to Africa, to meet the challenges of 'Comparability';

- Specific themes based on widely shared historical experiences: ‘Frontier’ in African history, as manifested in accounts of indigenous state formations, expansions and disintegration; slavery; European imperialism and colonialism; nationalism and identity; modern state territories and boundaries; regional integration; urbanisation; peace, war and revolution; refugee problem; poverty; disease, gender; oral traditions;
- Regional and global canvases, that may address subjects and issues of inter-African or inter-continental interests and concerns;
- Pedagogical matters: including issues of methods and strategies for teaching African history in comparative perspective.

The Contributions

Nine papers were eventually short-listed, covering a wide range of relevant issues of theoretical and empirical research interests. While the presentations manifest a diversity of spatio-temporal characteristics and perspectives, they together provide a suitable introduction to the sub-discipline of comparative history and its solicited exploration as a new approach to African historical scholarship in the twenty-first century.

This introductory note must begin with the three conceptual papers by Gareth Austin, Michal Tymowski and John Edward Philips (the first on ‘reciprocal comparison’ and its applicability to African history, and the other two on ‘the use of terms’ as problematised in respective discussions of the concepts of ‘empire’ in the historical research on Africa’ and ‘slavery as a Human Institution’), because of their common concern with the important preliminary issues of basic concepts and clarifying theorisation, so fundamental to any pursuit of our advocated focus of the comparative perspective on African history, but hitherto often ignored by mainstream African and Africanist historians. Whereas Austin’s paper points to the attraction of cross-cultural insights and perceptions, both Tymowski’s and Philips’s admirably confront the basic problem of ‘comparability’ and draw attention to the well-known escape window: a redefinition as ‘measurement’ with a requirement for ‘standardised language’.

Austin’s essay¹ focuses on the well-known problem of ‘Conceptual Eurocentrism’ in African historiography. It argues quite forcefully and persuasively that the way out is in the adoption of the principle of ‘reciprocal comparison’, recently developed by Kenneth Pomeranz in a book significantly titled *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (2001). To begin with the problem itself, it is perhaps pertinent to observe that ‘Conceptual Eurocentrism’ (i.e. the over-arching theorising influence of Europe-derived concepts and conceptual frameworks on the study

of African history) arose from the initial domination of the field by Europeans and the predominantly European training background of those who pioneered African historical scholarship in the mid-twentieth century. In its earliest and most extreme form, the problem manifested itself in the now thoroughly discredited colonialist historiographical formulation that denied the human identity of the black and cast doubts about the viability of African history, presenting it basically as a mere extension of European activities in the black man's continent. In its milder and most persistent versions, the problem became part and parcel of the larger problem of language: African and Africanist historians may have to live with at least some traits of 'conceptual Eurocentrism' for as long as the language they use is one of the official languages bequeathed to Africa by the erstwhile European colonial hegemonies.

While the problem has been significantly tackled through the giant strides made in the advancement of the African historical scholarship at the end of the twentieth century, thanks to revolutionary developments that have witnessed the scientific enthronements of oral traditions and such other internally generated sources of history that have improved the possibility of accessing indigenous Africans' viewpoints and perspectives about their own history, the positive developments have tended to pose the problem differently but not less worrisomely. The reference here is in the observable Afrocentrism, arising from an over-concentration on African viewpoints and perspectives. Indeed, as we have tried to suggest, there has been so much concentration on local and, at best, national history projects, that the main challenge to African historical scholarship today is in the new capacities that must be developed for situating future research concerns within wider regional and global contexts and weave the wide range of monographic studies that have accumulated over the past forty to fifty years into new syntheses that can contribute to an enhanced understanding of wider global historical patterns.

Austin's answers to the problem of 'conceptual Eurocentrism', which may be made to equally apply to the more current issue of Afrocentrism, is in the newfound land of 'reciprocal comparison: to ask [as in respect of Europe and China in the original formulation of the theory], equally why Europe was not China as well as why China was not Europe, as opposed to the traditional practice of taking Western Europe as the template'. Extended to Africa, this also means that we should ask why both 'Europe and China' were different from Africa, as well as why Africa was different from either or both. It is not in the service of a scientifically balanced position, to seek to see Africa only in an European mirror; Europe must also be placed in front of the African mirror. A similar endeavour should hold for Africa vis-à-vis other regions of

the world. The issues detailed in the call for papers for this panel, to which we have made an earlier reference, demonstrate that the scope for the application of the principle of 'reciprocal comparison' to African historical research can be immensely wider than the excellent examples provided in Austin's most fascinating presentation. Two telling examples that came to our notice during the CISH Congress in Sydney are the themes of 'holocaust' and 'terrorism', open for a systematic comparative research exploration for a more professional understanding of the history of European colonisation of non-European lands in North America, Australia and North Africa.

'Comparability', the heart of conceptual concern in comparative social inquiry, is also the key issue in comparative historical research, including the desired application to the study of Africa. Because social phenomena (for example, historical events) vary widely from one social system to another and because they occur in syndromes of specific spatial and temporal locations, endeavours at comparison are generally faced with the problem of measurement and appropriateness of language. Anyone with some relevant experience in cross-cultural or cross-national comparative work can bear witness to this problem of infinite variety of social systems and the inherently multi-variant levels of interactions between components within each system, thus posing a serious challenge to the twin issues of cross-system measurement and naming of events. It is in dealing with this problem that the rationale developed for the evolution of the notion of 'equivalence' and the adoption of 'cognitive model approach to definition of such basic concepts as 'state' and 'nation', to cite two of the common examples of social systems that historians deal with in the course of their comparative research.

Tymowski's paper on 'the use of the term "empire" in historical research on Africa' provides a most telling illustration of the problem of 'comparability' and the requirement for measurement and appropriateness of the 'measurement language'. Taking the reader through a critical literature review, beginning with Maurice Delafosse's popularisation of the concept in his pioneer essays on the ancient Western Sudanic States of Ghana, Mali and Songhai in 1912 and climaxing with pointers in the more professionally executed multi-volume UNESCO *General History of Africa* completed in 1985, Tymowski exposed the essential inconsistency in African and Africanist use of the term, 'empire', one of those concepts, including such others as 'Kingdom' and 'Feudalism,' which inevitably crept into the study of African history in the heydays of 'conceptual Eurocentrism'.

He then extrapolated the main features of African historic state formations that are usually labelled 'empire' in order to arrive at some broad African characteristics that can be used to evaluate the African pattern vis-à-vis non-African, notably European, historic examples that have been similarly

categorised. Tymowski then concludes that, with the possible exception of Ethiopia, the African historic states that are usually referred to in writings of so many generations of African and Africanist historians as ‘empires’ were really not more than historic formations, which elsewhere are referred to as ‘early empires’. But whether the African historic states in question are ‘empires’ or ‘early empires’, is not the concern of this introductory note. What is of more paramount interest is that Tymowski’s presentation has provided us with the illustration of the problem of ‘comparability’, and the associated need for standardisation of language or definition of operative concepts, which comparative African and Africanist historians can only ill ignore.

The paper by Philips on ‘Slavery as a Human Institution’ stands out as a watershed between the essentially theoretical and conceptual essays by Austin and Tymowski on the one hand, and on the other, the remainder of the six presentations in the session, largely devoted to the empirical treatment of specific topics. In a theoretically and empirically rich exposition of ‘slavery’ as a universal phenomenon in ‘human history’ and contemporary society, Philips has significantly advanced the argument about ‘comparability’ as, basically, a problem of ‘measurement’ and ‘standardised language’. The critical literature review, indicating strengths and weaknesses of both the ‘formal’ and ‘idealised cognitive model’ definitions of the basic concepts of ‘slave’ and ‘slavery’, demonstrates the requirement, not only for analytical rigour but also competence in inter-disciplinary communications.

Philips rejects a traditional approach to the discourse of ‘slavery’, based on characteristically restrictive ‘formal’ or ‘semantic’ definitions of the term. Instead, he advocates a new way of thinking based on a definition that is of a more global applicability. The reference here is to his brilliant elaboration of the ‘idealised cognitive model’ of definition, with a particular focus on the ‘radial’ variant of the model. This has enabled him to take the debate out of the confinement of ‘formal’ definitions of ‘slavery’, which had placed the North America-biased restrictive emphasis on the meaning of ‘slave’ as ‘property’. The new advocacy thus releases the discourse from the conceptual futility of having to either police the inherently ‘fuzzy’ and porous borders vis-à-vis such other semantically close neighbours as ‘serfdom’ and ‘peonage’ or engage in fruitless surgical operations to separate the inseparable cluster of such historic growths and extensions as ‘sporadic slavery’, ‘domestic slavery’, ‘chattel slavery’, ‘white slavery’, ‘elite slavery’ ‘forced labour’, ‘prostitution’ and ‘child labour’, as well as other products of modern ‘human trafficking’ in women and children. The adoption of the ‘radial’ variant of the cognitive-model definition of ‘slavery’ has facilitated Philips’s more inclu-

sive and more universalistic comparative account on, perhaps, one of the most influential issues in African and contemporary world history.

The next set of three papers, which open the session to presentations of strictly descriptive studies, are admirably thematically connected in their common focus on conceptually related issues of identity, national question, and regional integration, obviously matters of tremendous inter-African and wider global interest and sensitivity.

The essays by Bahru Zewde on 'Embattled Identity in Northeast Africa', Pierre Kipré on 'De la Question Nationale en Afrique Noire', and Nichodemus Awasom on 'Problems of Anglo-Saxonism and Gallicism in Nation-Building in Africa' are nicely inter-connected at more points than one. All three, for a start, commonly and correctly trace the origins of the problems to the history of modern state boundaries in the different sub-regions of Africa. All three are also unanimous in their view on regional integration as the most viable way out of the worrisome problem posed by nation-statism in Africa, the failures of 'federation' and 'confederation' experiments, specifically focussed by Awasom, notwithstanding. Finally, there is a common awareness and acknowledgement of the wider regional and global contexts and implications of the discussions in view of the resurgence of the closely related politics of ethnicity and ethno-nationalism, which have wreaked and are still wreaking havoc elsewhere in Africa, as in several Lake-Region States (Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo), post-Communist Europe, Asia and, in mostly muted forms, in North and Latin America, as well as Australia.

The papers by Zewde and Kipré are particularly close in content and orientation. Though based on data drawn from two distinct sub-regions of the continent, Northeast Africa in the one case and West Africa in the other, both presentations deal with conceptually identical issues of identity and the 'national question', and they both adopt a wider regional canvas and in-depth historical perspectives to the treatment of their inter-related subject matters. Unlike previous studies of the many instances of the invariably identity-concerned conflicts in the Horn (notably the Ethiopian-Eritrean, the Somalian and the Sudanese), where treatment is at the level of the individual constituent states and wherein the stress is on the present and current situations, the Northeastern African case study is an exemplar of wider regional synthesis and in-depth historical analysis. The historical account is of a long-term perspective that traces the developments from the pre-colonial population movements and state formation processes through the phase of imperial partition and differential colonial regimes to the impact of postcolonial politics within and between the modern states.

Kipré's West African focus replicates Zewde's Northeast African study in several of its essential details, notably a regional coverage and an articulated concern for time-depth in the treatment of the various events, including not just the more spectacular cases of 'collapsed' and collapsing states such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and the author's own beloved neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, but, as well, the older instances of contestation of the 'national question' as are known to have occurred in Nigeria, Benin (formerly Dahomey), Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), Ghana, Togo, Mali, Senegal, Guinea (Conakry) and Cape Verde. It is especially remarkable that in presenting his fascinating long-term historical account of the 'national question' as manifested in West Africa, Kipré has adopted the same colonially biased three-epoch chronological framework of pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial distinctions as in Zewde's paper on Northeast Africa.

Obviously a most welcome extension of foundation comparative studies of the French and British colonial impact in West Africa already cited, Awasom's comparative focus on problems of 'Anglo-Saxonism and Gallicism in Nation-Building in Africa', has significantly advanced the discussions, in both Zewde's and Kipré's presentations, of the grave challenges that have been posed to past efforts in Africa to transcend national bounds and forge trans-border identities. The abysmal failure of the Senegambia Confederation experiment and the severely qualified success of the Cameroonian Union, in spite of the several interlocking bonds of shared history and culture of the local indigenous people along and across state boundaries, underscores the generally inadequately appreciated obstructions posed to regional integration efforts by the profound impact of the parallel national socialisation processes of the colonial and postcolonial periods.

Awasom presents the united Cameroon as a success story of a political merger that symbolises a triumph over backgrounds of a divided colonial experience. However, his own admission of the sustained political unease and even tension between the federalist Anglophone minority, now as if it were permanently relegated to a position of political subordination and second-fiddle roles vis-à-vis the centralist Francophone majority who dominate the government, would seem to suggest a justification of the reservations and ultimate rejection of the Senegambian confederation project by the Anglophone Gambian political elite whose position in the proposed confederation would have been more uncomfortable than the Anglophone minority's in bilingual Cameroon. The potentials of Awasom's contribution for a more regional, if not global level of comparison are many including not only the popular case of the Quebecois, the French-speaking enclave that has dictated the status of Canada also as a bilingual federation, but also the numerous other African cases of 'federation' and 'confederation' such as the short-

lived Senegal-Guinea-Mali and the equally brief Ethio-Eritrean Federation of 1952–1961 as well as the similarly failed attempts at federating Northern and Southern Rhodesia, today's Zambia and Zimbabwe, in the 1960s. These failed 'federation' and 'confederation' projects seem to point to regional integration on the model of the European Union or Economic Community as a more viable future for forging trans-border identity in Africa.

The last bracket of three papers, each cast in a large-scale inter-continental canvas of comparison, points to some of the typical strengths and weaknesses of such global-level comparative history, including the application to the study of Africa being sought in this special collection of essays. As has been elaborated by Jorgen Kocka and cited in the paper by David Lindenfeld on 'The Taipin [China/Asia] and the Aladura [Nigeria/Africa]: A Comparative Study of Charismatically Based Christian Movements', the shortcomings may be summarised to include: over-dependence 'on secondary literature, because the linguistic skills required for cross-cultural comparisons at the level of primary and archival sources exceed the abilities of most historians'; taking cases out of their ordinary spatial and temporal locations and contexts; and isolating otherwise interconnected events to permit their being meaningfully compared, an approach which, as we have already seen, runs foul of mainstream disciplinary doctrines; and, finally, the absence of causal interactions between the two or more social phenomena in focus, a matter of so much concern for regular historians. However, as Kocka is also known to have argued, these disadvantages of 'far-flung, decontextualized comparisons' are generally out-weighed by their greater benefits. These include a more enhanced heuristic value; more easily demonstrated relevance to 'a global age'; and, above all, the bridging of the gaps often created by common-place engagements with over-specialisation.

It is against this backdrop of the advantages and disadvantages of a global-level comparative focus on African history that we must appreciate the last three papers in this session by Lindenfeld, as already noted, on 'Charismatically Based Christian Movements', Olufunke Adeboye on the closely related issue of 'Pentecostal Challenges in Africa and Latin America: A Comparative Focus on Nigeria and Brazil', and Ayodeji Olukoju on 'Maritime Policy and Economic Development: A Comparison of Nigerian and Japanese Experiences Since the Second World War'. The papers by both Lindenfeld and Adeboye are particularly closely connected, not just in terms of their shared characteristics as 'far-flung, decontextualised comparisons' and typical dependence on secondary literature. The two presentations, focussed on issues of religion, point in the direction of original contributions to world history which, though 'the story of connections within the global human community', has hitherto tended to emphasise material aspects of the

‘connections’ (for example, ‘trade patterns’ and ‘technological diffusion’) at the expense of relatively intangible dimensions such as ideologies and religions.

By drawing on the extremely rich data in the monographic studies that have accumulated over the decades on the ‘Taipin’ in China and the ‘Aladura’ in Nigeria, Lindenfeld has successfully pulled off a refreshingly insightful piece on ‘Charismatically Based Christian Movements’ in Asia and Africa. There are evidently new things to learn as much by African specialists as by their Asian counterparts whose works have been imaginatively and creatively utilised to achieve an impressively distinct intercontinental synthesis and an exemplary attempt at a global-level ‘reciprocal comparison’ of both Africa and Asia. Adeboye’s presentation makes a similarly remarkable contribution to our global level understanding of the Pentecostal movement. Also, by drawing the data for her paper from a wide array of works that have been published over the years on the Nigerian and Brazilian Pentecostalism, she has accomplished a distinctly new global study that will be recognised as much by experts on Africa as by the specialists on Latin America, whose published studies have been rigorously researched for the purpose of a ‘reciprocal’ comparative focus on the religious aspect of African and Latin American history.

Olukoju’s descriptive essay on ‘Maritime Policy and Economic Development: A Comparison of Nigerian and Japanese Experiences since the Second World War’ follows the same general path as the other two preceding global-level comparative studies. Not only are there the same features of methodological and conceptual challenges evident in the total dependence on secondary sources, decontextualisation and observable causal disconnection between the two economies in focus, there are also manifestations of the characteristic advantages. By carefully harvesting the fruits of existing detailed studies of the maritime history of each of Nigeria and Japan, which have accumulated over the years (including the author’s own pioneering original work on Lagos), Olukoju’s paper has provided a pointer to the future of, to return to Pomeranz as quoted in Austin’s presentation, viable ‘reciprocal comparison’.

This important potential is especially evidenced in the concluding part of the paper in which the author poses and answers questions as to ‘equally why’, in spite of a common contemporary policy-making and actual huge state investments in maritime infrastructural development, the outcomes for Nigeria have been so significantly different than those for Japan, and vice versa. Locating the discussions within wider global comparative contexts was particularly facilitated as much by the ubiquitous fact of the significance and relevance of the maritime sector to modern world economy as by the advantage of a wider scope of available secondary literature on the subject.

The prospects of intercontinental and global-level comparison, attempted by Olukoju as well as by Adeboye and Lindenfeld, have been demonstrated by Mark Beissinger and Crawford Young in the admirable multi-disciplinary symposium on contemporary world history, titled *Beyond State Crisis? Post-colonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspective* (2002).

On the whole, the nine papers presented to this symposium on 'African History in Comparative Perspective: New Approaches' would seem to have eminently fulfilled the purpose for organising it, namely to indicate the obvious gap in current engagement with research and teaching about African history, which a comparative focus and perspective can and must bridge. While the essentially theoretical and conceptual essays (notably the papers by Austin, Tymowski and Philips), draw attention to certain theoretical and methodological concerns, the remainder of the six largely descriptive essays (three by Zewde, Kipré and Awasom on issues of African regional interests and global implications; and three by Lindenfeld, Adeboye and Olukoju on inter-continental and global-level comparative casts) point in the direction of the immense potential for feasible themes and concrete case studies. All the presentations demonstrate the validity of the observation which Gareth Austin has made in his own specific contribution that 'the monographic foundation [of the twentieth century] is now [in the twenty-first] sufficient to facilitate defensible generalizations with Africa (or major regions of Africa) which can then be contributed to the debates about broader historical patterns'.

Note

1. Austin's paper, 'Reciprocal Comparison and African History: Tackling Conceptual Euro-Centrism in the Study of Africa's Economic Past' presented at the Sydney Congress of CISH, is not included in this special issue of *Afrika Zamani*, but can be obtained in CISH-Sydney 2005 Proceedings-Guest Editor.

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Use of the Term ‘Empire’ in Historical Research on Africa: A Comparative Approach

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Abstract

This paper explores the use of the term ‘empire’ in historical research on Africa to illustrate the problem of ‘comparability’ and the requirement for measurement and appropriateness of the ‘measurement language’. Taking the reader through a review of the literature, beginning with Maurice Delafosse's popularisation of the concept in his essays on ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhai in 1912 and climaxing with pointers in the multi-volume UNESCO *General History of Africa* in the late twentieth century, the author exposes the essential inconsistency in African and Africanist use of the term, ‘empire’, which inevitably crept into the study of African history in the heydays of ‘conceptual Eurocentrism’. He maintains that the usage of the term ‘empire’ in African historiography was employed due to the need to name those African states which were extensive territorially and multi-ethnically; and states designated ‘empires’ were characterised by certain elements of an imperial organisation rather than by a fully formed imperial system. And for analogues and comparisons, the form of dependence between the centre and the subordinated tribes and early states that developed in Africa reminds us rather of the relations existing on the other continents in the early stages of large state formation. Hence, the term ‘early empire’ seems more justified to describe these states in research on the history of Africa. The author calls for the need to conduct discussion, with the help of a comparative method, on the specific features of those ‘early empires’.

Résumé

Cet article étudie l'utilisation du terme «empire» dans la recherche historique sur l'Afrique, afin d'illustrer le problème de la «comparabilité» ainsi que le besoin d'un système de mesure et d'opportunité du «langage de mesure». En transportant le lecteur dans une revue de littérature, qui commence par la popularisation de ce concept par Maurice Delafosse, dans ses essais sur les anciens empires du Ghana, du Mali et l'empire Songhaï, et aboutit à des indica-

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tions figurant dans l'ouvrage multi-volume de l'Unesco intitulé *Histoire générale de l'Afrique* vers la fin du 20^e siècle, l'auteur présente la principale incohérence contenue dans l'usage du terme «empire» par les Africains et les africanistes, qui s'est inévitablement faufilée dans l'étude de l'histoire africaine, durant l'apogée de l'«eurocentrisme conceptuel». Il affirme que l'usage du terme «empire» dans l'historiographie africaine s'explique par le besoin de trouver une qualification à ces États africains qui présentait une certaine envergure sur le plan territorial et multiethnique. Ainsi, les États qualifiés d'«empires» étaient caractérisés par quelques éléments relevant de l'organisation impériale, plutôt que par un système impérial complet. En termes d'analogie et de comparaison, le type de dépendance qui existait entre le centre, les tribus sous domination et les premiers États qui se sont développés en Afrique rappelle davantage les relations existant au niveau des autres continents au tout début du processus de formation des grands États. Ainsi, le terme de «pré-empire» semble plus adapté pour décrire ces États en questions, dans le cadre de la recherche sur l'histoire de l'Afrique. L'auteur estime qu'il est nécessaire d'engager une discussion, à travers la méthode comparative, sur les caractéristiques spécifiques de ces «pré-empires».

African pre-colonial states differed with respect to their territorial sizes, economies and ethnic compositions of the population. Some of the states occupied a small territory, clearly delimited geographically and economically and inhabited by a single ethnic group or population, among which one sub-group unquestionably dominated the others. By way of example, we can list here: the Yoruba city-states, Benin, the city-states of Hausa, the Wolof state, Dahomey, Congo, Buganda, and Rwanda. Other African states had extensive territories, differentiated from the viewpoint of geographical environment, economy and ethnic composition of the population. Large, multi-ethnic African states are often termed 'empires' in the literature on the subject.

Examples of the use of the term 'empire' are very numerous. We cannot quote them all, so we will only list the best known ones here. Many of them occur in works devoted to the history of West Africa, and especially the area of Western Sudan. The term 'empire' was introduced quite early on in investigations into the history of that part of Africa. In 1912, Maurice Delafosse not only defined as 'empires' Ghana, Mali and Songhay, he also wrote about: *empires mossi et gourmantche; l'empire Sosso ou du Kaniaga; les empires banmana de Segou et du Kaarta; l'empire toucouleur d'El-Hadj Omar; l'empire de Samori; l'empire de Tekroun* (pp.427-28). What surprises in this list is not only the label of 'empire' for a state formation as ephemeral as Sosso, or to the tribal organisation such as the Gurmantsche people; but also using the term 'kingdom' rather than 'empire' with respect to such a territorially extensive and ethnically diverse Fulbe state of Macina. We will

find no explanation of this differentiation in Delafosse's work. However, the terminology he used had a strong influence on later research.

The use of the term 'empire' is accepted most often with respect to Ghana (in its heyday from about the seventh century to the eleventh century), Mali (heyday in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries) and Songhay (heyday in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries).¹ Also the political organisations of the Bambara of Segu, the Tukulor, as well as the Fulbe from Macina were termed 'empires'.² Another state recognised as an 'empire' was Oyo, lying to the south of the Western Sudanese states, in the area adjacent to the tropical forests on the Guinea coast (Akinjogbin 1966; Law 1977). Among the states lying to the south of the Sahara, in Central Sudan, the term 'empire' is used with respect to Borno. Also Ethiopia is commonly so termed.³ Another area where numerous political organisations termed 'empires' in the literature functioned in the past is the Congo basin and the savannahs of the South. Here a fact worthy of consideration is that of Congo, termed kingdom, even with respect to its heyday in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, while the Luba and Lunda states, centralised to a lesser degree, are termed 'empires' (Margarido 1970; Wilson 1972), as well as the state of Monomotapa situated in East Africa (Randles 1975).

The term empire, used in the above-mentioned monographic works devoted to the individual states of pre-colonial Africa, has been adopted—though inconsistently—by the authors and editors of the syntheses of African history published under UNESCO patronage. This adoption was based to a large extent on historiographic tradition. There is no separate chapter devoted to the adopted terminology. The practical solutions employed in the individual volumes are different.

Volume III, of the UNESCO General History of Africa edited by M. Elfasi and I. Hrbek—*Africa from the Seventh to the Eleventh Century*—uses the term kingdom to refer to Ghana.⁴ In Volume IV, edited by D.T. Niane—*Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*—the authors writing about Mali and Songhay use the term empire, but this is not the case for Borno, for which the term kingdom is used. With respect to Ethiopia, both the terms: kingdom and 'empire' are indiscriminately used.⁵ In Volume V, edited by B.A. Ogot—*Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*—the authors abandon the term 'empire' in favour of the term kingdom or a more general one of a political system, or in favour of African terms, such as *mansaya*, *bulopwe*, *Mmwant Yav*, etc. In that volume, the term 'empire' is used, however, with respect to Lunda and Ethiopia.⁶ Finally, Volume VI, edited by J.F. Ade Ajayi—*Africa in the Nineteenth Century until the 1880s*—sees the return to the term 'empire' used with respect to the Lunda, Oyo and the Tukulor states.

The Mossi states are termed both kingdoms and 'empires'. With respect to the Fulbe of Macina, the African term *dina* is used. The section concerning Ethiopia discusses decentralisation and 'decline of imperial authority'.⁷

Such use of the term 'empire' needs to be considered from two points of view. Firstly, we propose to compare features of the individual African pre-colonial states called 'empires' in order to compose a collection of typical and frequently occurring features of African 'empires'. Secondly, we need to compare the features of non-African 'empires' with the African ones.

Despite the inconsistencies referred to above, in historical research on Africa the term 'empire' is applied as a rule to political organisations (states) which had the following features:

- (i) Large area;
- (ii) Centralised powers;
- (iii) Successfully conducted territorial expansion;
- (iv) Subordination of many peoples with different cultures, occupations and internal organisation systems to the superior organisation.

The issue of occurrence of these features in pre-colonial African 'empires' requires further analysis. Their territories were not uniform—they usually consisted of a central area and peripheries. The former was governed by the ruler and the latter by provincial chiefs he had appointed. But as conquests progressed and new territories were included in the empire, the number of provinces did increase. Remote areas were administered indirectly, and their relatively loose dependency was expressed in paying an annual tax and supplying people for the victorious ruler's army.⁸

In the peripheral areas included in the 'empire', the local tribal or early state organisation was maintained; the former chiefs or rulers or—in case of their resistance, defeat or death—other members of the local dynasty were left in power there. They were only assigned the duties of provision of people for military expeditions, collection and delivery of taxes, often involving the obligation to report personally, once a year, at the victorious ruler's court in order to deliver the tax and renew the bonds of political allegiance.

Leaving the old political organisations on the peripheries of the 'empire' more or less to themselves was the cheapest way of subordinating them and including them in the political system of the victorious empire, since this solution did not require organisation of the empire's own administration. In face of the weakness of the economy and the low level of surplus means, use of such a system was often the only way of increasing the area of the 'empire'. But the system had its faults too. Local, dependent chiefs tended to throw off foreign power at any opportunity, refuse to send the tax and people, and

neglect the duty to report at the court. What is more, exploitation of the subordinated peripheral organisations and the struggle to maintain their internal structure resulted in blocking their development.

Thus, without negating the feature of possessing extensive territories exhibited by the ‘empires’ in which we are interested, in their spatial organisation we observe partial centralisation of power. The peripheral organisations subordinated to the centre included not only early state organisations, but also tribal ones. What is more, the development of tribes towards early state organisation was blocked or fraught with difficulties. For this reason, some of the researchers either negate or consider as disputable the use of the term ‘empire’ with respect to the state organisations they study.⁹

According to the tradition of research concerning general history (Eisenstadt 1963, 1968; Doyle 1986; Mann 1986), an ‘empire’ is a state of states, a superior organisation built over dependent states. This gives rise to the question of constructing a superior power over tribal organisations. K. Polanyi used the term early empire, which was adopted in later research. But recent publications devoted to ‘early empires’ on different continents do not resolve the dilemma regarding the role of tribes in their structure (Polanyi 1957; Tapar 2001).

The second, important feature of an ‘empire’ is its endeavours in the military, political and ideological spheres to arrange the whole surrounding world known to the ruling group according to its own religious, legal and political rules and principles developed in the centre of imperial power (Conrad 1984; Khazaniv 1993; Doyle 1986).

As a result of the inclusion of peripheral tribes and early states in their own territory, the areas of many African ‘empires’ were settled by very diverse ethnic groups, differing in their occupations and cultures. This diversity within a single political organism facilitated mutual infiltration of cultures. The rulers and ruling groups in the centre were aware that cultural differences weakened cohesion of the empire. They tried to counteract it on the ideological plane. Where Islam was adopted, it became the religion of the ruling group both in the centre and on the peripheries (Trimingham 1962, 1968; Monteil 1972; Levtzion 1988). A similar role was played by Christianity in the case of Ethiopia, and in the intention of the rulers of Congo at the end of the fifteenth and in the sixteenth centuries in the Congo kingdom (Thornton 1983). And where the use of Islam or Christianity was impossible, this function was fulfilled by the cult of the ruler and the recognition of the supremacy of his magic power over the power of the subordinated rulers and chiefs. An example of this is the worship of Sango in old Oyo.

A comparison of the methods and circumstances of building a religious or ideological supremacy in the 'empires' known from the general history with the methods and circumstances occurring in African 'empires' allows us to establish a considerable difference between them. In cases referring to Islam, the centre of an African 'empire' was not the main centre of the religion the state subscribed to. This was located in Mecca, Medina, Cairo, and hence outside the reach of the local empire's power. What is more, in Africa there was both awareness that the religious centre was situated outside and a good knowledge of the holy places of Islam. In this situation, an African 'empire' could not aspire to a full religious supremacy and to ordering the world solely according to its principles.

Neither could such a supremacy be provided by Christianity, for its centres, both Catholic and Protestant ones, were situated outside Africa. However, in the case of Ethiopia, where a separate Ethiopian church existed, we can assume that the religious and cultural foundations for building imperial power developed there (Tamrat 1972; Kaplan 1988).

The above overview of the usage of the term 'empire' in African historiography leads to the following conclusions:

- (i) The term 'empire' was employed due to the need to name those African countries which were extensive territorially and multi-ethnically.
- (ii) The use of this term in historiography is not consistent.
- (iii) Some of the researchers reject the use of this term.
- (iv) African states referred to as 'empires' were characterised by certain elements of an imperial organisation rather than by a fully formed imperial system.
- (v) In African 'empires' religions fulfilled the role of a factor unifying the ruling group. However, those 'empires', except for Ethiopia, were not the main centres of great religious systems, and neither were they able to arrange the world they knew according to the principles of those religions.
- (vi) If we were to look for analogues and comparisons, then the form of dependence between the centre and the subordinated tribes and early states that developed in Africa reminds us rather of the relations existing on the other continents in the early stages of large state formation.
- (vii) It seems justified to adopt the term 'early empire' in research on the history of Africa.
- (viii) It is necessary to conduct—with the help of the comparative method—discussion on the specific features of those 'early empires'.

Notes

1. G. Dieterlen, Diarra Sylla, *L'empire de Ghana. Le Wagadou et les traditions de Yérére*, Paris 1922; C. Monteil, "Les 'empires' du Mali", *Bulletin CHSAOF*, 1929; Madina Ly Tall, *Contribution à l'histoire de l'empire du Mali (XIIIe—XVIe siècles)*, 1977; J. Béraud-Villars, *L'empire de Gao, un état soudanais au XVe et au XVIe siècles*, 1942; J. Boulnois, Boubou Hama, *L'empire de Gao. Histoire, coutumes et magie des Songhai*, 1954; S.M. Cissoko, *Tombouctou et l'empire Songhay*, 1975.
2. L. Kesteloot (ed.), "Le mythe et l'histoire dans la formation de l'empire de Segou", *Bulletin IFAN*, 1978; A.H. Ba, J. Daget, *L'empire Peul du Macina*, vol. I (1818-1853), 1962; Y.J. Saint-Martin, *L'empire Toucouleur 1848-1897*, Paris 1970; O. Oloruntimehin, *The Segu Tuculor Empire*, 1972.
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5. General History of Africa, vol. IV, *Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, D.T. Niane (ed.), UNESCO 1984, p. 126ss, 152ss, 172s (Mali), 191ss
6. General History of Africa, vol. V, *Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, B.A. Ogot, ed., UNESCO 1992, p. 43 (mansaya), 590, 595 (bulopwe), 590ss (political systems), 593 (Mwant Yav), 6012-603 (Lunda as 'empire' and imperial organisation), 705-709 (Christian Ethiopian Empire).
7. General History of Africa, vol. VI, *Africa in the Nineteenth Century until the 1880s*, J.F. Ade Ajayi (ed.), UNESCO 1989, p. 17 ('Empires' of Lunda, Old Oyo, Mossi), 377 (decline of imperial authority in Ethiopia), 600,611ss (Tukulor empire), 605 (dina), 672-678 (Mossi kingdoms).
8. L. Mair, *African Kingdoms*, 1977, pp. 74-78: *The Core and the Periphery*; J. Vansina, 'A Comparison of African Kingdoms', *Africa* 1962; R. Thapar, 'The State as Empire', in *The Study of the State*, J.H.M. Claessen, P. Skalnik (eds.), 1981, pp. 409-426, wrote "In the typology of early 'empires' the nature of the relationship between metropolitan and the peripheral areas is crucial" (p. 411); M. Tymowski, *Le territoire et les frontières du Songhay à la fin du XVe et au XVIe siècle—le problème du centre et de territoires périphériques d'un grand Etat de l'Afrique occidentale*, UNESCO, forthcoming.
9. E.I. Steinhard, "From 'Empire' to State: the Emergence of the Kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara c. 1350–1890", in *The Study*, op cit., pp. 353-370: ('of the transformation of Kitara from an extensive and loose-knit 'Empire' to a smaller and more compact 'state'), p. 354; J. P. Chrétien, "L'empire de Bacwezi; la construction d'un imaginaire géopolitique", *Annales ESC*, 1985, pp. 1335-1377: 'empire' ou constellation clanique?" (p. 1341).

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Slavery as a Human Institution¹

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Abstract

Scholars of slavery have long been divided between those who define slaves primarily as human property and those who define slaves primarily as kinless outsiders. This article reconciles these competing definitions by using the new understanding of definitions popularized by George Lakoff in his book *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*. The two formal definitions that have been offered are really two sides of the same coin. Slaves in Africa were property because they were kinless outsiders, while slaves in the United States were kinless outsiders because they were property. Slaves in other societies also had this dual character as both property and kinless outsiders. Slavery is a human institution that began in the psychological dependence caused by the shame of kinlessness experienced by isolated individuals. It was thus a mechanism for the incorporation of new members into a society. It spread and developed in human societies, coming to have various extensions in different societies, but always so recognizably similar that slaves could easily be transferred between cultures that had very different understandings of slavery.

Résumé

Un clivage existe depuis longtemps chez les universitaires spécialisés dans l'étude de l'esclavage, entre ceux qui définissent fondamentalement l'esclave comme une propriété humaine et ceux qui le considèrent essentiellement comme un être sans attaches familiales. Cet article réconcilie ces deux définitions concurrentes en recourant à la nouvelle conception de définitions popularisée par George Lakoff dans son ouvrage *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*. Ces deux définitions proposées sont comme bonnet blanc et blanc bonnet. En Afrique, les esclaves étaient considérés comme une propriété, parce qu'il s'agissait d'individus sans attaches familiales, tandis qu'aux Etats-Unis, les esclaves étaient des individus sans attaches familiales, justement parce qu'ils étaient la propriété d'autres personnes. De même, dans d'autres sociétés, les esclaves présentaient également cette double caractéristique d'être à la fois propriété et personnes sans

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attaches familiales. L'esclavage est une institution humaine née de la dépendance psychologique provenant du sentiment de honte d'être dépourvu d'attaches familiales, honte ressentie par certains individus. Il représentait ainsi un mécanisme d'intégration de nouveaux membres au sein de la société. Il s'est étendu et s'est développé au sein des sociétés humaines, à travers diverses ramifications, qui présentaient cependant de fortes similitudes, à tel point que les esclaves étaient aisément transférables d'une culture à l'autre, cultures qui présentaient pourtant des conceptions très différentes de l'esclavage.

Introduction: The Persistence of Slavery

Although slavery has been universally outlawed only recently in historical terms, it is surprisingly persistent. Despite strong social disapprobation and stiff legal penalties, bonded labour, other forms of involuntary servitude, and even the outright sale of persons, persist into the twenty-first century on every inhabited continent. Shockingly, even some slaves who have been freed from bondage return voluntarily to slavery, or even attempt suicide because they do not know what else to do with themselves. Psychological dependence is not only possible, it is far more effective in ensuring control of slaves than is mere brute force.² Slavery is probably as irrational and stubbornly persistent among slave owners as among slaves themselves. The institution may be an economic one in that it involves economic relations between slaves and their owners, but it is not economically rational in the sense that it is an efficient way to organise human labour. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, slave societies have shown that they were simply not able to compete with free societies economically, yet slave owners almost everywhere have put up a very stubborn resistance to the emancipation of their slaves, despite evidence that the owners themselves would be among the beneficiaries of the abolition of slavery. Understanding slavery and the psychology of its stubborn persistence has been and still is one of the most important yet difficult tasks of historians and social scientists.

The Problem of Defining Slavery

In an absolute sense there is no slavery, there have only been a finite number of persons held for a limited time (even if often to the end of their lives), in conditions considered by themselves or others to be slavery. Those conditions differed widely, not only from society to society but from time to time in the same society, and often even for the same slave at different times in his or her life. Historically speaking, there have only been those specific concrete instances of domination of one or more human beings by one or more other human beings. These specific instances can be broken down and deconstructed theoretically to arbitrarily prove that 'slavery' as a unified sys-

tem of human domination never really existed. Such deconstructionist theorising would be silly, perhaps dangerous, especially when one considers the tremendous amount of human suffering that has been caused, indeed is still being caused, by these various cases of slavery. But any human theorising about the abstract nature of those many, but still finite, instances is simply that: human theorising, which has no real, objective existence in the outside physical world.

Yet without this very theorising there is no slavery, even in the concrete historical instances of which I have spoken above. Slavery, like money, is an abstract, artificial, human-created institution. Again like money, it is, of course, very real and powerful, but it is still clearly theoretical and metaphorical in its inception. Paternity, or at least fatherhood, may also be a socially constructed category, but it is based on the biological fact of human reproduction. Slavery, however defined and conceived theoretically by whatever society practices or practised it, is not usually considered a natural category, at least today. The state of enslavement is only an artificial metaphor imposed by human theorising. No one is really born chattel, for no living, conscious human is actually an inert, manipulable object, unless he or she believes themselves so and submits, because 'every bondman in his own hand bears the power to cancel his captivity'.³ Neither are humans naturally without kin, for all humans are necessarily born from a biological mother. Slaves are made by humans, not by nature. These are, in William Blake's famous phrase, 'mind forged manacles'.

Yet too few bondsmen have so cancelled their captivity, and the institution is still with us, laws to the contrary or no. It is not with any intent to trivialise the institution that we must consider its nature, but rather out of recognition of its great importance. We do not need to deconstruct it, to explain it away, or to cut it into pieces so we will live in less fear of it. We need to understand its great power and its persistence. How has its hold on human beings been so strong and lasted so long? How has it appeared and reappeared and lasted so long in so many societies, many with no relation to each other? How do we know that most of these legal and social institutions throughout history, each of these instances of domination, are recognisable as something called 'slavery' in other societies, to the extent that slavery, legal or not, has been a recurring factor in human history.

While recognising the cross-cultural, near universal existence of the slave category we also must recognise that the borders of this category are fuzzy and fade into other categories of social and economic relations, such as peonage and serfdom. Those considered enslavable in one society may be considered immune to enslavement in another. Honoured labour in one soci-

ety may be considered fit only for slaves in another. Conceptions and definitions of slavery have been very different from society to society throughout history, yet there have been few attempts to deny the reality of the concept, and most investigators would find any such attempt dangerously absurd. The only argument has been about the definition of slavery, not its existence.

Academic attempts to construct universal theories of slavery have been almost as contentious as have the social and legal debates over definitions of slavery in various societies. The very nature of the institution has long been debated in terms that might make an outsider to the debate wonder whether the participants were discussing the same institution or not. Specifically, while many have theorised that the slave is essentially property, a human being owned by another human being, others have theorised that the slave is essentially a deracinated human, one who is considered so much an outsider to the society in which he or she lives that he or she is considered to have no kin.⁴

The two definitions are not, of course, incompatible. In actual historical instances of slavery they would seem, in fact, to be mutually reinforcing. In the antebellum United States slaves had no legal families, and were thus kinless, because of the legal fact that they were property. The Supreme Court even ruled, in *Dred Scott vs. Sanford*, that slaves had no rights that free persons were bound to respect, a rather extreme statement of theoretical slavery. Likewise, in societies where slaves were primarily thought of as kinless outsiders, such as Hausa and other African societies, where the opposite of 'slave' (Hausa 'bawa') was 'son' (Hausa 'd'a'),⁵ this very status as expendable outsiders made slaves alienable, and therefore valuable property, that could even be traded as a kind of currency.⁶ In Thai society slaves were considered property to the extent that anyone who helped a runaway slave was punished as a thief.⁷ Yet even here slavery was the only rural institution not 'cast in the kinship idiom'.⁸ Thus the two seemingly different and unrelated definitions obviously describe the same institution. Only the formal definition, the question of which characteristic of slavery defines the category and which is merely incidental, is controversial, not the reality of slaves as both kinless outsiders and property of others. This academic question of which definition to use certainly never hindered the trans-Atlantic, Indian Ocean, trans-Saharan or other inter-cultural slave trades, in which slaves were passed from one civilisation to another. And yet the slaves involved in these great forced migrations were passing from one concept of slavery to another, and others' understandings of their situation became different, even if their own did not change immediately. What was the essence of this slavery, or these slaveries, they found themselves in? Let us look at some of the more important recent academic definitions of slavery more closely to see what they tell us about the dispute, and about the nature of slavery itself.

In the introduction to their important collection of studies of African slave institutions, Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers contrasted African concepts of slavery with western models, especially those influenced by New World plantation slavery in the era of the Atlantic slave trade and its aftermath.⁹ They noted that the 'bundle of traits' forming the western concept of slavery did not necessarily coincide with African institutions that were analogous to slavery, and questioned the wisdom of using the term 'slavery' for these African institutions. Ultimately they chose to forego attempts either to compare and contrast 'African' slavery with western slavery, or to develop a universal definition, which they referred to as 'a fruitless exercise in semantics'. Rather they chose to present a series of case studies, and to provide a framework within which those institutions could be seen, and the range of possible human institutions that have been referred to as slavery could be better understood, a framework they referred to as 'rights-in-persons' especially in the context of kinship. Specifically, the slave is the marginal outsider, with no right of membership in the kinship group that defines the society in question. They posited a continuum between completely marginal outsiders (slaves) and fully incorporated lineage members who are free. Unfortunately, they neglected to define the difference between the status of slave outsiders with the status of a 'guest' or 'stranger' (concepts which are covered by the same semantic category in many African languages, as in the Hausa word 'bak'o').

In another important collection of studies of slavery, Paul Lovejoy defined slaves in terms of three characteristics: they were property, they were outsiders who shared no kinship ties to the society in which they lived, and their status was based on coercion, it was not a voluntarily chosen status. Thus the 'bundle of traits' to which Miers and Kopytoff pointed was simplified, and at least in non-Islamic areas the lack of kinship characteristic of slaves was considered decisive. 'Where kinship was the governing principle in societies, slaves were perceived as non-kin'. Slaves in such societies were property because they were kin-less, just as slaves in other societies were kin-less because they were property. More importantly, Lovejoy argued that the ideology of any society should not necessarily be taken at face value. The self-justifications of any society do not necessarily reflect the reality of that society, especially as experienced by those at the bottom of the social order. The ideology should not just be studied as an end in itself, but as a part of the very social structure it professes to describe, filling a function in that society which serves particular interests.¹⁰

Claude Meillassoux began the introduction to his important study of slavery by complaining about the very semantic dispute itself, observing that 'Current research seems to be concerned less with slavery as a social system

than with the definition of the slave'.¹¹ He took the position that the slave was basically property and that all other characteristics of the slave's condition grew from that. He criticised Miers and Kopytoff for not realising that their own definition in fact 'rests on the strict application of Western notions of law and liberal economics'.¹² He held that their assimilation of slavery to the rubric of kinship missed the real point, that slavery was the clear opposite of kinship. Although he claimed (p. 22) that the definition of slavery was the main object of his study, in his glossary (p. 343) he defined slavery as a 'social system based on the *exploitation* of a class of producers or persons performing services, renewed mainly through *acquisition* (used also, by extension, to mean enslavement)' (emphasis in original).

While this moderates the explicit Marxism of much of his argument by including services along with material goods, it also has two problems. For one it would exclude slavery in the United States on the eve of the Civil War from the definition, since the slave trade had been abolished fifty-three years before the war broke out, and the slave population was dramatically increasing. The same is true of other slaves who had been born, rather than taken, into slavery. Second, if intended only to apply to African societies, the topic of the book, it ignores the acquisition of slaves as prestige commodities, which in many African societies was important.

The most comprehensive and influential survey of slavery to date has been Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death*.¹³ In it he tried to summarise the increasingly complex understanding of slavery with a 'preliminary definition of slavery on the level of personal relations: *slavery is the permanent, violent domination of natively alienated and generally dishonored persons*'¹⁴ (emphasis in original). This extremely well and carefully thought out and argued definition is probably the most refined one that could be done without a new way of thinking about not only slavery but also the nature of semantic categories themselves, especially categories for social phenomena that transcend cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Despite the evolution and increasing sophistication of the debate about the nature of slavery the difference in definitions persists, remains an irritant and an annoyance to theoretical attempts to understand slavery, and still leads to misunderstandings.¹⁵ We need a new way of thinking about the problem of slavery, a new understanding of the category of slave, to help us understand the reality of the institution. Fortunately cognitive science and linguistics have given us a new understanding of human-created semantic categories, and the words we use to manipulate these categories and understand the reality around us. It is time to use this new understanding of categories created by human minds, especially in the case of categories like slavery, that

do not exist in nature but which are human creations and which therefore have nothing but the human imagination behind their existence. Psychology has also given us a new understanding of human emotions, which may help us understand why the category of slave is so widespread and persistent.

What Is a Definition?¹⁶

The old understanding of categories is that they were defined by shared characteristics or properties. All members of categories shared all those properties that were necessary to be members of such categories and therefore all such group members were assumed to be equally good examples of the category as a whole. Categories were thought to have clear boundaries set by their definitions ('define' is from the Latin word 'finis' meaning, among other things, 'border'), and it should therefore be a relatively simple matter to determine whether or not a particular person, place, thing, idea, event, action etc. was a member of a category or not. If it had the defined properties it was, otherwise not. This sort of category reduces semantics to a general problem of mathematical set theory. Thus, in this classical scheme of categories, once one has defined the characteristics of a 'slave' one can easily determine whether or not a particular existing human being is or was a slave. All slaves would be considered equally good examples of members of the category 'slave'.

Unfortunately the matter is not so simple. Semantic analysis of such terms as the English word 'game' has shown that there are no shared characteristics of all things recognised by English speakers as being 'games', although games are similar to each other in a wide variety of ways.¹⁷ Likewise, such basic categories as colours have been shown, despite their wide variation from culture to culture, to have certain identifiable prototypes that are neurophysiological in origin. There is a universally recognised 'bluest blue' at least in those cultures that have a word for blue, and there are certain colours that can be learned more easily than others. This is called the prototype effect. It has been shown to be a general characteristic of categories as perceived and manipulated by humans.¹⁸

Legal categories and social science definitions of 'slave' have always assumed classical definitions of the type I have laid out above, yet the very existence of legal and social science arguments about the definition of slave, and about which persons fit into the category and which do not, points out that the boundaries are inherently fuzzy and need policing to be maintained. At what point does working one's way out of debt become peonage? How did Roman slavery evolve into medieval serfdom? What is 'white slavery' and is it really slavery? Is the buying and selling of baseball players a form of slavery? Was the obligation to work under Communism ('parasitism' was a

criminal offence) a form of slavery? Were vagrancy laws in American communities the same? Is a military draft a form of involuntary labour and therefore slavery? Were slave soldiers and officials, from the praetorian guard of the Byzantine Empire to the Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire to the Mamluke Dynasty of Egypt, really slaves, or something else? None of these cases fits the common western (or at least American) mental prototype (or idealised cognitive model—ICM—in Lakoff's terminology) of slavery, but they all fall within various formal definitions of slavery. Instead of fine-tuning the two main competing classical definitions we need to transcend the old dichotomy of definitions, and generate a new kind of definition of slavery.

The new concept of categories is that they are based on idealised cognitive models, which in turn produce prototype effects. In the case of a human-created institution like slavery this is obvious. We all have a mental image of an ideal or prototypical slave. Powerful members of slave societies projected these prototypes onto the world, creating slaves in the image and likeness of their prototype. That prototype is different from society to society, and even from individual to individual, of course, just as the exact nature of slavery is also different from society to society. But the fact that these idealised cognitive models organise and reproduce the institution of slavery seems irrefutable.

What kind of idealised cognitive model or models are involved in the creation and reproduction of slave relations? Some human idealised cognitive models, of course, do conform to the classical semantic model described above. These models are defined by necessary and sufficient conditions. They have clear boundaries that simply and adequately define whether a particular phenomenon is a member of the category or not. All members of the category are equally members of the category. Other cognitive models are graded or scalar. There are degrees of membership in them, but no clear boundaries (as with the category 'tall' for example) though some members of the group are obviously better examples of the category. Still other category models are radial. They are complex amalgams of several models arranged in a cluster, all of which link to a centre. The radial models are not predictable from the central model, but have connections to it which are not necessarily obvious from outside their conceptual universe, but which make clear sense from within it.

One such radial category is the universal category of 'mother', even more universal than the category 'slave'. The several models in this cluster include the birth model (a mother is one who gives birth), the genetic model (the one who furnishes the egg cell, whether or not she winds up giving birth, is the mother), the nurturance model (the mother is the female who raises the child), the marital model (the mother is the wife of the father), and the genealogical

model (the mother is the closest female relative). The term mother has even more common metaphoric extensions in English (mother tongue, mother country, etc.) and in Arabic (mother of battles etc.). While the further metaphoric extensions can easily be considered subordinate, which of the other meanings is primary is not so simple a matter, since in the ideal cognitive model they all coincide. Dr Johnson used the birth model to define mother in his dictionary, and many lexicographers have copied him. This has not been a universal choice, however. Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary considered the nurturance model primary, and the American College Dictionary used the genealogical model.¹⁹ The parallel with the problem of defining slavery should be obvious.

The semantic category 'slave' is an example of such a complex, clustering model of a human social category. Slavery is a complex radial idealised cognitive model with different characteristics and extensions in different societies. This explains how most human societies can have a category that is understood as 'slave' in other societies, despite the fact that the actual legal definitions of slavery in the societies in question are very different, and some of each society's extensions of the concept of slavery are not recognised as slavery in some other societies. In American perception even today, the idealised cognitive model of a slave is necessarily black,²⁰ and therefore 'white slavery' is an oxymoron, an aberration to be condemned even by those who might otherwise approve of slavery as an institution, and slavery that does not necessarily involve blacks on plantations is often not even recognised as slavery. Thus the system of slave prostitution in Japan survived even the reforms of the American Occupation (1945-1952), but was only outlawed later, as a result of women's enfranchisement.²¹ Despite these differences, there is a bundle of properties (dishonour, kinlessness, physical domination by another, lack of remuneration for services, inability to voluntarily leave one's occupation, ability to be sold, etc.), that together combine to explain what is a slave. These properties are sufficiently related to make slavery a cross-cultural category, a very human institution in that slaves were easily transferable between societies that might have had very different idealised cognitive models of slavery, even when the slave trade was legal. In this ease of cross-cultural transfer were born the great slave trades of the ancient world and especially the major slave trades out of Africa in the medieval and modern world. There is something terribly human, even (dread the thought!) natural, about slavery, despite its many forms and its differences from society to society. It may not be as universal as the institution of motherhood, but it is very widespread, and notoriously difficult to eradicate because, as Ehad Toledano recently pointed out, 'Something in human nature made slavery

possible everywhere, and it took major transformations in our thinking to get rid of it; and that barely a century and a half ago, an admittedly late stage in our history'.²²

The various extensions of the basic prototypical characteristics of the category 'slave' are where the institution of slavery varies most in different societies. In the antebellum United States, even where slavery was legal, slave soldiers and officials were unimaginable. In other societies, especially but not exclusively Islamic societies, they were part of everyday life. Despite the existence of the term 'white slavery' in American English, it was legally impossible in every American state before the Civil War for a person defined legally as 'white' to be enslaved. (Racial categories, and their occasional relation to slavery, are also human-created and artificial.) This is not just a matter of the ways in which slaves were used in different societies. It is a matter of the way the category 'slave' was conceived. It is simply impossible, in every society, to conceive of using slaves in certain ways, even if slaves have been used in those ways in other societies.

The Appearance of Slavery

The Origin of Slavery in Human Society

The question of the appearance of slavery in history must necessarily be connected with the question of why some people have slavery as an institution and others do not, or perhaps why slavery has been so central to some societies and so marginal in others.²³ Anthropologists have traditionally posed that question in terms of the relatively primitive (in terms of technology and subsistence) Native Americans of the northwestern United States and southwestern Canada who had elaborate institutions of an extreme form of slavery and even an extensive slave trade, while the agricultural Creek people of the southeastern United States never developed chattel slavery as a significant economic institution. This is particularly surprising because the Creek lived in a situation where land was not a scarce commodity but labour was. The usual explanation for the appearance of slavery in any agricultural society is that labour is scarce but land abundant. Therefore a market develops in private property in persons, rather than in land.²⁴ This incidentally also explains the prevalence of walled cities in Africa, and their complete absence in Japan. In Japan lords went to war to get land for their people, or at least for their clan. African kings went to war to get people for their land.

We can see from our new understanding of the nature of slavery that the question here has been posed wrongly. In the best theoretical explanation of the argument over the alleged non-existence of slavery in some societies it is in fact framed differently.²⁵ There are in fact 'many instances of *sporadic*

slavery among most primitive groups'.²⁶ This 'sporadic' slavery is not a major economic institution among hunter-gatherers, but the psychological dependency typical of humans in slavery, even in its surviving instances, is probably a human universal among those cut off from social networks.

Contrary to popular assumptions, slavery did not originally begin as an economic institution to exploit agricultural labour. It is, in origin, a relationship of psychological dependence induced by lack of connection to the surrounding society and resulting shame and loss of control. In societies throughout history this relation of dependence has served to integrate new members into a society. It is best for those of us in modern, individualistic Western society to remember how essentially social human beings are, as evidenced by our universal, constant use of languages to communicate and coordinate our activities. Just as bees could not exist without a hive, in which they communicate by dancing, so we humans cannot exist without a society, in which we communicate through language, including gesture. Isolated persons from more groupist, non-western societies, even if they are industrially developed and modernised, will attach themselves fervently to the first new groups they encounter, as did Japanese prisoners of the American military in the Second World War. From this natural human bonding came slavery, originally a means of incorporating isolated individuals into new groups.

This early, natural 'sporadic' slavery was extended for economic gain in most agricultural societies, and even in some of the more prosperous gathering societies. While still an institution for the incorporation of outsiders, slavery became more and more one of economic exploitation. It did not extend into economic exploitation in all agricultural societies, but even the Creeks had household slavery, although their captives were generally either executed immediately or integrated into their society as quickly as possible. In their case there was no economic incentive to extend the system of natural, sporadic slavery much beyond occasional household slavery of an integrative nature, since status in the matrilineal and matrilocal world of the Creek was not attained from individual or even clan wealth, but was ascribed for the clans and obtained by valour in battle by the men. When historians and anthropologists speak of the 'absence' of slavery among the Creek they simply refer to the failure of slavery to develop into agricultural chattel slavery of the type found in those states of the United States that displaced the Creek from their land.²⁷

Other societies in which status was based on wealth did develop chattel slavery and even elaborate slave trades, despite being non-agricultural. For example, in the language of the Quinault of the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State the word 'ali's' meant 'rich man, chief, noble'.²⁸ This was

a stateless society and chiefs had no absolute, legal, coercive authority. They were forced to have their authority confirmed through their generosity in potlatch, which required wealth, obtained partly through the exploitation of slaves. Slaves could buy their freedom in this society, but the society was heavily stratified, with nobles, commoners and slaves said to be distinguished by 'blood'. Not only were slaves traded up and down the coast to similar groups, but in the nineteenth century they were sold to trading posts on the Columbia River for guns, powder, steel tools and trade blankets.

Domestic slavery has also been common in other societies where a labour shortage never tempted masters to turn it into a system for the accumulation of wealth in agriculture. In India and Nepal slaves were used mostly as servants, and therefore could not be from the lower castes, since contact with them would have been polluting for their masters. The lack of a need to recruit more labour into one's group also meant that slavery in these systems was less likely to be ended by eventual emancipation and assimilation into the host society, although in African societies that was often a process that took generations.²⁹

In Asian societies where chattel slavery, not just household slavery, was a major economic institution, there was a more open system that allowed for former slaves and their descendants to be reintegrated with free society. Slavery in Thailand seems originally to have involved the capture and sale of persons from surrounding societies. As time went on, more and more Thais were reduced to slavery, either for inability to pay debts, as punishment for crimes, or because their parents had sold them into slavery. A business of abducting free people into slavery grew up, and a substantial proportion of the capital at Ayudhya was enslaved. By 1397 there was even an Officer of Slave Affairs in the government whose primary responsibility was hunting runaway slaves.³⁰

Frontiers of Slavery (Extensions and Borders)

As a fuzzy category, slavery has never had clearly defined borders, although there are clearly instances of slavery that make better examples of the institution, although which examples are best may be seen differently by different societies. Rather than indulge in hair-splitting about which are the best examples of slavery, or semantic border patrolling to determine which cases are 'really' slavery and which are something else, let us look at how some of these more dubious instances of shame augmented physical domination relate to the more general category of slavery, to show how the institution can arise and prosper around the human inhabited parts of the planet.

Among the Ecuadorean highland Quechua the institution of 'concertaje' was only abolished in 1918. Grants to Spanish conquistadores had included

rights to the services of Native Americans in return for ‘protection, indoctrination in Catholicism’ and other alleged services. The indigenous people of the area were obliged to render a certain number of days of unremunerated labour, perform other services and hand over a portion of the produce of their meagre landholding. This institution did recognise the rights of the native people to their small plots of land, but their accumulated debts left them unable to leave the lord’s estate in a situation often referred to as peonage, and which extended to their descendants.³¹ Such an institution is clearly on the edges of slavery, although both its victims and its beneficiaries could also have seen it as being significantly different from slavery.

Shame and Elite Slaves

‘Elite slavery’ is even more clearly and universally recognised as an oxymoron than the term ‘white slavery’. Since shame is one of the most painful affects to experience, and since the various definitive characteristics of slavery are not generally considered desirable, the idea of elite slavery is difficult to reconcile with most idealised cognitive models of slavery. Many commentators on slavery reject the idea that elite slaves are in fact slaves, using a classical definition that includes characteristics that exclude any elites from the definition. Yet if we conceive of elite slaves as an extension of the basic concept of slave it becomes more understandable. If we combine our new understanding of definitions with our new understanding of the relation between slavery and shame we may be able to come up with a new understanding of the origins of elite slavery in the late Roman Empire.

Rome was one of the great slave-holding societies of history, but Roman slavery, though often brutal and exploitative, was also very largely a means of incorporating new persons into the society. Roman law favoured emancipation, and Roman masters often gave pay and bonuses to their slaves. This pay in turn, could be saved and used by the slaves to buy their freedom. Slave descendants of the third generation were indistinguishable from other Roman citizens. Even many slaves were respected craftsmen and professionals. So many slaves were employed as teachers of the Roman gentry’s children that Latin had a word, ‘paedagogus’, which meant slave teacher. ‘With few exceptions, slavery in Rome was neither eternal nor, while it lasted, intolerable’.³²

Gradually Roman slaves came to be used in more and more responsible positions. Wealthy Romans kept slaves to guard their (other) property from fire.³³ In the imperial period slaves came to fill more and more important positions.

Up to the time of Claudius the imperial ‘cabinet’ was composed almost exclusively of slaves. They received the petitions of the empire, issued in-

structions both to provincial governors and to the magistrates of Rome, and elaborated jurisprudence of all the tribunals including the highest senatorial court.³⁴

From Claudius to Trajan free citizens were used for these tasks, but the move to slave officials seems to have been irresistible. Other elite Romans imitated the emperors and more and more of the official business of Roman public and commercial life came to be transacted by slaves, a fact which proved demoralising for the free poor.³⁵ Eventually

their slaves and freedmen—the ‘Caesaris servi’ and the ‘liberti Augusti’—formed a kind of new aristocracy as rich as the freeborn senatorial and municipal bourgeoisie, and certainly not less influential in the management of state affairs.³⁶

This system of elite slaves continued into the Byzantine Empire and was picked up by the Abbasid Caliphate. It spread nearly everywhere in the Muslim world, although it may have been invented independently in West Africa. With this system slavery was extended to the point that it nearly turned back on itself, and became something else entirely.³⁷ Yet the argument over whether slave soldiers and officials are really ‘slaves’ or not is based on the old form of definition that we have here rejected. The slave soldier and official systems were natural extensions of chattel slavery, just as chattel slavery itself was an extension of household slavery and household slavery was itself an extension of the original, sporadic slavery. They cannot be meaningfully understood and discussed in isolation from each other, since they are organically linked. The shame that was attached to slavery was attached to military slaves as much as to any others, if their attempts to win honour for themselves by means of military prowess and administrative authority made slave status more appealing for them than for most others in different situations of slavery.

Transitions

*Disappearances: Serfdom*³⁸

Slavery not only disappeared for individual slaves, it sometimes disappeared for whole groups of them, if not necessarily as an institution. The most famous example is the gradual evolution of Roman slavery into medieval serfdom. Unfortunately it is one of the least studied and least understood aspects of the history of slavery. It is one of the most interesting cases not only because it was so huge, but more importantly because it only applied to some of the slaves of Europe. It is not often realised that there were still large numbers of slaves in medieval western Europe, for while serfs were tied to

the land and had certain rights, slaves were more mobile and served as the medieval equivalent of modern hired hands.³⁹

The main reason serfs won increased rights over the slaves of the preceding Roman Empire was the difficulty of increasing their numbers.⁴⁰ Kin-less people do not reproduce as well as those in recognised families, which has been a problem for so many slave societies, that the alleged inability of slave populations to reproduce themselves has sometimes been treated as the equivalent of a natural law. Giving the serf an interest in the land also tended to reduce management costs, in addition to giving the serf an interest in upkeep of land and capital equipment. Thus Roman slavery slowly evolved into something not unlike the sharecropping of the post-bellum American South.

Because this was a gradual evolution the term 'serf' is in fact derived from the most common Latin word for slave, 'servus'. When slavery and serfdom came to be distinguished a new term was used for slave, derived from the ethnonym 'Slav'. Eastern Europeans were in fact the major source of slaves in Europe at this time.⁴¹ Thus those with a semi-free status, the serfs, came to see themselves as not only socially but (at least at first) as ethnically superior to the slaves. They had been successfully integrated into their societies. The slaves, like all slaves, had not. Where this distinction was not found, or where slaves were not readily available, the conditions of serfs tended to deteriorate to those of true slaves, until there were even cases of them being bought and sold in the markets.⁴² Divide and rule policies of the elite were as important in defining slaves and serfs in medieval Europe as they were in the American South.

Abolition, Slavery and Caste

The coincidence of slavery with a colour caste system is not only a uniquely modern system of slavery, it is a specifically Anglophone, New World development. While slavery has been common throughout human history, and other societies, most famously India, have had colour caste systems,⁴³ the combining of slavery with a hereditary colour caste system, especially to the extent that a new idealised cognitive model of slavery was created, has been unique to the English-speaking New World, especially the United States of America and its British colonial antecedents. The origins of this slave/caste system in the late seventeenth century Chesapeake have been much debated, and it is not my intention here to resurrect the old debate about which came first, racism or slavery. After all, both came first. The questions should be how and why they were combined, for their combination is not natural. The question to be considered here is rather how it is that abolitionism appeared for the first time in human history in the British North American colonies approxi-

mately a generation after the combination of slavery and colour caste. Before this time slavery had often been a temporary situation, lasting at most a few generations. If one could not work oneself out of slavery, at least one could hope that one's children or grandchildren would be integrated into the host society as regular members. Likewise persons of caste, whether in India, West Africa or elsewhere, had autonomous family lives and were not liable to being sold. They may have been inferior, even despised, members of society, but they were not chattel slaves. Previous studies of the origins of abolitionism have focussed either on the rise of mercantile and industrial capital, or on the British humanitarian tradition, especially the Friends (Quakers) in Pennsylvania, the first state in the world to abolish slavery, but it might be better to look at the peculiar institution in the antebellum United States as a peculiar combination of slavery with racial colour caste which necessitated a number of other unique characteristics of American slavery.

The necessity of combining slavery with caste led to such unique features of slavery in the United States as the laws against teaching slaves to read and write. Frederick Douglass wrote that this was the single fact about slavery that first caused him to think that something might be wrong with the institution.⁴⁴ The contrast with the Roman slave Terence, one of the most famous authors of Latin literature, is great. Terence, a slave from Africa, was not only taught to write, he earned his freedom as a reward for his great contributions to Roman theatre. So many Greek slaves were school teachers in Roman times that the Roman poet Horace made a famous pun about how Greek slaves enslaved the Romans, or how taken Greece took her wild conqueror, however one translates it.⁴⁵ The great West African Islamic reformer Usman Danfodiyo criticised the scholars of his time for not educating their slaves, although it was their religious duty to do so.⁴⁶ Both the necessity of keeping Douglass a slave for life, and keeping him in an inferior caste, meant that he could not be allowed to better himself, and both the lifetime nature of the slavery and the inability to better himself were a cause of his discontent as a slave and his conversion into one of the most eloquent abolitionists of his age, something that Terence probably never considered. Of course the ban on teaching slaves to read and write was sometimes controversial among slave owners themselves, as shown by the experience of future General William Tecumseh Sherman in advocating it in Louisiana just before the outbreak of the US Civil War,⁴⁷ but no slave state in the United States ever legalised the education of slaves, and even after the abolition of slavery the education of former slaves continued to arouse much opposition. The education of America's subordinate colour caste, now politely referred to as 'African Americans', together with the dominant white caste, is still not completely accepted

by all, even at the present time, and was one of the United States' most explosive domestic political issues throughout the last half of the twentieth century. 'These two words, Negro and Slave [are] by custom grown Homogenous and Convertible'.⁴⁸ It was only because blacks in the US were a slave caste, who could never become free, that they were to be denied education, and otherwise prohibited from entering fully into the life of their host society.

The debate about the causes of the rise and spread of abolition in the modern world are usually framed in terms of ideological causes versus economic causes. Was this a story of the ultimate triumph of high-minded principle, or was it rather a story of the triumph of industrial capitalism over a previously dominant form of economic exploitation?⁴⁹ In the light of the new understanding of slavery advanced here I would like to propose a social explanation. Slavery as a human institution became untenable when it was combined with a permanent colour caste system in British America at the end of the seventeenth century.⁵⁰ While slavery heretofore had been either a marginal household slavery, or even if sometimes brutal economic exploitation as chattel slavery, it had also been a means of assimilating people into the larger society, as in ancient Rome. The dangerous combination of slavery with colour caste proved to be an unstable mix that eventually brought down the whole edifice of legal slavery with it.

The first stirrings of the anti-slavery movement seem to have objected to the idea that black colour was an excuse for slavery.⁵¹ After several scholars had objected in theory to the idea that blacks were necessarily to be slaves, the Quaker George Fox travelled to Barbados to argue that African slaves should be treated mildly and freed after a term of years. He had an effect on his fellow Quakers, but the upshot was that a law was passed against them bringing their slaves into their meeting houses. Eventually all of them were pressured or compelled to leave the island. Other Quakers became active in writing and speaking against slavery in the eighteenth century, and thus the movement began to spread.⁵² Fox's ideas eventually took root among the much more numerically significant community of Quakers in Pennsylvania, where, despite the not insignificant numbers of slaves in the colony, they began to spread and eventually became dominant in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁵³ Anti-slavery sentiment spread as more and more people in Britain and America began to see black slaves not so much as heathen savages but rather as English-speaking people who happened to be black.⁵⁴ If the individual slave who had successfully adapted to the host society could not be taken in as a citizen, as had been the case in ancient Rome and so

many other slave societies throughout history, the whole body of slaves would eventually have to be taken in at once, as was the case in the United States.

The economic triumph of free society helped the spread of the emancipation movement as slavery was exposed as an irrational economic institution. Despite their great importance in Thai society, slavery and compulsory labour by peasants were abolished in the late nineteenth century and the latter was replaced by wage labour in order to increase economic efficiency and the amount of rice available for export.⁵⁵ Slavery is today universally outlawed not only because it developed into an inhumane institution but also because it is simply not an efficient method of organising human labour. Only if civilisation collapsed and had to be rebuilt from scratch can one imagine slavery again becoming more than a marginal institution in any human society.

Notes

1. A previous version of this paper was presented to the conference ‘Slavery, Islam and Diaspora’ at York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada on 23 October, 2003. I am grateful to the participants for their comments and encouragement. I also wish to thank the staff of the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan, for the use of their library, especially the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) which were invaluable for comparative work.
2. Kevin Bales, ‘The Social Psychology of Modern Slavery’, *Scientific American*, April 2002 (dated 24 April 2002 from the Website <http://www.sciam.com>). Cf. David Labrador, ‘Mental Bonds’ (11 March 2002) and The Editors (sic) ‘The Peculiar Institution’ (30 April 2002) also from the *Scientific American* website. For additional information about contemporary slavery contact Antislavery International at <http://www.antislavery.org/> or at Thomas Clarkson House, The Stableyard, Broomgrove Road, London SW9 9TL, United Kingdom.
3. Casca in William Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, Act I, Scene 3.
4. Moses Finley, ‘Slavery’, *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, New York & London, 1968, pp. 307-313. For other examples see Paul Lovejoy, ‘Slavery in the Context of Ideology’, in Paul Lovejoy (ed.), *The Ideology of Slavery in Africa*, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1981, pp. 7-38.
5. ‘In Hausa thought the slave (bawa) is often contrasted with the son (d’a), as in the proverb ‘Bawa ba ya gasa da d’a’ (A slave doesn’t compete with a son). Freedom, the opposite of slavery, is ‘yanci’, literally ‘son-ship’, a term which can also be translated as citizenship, or, if applied to a country, as independence. Here the contrast with English notions of freedom and slavery appears most strongly. ‘Freedom’ implies a state of being unattached (‘the bolt worked itself free’), even alienated (care-free, free to go, etc.). The slave, in English, is the one who is attached, who belongs, as the property of another, bound in some fashion to the will of someone else. In Hausa thought it is the free person who

belongs, who is where he is supposed to be ('where he belongs', in English). The slave is the alienated, uprooted, unattached person who can be removed most easily.' John Philips, 'Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate: Selected studies 1804-1903', Ph.D. Dissertation, History, University of California, Los Angeles, 1992, p. 426.

6. 'Slaves are used in the country for two distinct purposes; first as currency whenever any large amount is involved, and secondly as carriers,' Charles H. Robinson, 'The Hausa Territories', *The Geographical Journal*, vol. VIII, no. 3, September, 1896, p. 208.
7. A. B. Griswold and Prasert na Nagara, 'On Kingship and Society at Sukhodhaya', in G. William Skinner and A. Thomas Kirsch, (eds.), *Change and Persistence in Thai Society*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975, pp. 77-8.
8. Steven Piker, 'The Post Peasant Village in Central Plain Thai Society', in Skinner and Kirsch, (eds.), *Change and Persistence*, p. 302.
9. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, 'African Slavery as an Institution of Marginality', in Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff (eds.), *Slavery in Africa*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977.
10. Lovejoy, 'Slavery in the Context of Ideology'.
11. 'Introduction' to *The Anthropology of Slavery*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, *Translation of Anthropologie de l'esclavage: le ventre de fer et d'argent*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986.
12. Meillassoux, p. 13.
13. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.
14. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, p. 13.
15. Sean Stilwell, for example, in 'Power, Honour and Shame: the ideology of royal slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate', *Africa*, vol. 70, no. 3, 2000, pp. 394-421, misunderstood my then current belief that kinlessness was the essential aspect defining slavery for a denial of the fact that the property aspect played any role at all.
16. The argument in this section of the paper is largely taken from George Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*, 1987: University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
17. Lakoff, p. 16.
18. Lakoff, pp. 24-30.
19. Lakoff, pp. 74-5.
20. Bernard Lewis moved from discussing the legacy of slavery to discussing the question of race in Islamic civilisation without even stopping to change topics, or even noticing that he had changed topics, in 'The Roots of Muslim Rage', *The Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1990, online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/90sep/rage2.htm> (paragraphs 3 and 4).
21. Because sale of persons was technically illegal in Japan, legal Japanese brothel slavery was disguised as indentured servitude for terms of ten or twenty years, with accumulated 'debts' at the end so that women were effectively trapped. Thus it involved the sale of women away from their natal home into a job they

couldn't quit, meeting both social science definitions as well as the popular definition of slavery as a job which one cannot leave voluntarily. Despite passage of an 'Anti-slave Trade Act' ('Jinshin Baibai Kinshi Rei') by the Meiji Government in 1872, the system continued with few restraints through the American Occupation (1945-52) and only ended in 1957-8 as a result of a law passed in 1956 in response to pressure from newly enfranchised women voters, cf. Kazuro Takenaka, 'Prostitution', and Toshio Sawanobori, 'Prostitution Prevention Law', *Kodansha Encyclopaedia of Japan*, vol. 6, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983, pp. 256-7 and 257 respectively. The former notes that 'some prostitution is still more or less involuntary'.

22. 'Keynote address', Conference on Slavery, Islam and Diaspora, Harriet Tubman Resource Centre on the African Diaspora, History Department, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 24-26 October, 2003.
23. Goody, 'Slavery in Time and Space', argued that slavery was not found in Australia, was on the Pacific Coast of North America as far south as Oregon, scattered in Central and South America, rare in Oceania except Tahiti and New Zealand, and rare in Central Asia and Siberia. It was frequent in an arc running from Malaysia and Indonesia through India and the Middle East into Africa. As a statistical summary he noted that it was found in three per cent of hunting societies, almost half of societies with intensive or extensive agriculture but only seventeen per cent of those with 'incipient agriculture', about a third of fishing societies and almost three-fourths of pastoral societies, pp. 25-26. This of course raises the question of how the ethnographers whose findings were summarised in Goody's source, Murdock's *Ethnographic Atlas*, defined slavery, but we can assume that many of them missed slavery that was not the sort of chattel slavery for economic exploitation that they were used to from the western example, most prominently in ancient Rome and modern North America.
24. Jack Goody in *Technology, Tradition and the State in Africa*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1971, noted that 'chiefship tended to be over people rather than over land', p. 30.
25. Bernard J. Siegel, 'Some Methodological Considerations for a Comparative History of Slavery', *American Anthropologist* 47 (3) 1945, 357-392.
26. Siegel, 'Methodological Considerations', 364n (emphasis in original).
27. For more information about slavery and its near absence among the Creek see J.R. Swanton 'Social Organization and Social Usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy': *Forty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*. 1924-25. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928, pp. 79, 167.
28. 'Guide to file NR17' in *Electronic Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) CD-ROMs*.
29. J.L. Watson, 'Slavery as an Institution: Open and Closed Systems', in James L. Watson, ed., *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980, pp. 9-12.

30. Griswold and Nagara, 'Kingship and Society', pp. 35, 48-9, 58, 72, 77-8.
31. J.B. Casagrande, 'The Indian and Ecuadorean Society', in Peter T. Furst and Karen B. Reed (eds.), *The Condor and the Bull: Tradition and Change in Andean Indian Culture*, Los Angeles; Peace Corps, 1971, 375, 385.
32. Jérôme Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975, pp. 56-9.
33. Carcopino, p. 33.
34. Carcopino, p. 62.
35. Carcopino, pp. 62-64.
36. M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926, p. 100.
37. The best survey of slave soldiers in history is still Daniel Pipes's *Slave Soldiers and Islam*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981. For more recent perspectives see Toru Miura and John Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa*, London: Kegan Paul International, 2000.
38. This section is taken from chapter 20, 'Freedom and Servitude in the Middle Ages', in Orlando Patterson's *Freedom: Freedom in the Making of Western Culture*, New York: 1991, Basic Books.
39. Patterson's Freedom, p. 350.
40. Patterson's Freedom, p. 354.
41. Patterson's Freedom, p. 357.
42. Patterson's Freedom, p. 361.
43. The extent to which the caste system of India was based on actual colour of skin has been disputed. S.V. Ketkar, Ketkar, in *The History of Caste in India* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1979 [1909]), while noting the presence of two castes in the United States, denied that Indian caste had anything to do with colour or race, or the conquest of Dravidians by Aryans (pp. 4, 79-82, 170). On the other hand, G.S. Ghurye in *Race and Caste in India*, 5th edition (Bombay; Popular Prakashan, 1979) claims that "'Varna" [caste] means "colour" and it was in this sense that the word seems to have been employed in contrasting the Arya and the Dasa', p. 46. Nripendra Kumar Dutt in *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, vol. 1, 2nd edition (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968) also argues that the colours of Hindu caste refer to colours of skin, but notes that the Brahmins were white, the warrior Kshatriya caste just under them were red and the Vaisya caste below them were yellow. Given the common associations of red, blood and warfare there would seem to be more than a little symbolism in the colours, since in a purely racial hierarchy one would expect yellow to rank above red, (pp. 4, 18-19). He also notes that slavery in ancient India was a temporary status and that sons of slaves became free. There was no slave caste in India.
44. Chapter 10, 'Learning to Read', in *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, New York: Macmillan, 1962 [1892].
45. 'Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit', *Epistles* ii, No. i, l., 156.

46. For example in his book Nur al-Albab translated by Wali Yusuf in *Kano Studies, New Series*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1980, pp. 10-36.
47. Stanley P. Hirshson, *The White Tecumseh*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997, p. 66.
48. Morgan Godwyn, 1680, quoted in Betty Wood, *The Origins of American Slavery*, New York: Hill & Wang, 1997, p. 5.
49. Howard Temperley, 'The Ideology of Antislavery', chapter 2 in *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, edited by David Eltis and James Walvin, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982.
50. The standard history of the development of chattel slavery based on colour caste in the future United States is still Winthrop Jordan's *White over Black*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1968.
51. Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade by the British Parliament*, London; 1808, 1968, vol. 1, pp. 48-9.
52. Clarkson, History, pp. 110-11, 134-5, 146-64.
53. Wood, *Origins of American Slavery*, pp. 116-17.
54. James Walvin, 'The Public Campaign in England against Slavery', in Eltis and Walvin, *Abolition*, p. 73.
55. Steven Piker, 'The Post Peasant Village in Central Plain Thai Society', in Skinner and Kirsch, (eds.), *Change and Persistence in Thai Society*, p. 302.



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Embattled Identity in Northeast Africa: A Comparative Essay

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Abstract

The Northeast African sub-region has been ridden with inter-state and intra-state conflicts since the beginning of the second half of the last century. And most of those conflicts have their roots in the clash of identities. In the pre-colonial period, language and religion constituted the major expressions of identity. While Ethiopia and the Sudan evolved as a mosaic of diverse linguistic and religious groups, Somalia was characterized by relative homogeneity. Colonial rule created sharply defined international boundaries and partitioned some populations among two or more states. This state of affairs gave rise to irredentist movements, the most prominent two manifesting themselves in Eritrea and Somalia. Irredentism was abetted by the British policy of Greater Somalia, which led to a period of armed confrontation between Ethiopia and Somalia. Conversely, in the Sudan, the British followed a deliberate policy of separating the South from the North; this was one of the factors behind the eruption of the civil war in the Sudan. While colonial rule might have sown the seeds for the numerous conflicts that have plagued the sub-region in the post-colonial period, the situation was aggravated by the assimilationist and integrationist ambitions of hegemonic regimes and the inability of liberation movements to aspire beyond the narrow confines of self-determination. The future salvation of the sub-region seems to lie in the fostering of genuinely pluralistic societies that recognize the merits of multiple identities and aspire for a sub-regional confederation rather than the continued veneration of the nation-state.

Résumé

La sous-région du Nord-Est africain est accablée par les conflits inter- et intrastatiques depuis le début de la seconde moitié du siècle passé. La plupart des conflits trouvent leurs origines dans le clash des cultures. Au cours de la période pré-coloniale, la langue et la religion constituaient les principaux moyens d'expression identitaires. Tandis que l'Éthiopie et le Soudan se présentaient

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comme une mosaïque de groupes linguistiques et religieux, la Somalie, elle, était caractérisée par une relative homogénéité. Le gouvernement colonial a ensuite créé des frontières internationales précises et réparti certaines populations entre deux ou plusieurs états. Cette situation a donné naissance à des mouvements irrédentistes, dont les deux plus visibles se manifestent en Érythrée ainsi qu'en Somalie. L'irrédentisme a été soutenu par la politique britannique autour de la Grande Somalie, qui a conduit à une période de confrontation armée entre l'Érythrée et la Somalie. Au Soudan, les Britanniques ont délibérément mené une politique de séparation du Nord et du Sud, ce qui représente aujourd'hui un des facteurs de déclenchement de la guerre civile au Soudan. Le système colonial a certes semé les graines de la multitude de conflits qui ont accablé cette sous-région durant la période post coloniale, mais cette situation a également été aggravée par les ambitions assimilationnistes et intégrationnistes de régimes hégémoniques, et par les mouvements de libération qui n'aspirent à rien d'autre qu'à l'autodétermination. Le salut de cette sous-région semble se trouver dans le développement de sociétés véritablement pluralistes, reconnaissant les valeurs de la multi-identité et aspirant à une confédération sous-régionale, plutôt qu'à une vénération continuelle de l'État-nation.

Introduction

Africa has more than its fair share of the conflicts that constitute the daily fare of the international media. And when we come to focus on the continent's sub-regions, Northeast Africa seems to stand out conspicuously, providing three of the continent's conflicts—intra-state or inter-state. The Sudan, even as it appears to resolve at long last its long-standing civil war in the south, is standing in the dock on charges of possible genocide in its western region of Darfur. The Somalis' nth attempt to extricate themselves from the tyranny of warlordism appeared finally to have borne fruit with the conclusion of the marathon peace process in Kenya in late 2004, which resulted in the election of a president and the subsequent formation of a government. But, as the Somali capital continues to be rocked by explosions and sniper fire, the future of that government seems highly precarious.

The thorny relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia constitute perhaps the ultimate in intractability. A thirty-year-long war for Eritrean independence from Ethiopia appeared to have come to a merciful end with the victory of the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces in 1991, and the ratification of Eritrean independence in the 1993 referendum. But, before the lapse of a decade, the two states were locked in a war of unprecedented ferocity, characterised by massive deportations and venomous propaganda. Notwithstanding the conclusion of a peace accord in 2000 and arbitration of the boundary issue that ostensibly triggered the conflict, the two states are girding themselves for yet another war.

Only the tiny state of Djibouti appears to live in relative peace and harmony. But the relativity of that peace has been emphasised more than once, as the former French colony had been forced to align itself to one or other of the warring factions in the sub-region. While it has been struggling to maintain a tenuous state of neutrality in the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict, it has tried to broker the Somali peace process in a way that would ensure its own strategic interests while curbing the perceived hegemonic ambitions of Ethiopia, its powerful neighbour to the west.

The question of identity—clan, ethnic, national and regional—lies at the roots of almost all the conflicts delineated above. Ethnic identity and religious affiliation have determined the nature of the Sudanese conflict. In the case of Somalia, we see a dramatic shift from pan-Somali nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s, which brought it into conflict with neighbouring states like Ethiopia and Kenya which had and continue to have a significant Somali population within their bounds, to the more parochial clannish feuds that have been the hallmark of the post-Siyad Barre period (i.e., after 1991). But, nowhere in the sub-region has identity probably been as bitterly contested as in the relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Until 1991, Ethiopians asserted vigorously the Eritreans' Ethiopian-ness while the Eritreans emphasised their uniqueness. Yet, Eritrean independence, sanctioned by the incumbent Ethiopian government with an alacrity that baffled and infuriated many Ethiopians, far from resolving the problem, opened yet another chapter of hostility.

This paper proposes to investigate the genesis and trajectory of what could be characterised as 'embattled identity' in Northeast Africa in a comparative framework. The first part of the paper outlines the pre-colonial mosaic of ethnic and religious affiliation. The second part assesses the impact of the colonial intervention and the legacies it has bequeathed. The third part examines the record of the postcolonial state in resolving or exacerbating (mostly the latter) the problems of identity. The last part concludes by attempting to point out the prospects for the future.

Pre-Colonial Expressions of Identity

Language and religion, characteristically, constituted the two major channels for the expression of identity in pre-colonial Northeast Africa. Almost all the peoples of the sub-region speak languages that fall under either one of two super-families of languages: Afroasiatic, a linguistic designation for a super-family of languages that is spoken on both sides of the Red Sea, and Nilo-Saharan, which covers the geographical area suggested in the term. The Afroasiatic super-family is in turn sub-divided into major families, of

which the most pertinent to the area under investigation are Cushitic and Semitic.

Within the first family (Cushitic) are found the Afar (now split between Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia), the Oromo (predominantly in Ethiopia, with some spill-over into Kenya) and the Somali (the classic case of a 'partitioned' people, scattered as they are in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia itself). The Semitic family of languages is spoken by the historically dominant groups: Arabic in the Sudan, Amharic in Ethiopia and Tegrēñña in Eritrea; interestingly, Tegrēñña is also the language of the northernmost Ethiopian population enjoying political ascendancy in the post-1991 dispensation. Within the Nilo-Saharan super-family are such predominant groups of the Southern Sudan as the Nuer and Dinka, with some of them (like the Nuer and Anywaa) found on both sides of the Ethio-Sudanese boundary.

Given their extreme sensitivity and the consequent potential for manipulation, statistical breakdowns are hazardous. Nonetheless, a recent study of the Sudan (Lesch 1998:4) gives the following percentages: 34 per cent for the South, 40 per cent for the Arabised North and 26 per cent for the non-Arabised North (such as the Fur). In Ethiopia, the Cushitic-speaking ethnic groups (Afar, Oromo, Somali and a host of groups in south-central Ethiopia) have constituted a majority (Statistical Abstract 1999). But political power has historically been by and large the preserve of the Semitic-speaking groups, particularly the Amharic- and Tegrēñña-speaking ones, even if their relationship has been marked by alternations of partnership and rivalry. Within the Semitic group are also the economically powerful Gurage and Harari. Eritrea is a predominantly Semitic-speaking country, Tegrēñña and Tegrā between them accounting for a large percentage, perhaps the majority, of the population.

In contrast to the above scenario, Somalia presents a relatively homogeneous picture. Somalis speak the same Cushitic language and adhere to the same religion, Islam. But this apparent homogeneity has concealed clashes of identity at subsidiary levels: between the nomad (Samale) and the settler (Sab), between different clans and between different religious orders (tariqqa). The supremacy of the nomad has been enshrined both in the camel, his proverbial beast of burden, and the name 'Samale' that—modified into Somali—has come to have generic application (Bronson 2001:89-95). It is these subsidiary fissions that explain, perhaps more than anything else, the apparent anomaly of such a homogeneous people having been rent into irreconcilable factions for nearly a decade and a half.

The anomaly is all the more striking in that Somalia, compared to the other countries of the sub-region, apparently enjoys not only linguistic but also religious homogeneity. Elsewhere in the sub-region, there is a more

variegated picture. The religious profile of the Sudan is reportedly 70 per cent Muslim, 25 per cent followers of what are described as 'indigenous beliefs' and 5 per cent Christian (Lesch 1998:20). Such statistical information is hard to come by in the case of Ethiopia, but Christians and Muslims are generally believed to be in equal proportion. More or less the same situation seems to prevail in the case of Eritrea.

In the pre-colonial period, advanced levels of state formation took place primarily in the Sudan and in Ethiopia. Beginning with the Christian kingdoms of ancient times, the Sudan saw the rise of the Funj kingdom (1504–1821) in the east and the Sultanate of Dar Fur (sixteenth century to 1916) in the west. The Funj kingdom, which had dominated the historically central riverine area of the Sudan, fell prey to the more mighty forces of Muhammad Ali's Egypt, thereby ushering in the period known as the Turkiyya (1821–1881)—so-called because of the dominant role that officials of Turco-Circassian origin played in the dynasty inaugurated by Muhammad Ali in 1805 (Holt & Daly 1988:Part II).

The Turkiyya was characterised above all by vigorous expansion in the south (following the course of the Nile) combined with mass conscription and mass enslavement of southerners. Egyptian misrule and what was perceived as their moral laxity triggered a fundamentalist movement that combined Sudanese nationalism and religious puritanism. The Mahdiyya (1881–1898), even if it had scarcely any liberating effects in the South, formed the backdrop to the rise of modern Sudanese nationalism. It fell under the barrage of British cannon in 1898, when the so-called Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (in actual fact British colonial rule) was inaugurated. Dar Fur meanwhile continued to exist in splendid isolation until it succumbed to the might of British arms in 1916 (Holt and Daly 1988: Part III).

The Ethiopian region witnessed an even more continuous history of state formation. The Aksumite kingdom (first to seventh centuries AD) constituted the ancestor and the inspiration for a succession of regimes that came to be formed in the Ethiopian highlands. Its conversion to Christianity in the fourth century AD gave those regimes their main ethos and ideology. The Christian kingdom attained the apogee of its power in what historians of Ethiopia have come to characterise as the medieval period, 1270–1527 (Taddesse 1972), presaging the even more spectacular expansion of the empire in modern times under Menilek II. These successive regimes incorporated the neighbouring peoples through a combination of force and diplomacy, mostly the former. The Eritrean highlands were essentially part of this Christian polity while the lowlands formed a buffer zone or a bone of con-

tention between the dominant powers in the Sudan and the Ethiopian highlands.

In Somalia, notwithstanding the linguistic and religious homogeneity described above, no major pan-Somali political entity emerged. Instead, Somali came to be affiliated to one or other of the religious orders (Qaadriya, Ahmadiya, Salihiya, etc.) or the various clans. The only significant attempt to forge a pan-Somali polity came about in the first two decades of the twentieth century in reaction to colonial domination. As in the Sudanese case, it combined religious fundamentalism with Somali nationalism. Colonial intervention initiated a fatal divergence between clan territories and state borders. The efforts to rectify that divergence were to be the hallmark of Somali nationalism in the postcolonial era.

Colonial Legacies

As elsewhere in the continent, the last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a feverish race among European colonial powers to carve out first their respective spheres of influence and subsequently their colonial possessions. Britain, driven above all by the quest to dominate the waters of the Nile, vanquished the Mahdist state and established its hegemony in the Sudan. The Italians, taking advantage of the political disarray in northern Ethiopia subsequent to the death of Emperor Yohannes IV in 1889, proclaimed their colony of Eritrea. The French ensconced themselves in the tiny but strategically important colony that they baptised French Somaliland, known after independence by the most significant port town of Djibouti. The other Somalis were carved up among the British (British Somaliland and the North Frontier District in Kenya), the Italians (Italian Somaliland) and the Ethiopians (the Ogaden). Only Ethiopia, thanks to its decisive victory in 1896 over Italian colonial ambitions, managed to remain not only independent but also a beneficiary of the partition process.

The colonial partition was sanctioned through a series of bilateral boundary delimitation agreements. Ethiopia, surrounded as it was by the tripartite European colonial powers, was the sole African signatory. These agreements, concluded in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, gave the Northeast African entities by and large the political boundaries that they have maintained to this day. As elsewhere in Africa, the boundaries reflected colonial ambitions and capabilities rather than the wishes and affiliations of the indigenous peoples (Asiwaju 1984). While all trans-frontier peoples lost in this cartographic exercise, undoubtedly the great losers were the Somali, who found themselves partitioned into five territories (British Somaliland, French Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, the North Frontier District in Kenya and the Ogaden in Ethiopia).

The only anomaly in this otherwise standard colonial arrangement was the participation of an indigenous African polity in the partition process. Ethiopia incorporated part of the Somali territory (known as the Ogaden in the past, currently forming the Ethiopian Somali regional state). Conversely and equally significantly, it lost to the Italians its historic maritime province of the Marab Mellash, which the new colonial master, drawing a leaf from ancient Hellenic geography, re-christened Eritrea. This gain and loss had a decisive impact on the course of the sub-region's postcolonial history. Both inspired irredentist movements.

Somali irredentism got its first expression through the politico-religious movement led by Mohamed Abdule Hasan, now venerated as the father of Somali nationalism. His two-decade long struggle against colonial occupation, so fervently and ardently expressed through his extraordinary poetic outpourings, forms an epic in modern Somali history. He was able to unite divergent clans, classes and occupational categories in quest of a common destiny. As a prominent historian of the Somali has concluded: 'The tangible benefits they [i.e. the leaders of the movement] achieved were few. Yet the values they expressed and the memories they left became part of the consciousness that would later sustain the growth of modern Somali nationalism' (Cassanelli 1982:253).

Ironically, it was the colonial powers themselves (notably Italy and Britain) who gave Somali irredentism a boost after the collapse of the dervish movement. In 1936, Italy finally achieved its dream of a Northeast African colonial empire when it crushed Ethiopian resistance through a ruthless application of brute force, including the internationally banned mustard gas. The first act of the Fascist dictator, Mussolini, was the proclamation of 'Italian East Africa' (*Africa orientale italiana*), which merged and reconfigured the three possessions (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia) along ethno-linguistic lines. Thus Eritrea was expanded to include the Tegrēña-speaking northern Ethiopian province of Tegray while the Ogaden was merged with Italian Somaliland to form a fairly expanded entity. The entity became even bigger, albeit briefly, when the Italians managed to annex British Somaliland in 1940 (Laitin and Samatar 1987:62).

After the collapse of the Italian colonial empire in 1941, the British, who had assumed custodianship of both Eritrea and Somaliland, took it upon themselves to formulate schemes for future administration. For Eritrea, they developed a scheme of detaching the lowlands and attaching it to the Sudan while uniting the Tegrēña-speaking populations of the Eritrean highlands and the northern Ethiopian province of Tegray, in effect creating Greater

Tegray. This scheme became history when the UN resolution not only kept Eritrea intact but also federated it with Ethiopia.

For Somalia, the British adumbrated the idea of ‘Greater Somalia’, aiming at the unification of all the Somali-inhabited areas of the Horn of Africa. A brainchild of the British foreign minister Ernest Bevin, the idea, so pregnant with pan-Somali nationalism, formed the springboard of Somali irredentism both in the course of the struggle for independence and post-independent Somalia.

In Eritrea, irredentism had two sources and protagonists—Eritrean and Ethiopian. It found its first and most passionate expression in the writings of the Eritrean intellectual, Blatta Gabra-Egziabher Gila-Maryam, who castigated Emperor Menilek in the most vitriolic fashion for his abandonment of Eritrea to the Italians (Bahru 2002:156-57). His pleas appeared to have struck a sympathetic chord with Menilek’s grandson and successor, Iyyasu, who is reported to have vowed not to wear the imperial crown until he had reunited Eritrea with its motherland. Italian alarm at what was perceived as his mobilisation to this end was one of the factors that contributed to the premature demise of the young prince in 1916, when the threatened colonial powers (British, French and Italian) joined forces with his domestic opponents to dethrone him on charges of apostasy.

The end of Italian rule in Eritrea in 1941 gave rise to an even more strident irredentist movement spearheaded by Eritrean Unionists and vigorously supported by the Ethiopian government. Conversely, particularly among the Muslim section of the population, there developed an equally strong movement for independence. The UN resolution of 1950 to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia was in essence a compromise formula to accommodate these antithetical positions.

The British, who were at such pains to forge the unity of the Somalis, followed a diametrically opposite policy in the Sudan. Through what came to be known as the Southern Policy, they effectively sealed off the South from the North. The ostensible rationale was to protect the Southerners from the habitual raids and exactions of the Northerners. Pursuant to the policy, Northern traders and officials were barred from the South. Arabic was excluded in favour of the Southern languages and mother-tongues. Islamic schools were closed and Muslim preachers banned while Christian missionaries were given all possible encouragement (Lesch 1998:31-32). The ultimate effect of the policy was to sow the seeds of Southern separatism, abetted by the short-sighted policies of the postcolonial Northern regimes.

The Postcolonial Record

Independence from colonial rule did not usher in an era of peace and stability. On the contrary, all countries of the sub-region, with the exception of Djibouti, came to be locked in internecine or inter-state conflicts that have not yet been completely resolved. The Sudan went through two editions of a bloody civil war (1955-1972, 1983-2004) that seems to be coming to an end only now. Somalia went through a process of consolidation (through the merger of the two Somalilands, British and Italian), confrontation with its neighbour Ethiopia, and disintegration. The case of Eritrea and Ethiopia was rather unique. Ethiopia was never colonised and the short-lived Fascist Italian occupation came to an end in 1941. When Italian colonial rule came to an end in Eritrea in the same year, it was first federated with and then absorbed by Ethiopia, fought a thirty-year-long war for independence, and is now locked in seemingly interminable warfare with its southern neighbour.

As stated above, the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, adopted above all as the golden mean between absorption and separation, was perhaps the best possible arrangement under the circumstances. Although it was structurally flawed (Ethiopia for instance being the sovereign entity rather than one of the federated parties), it could have accommodated the divergent interests and aspirations triggered by the decolonisation process. But it was not allowed to continue. Eritrea's autonomous status, albeit under the Ethiopian crown, was systematically corroded until, in 1962, the Eritrean parliament decided to dissolve itself and Eritrea became Ethiopia's fourteenth province. Prominent in achieving that fateful decision were the Eritrean Unionists, who controlled both the executive and the legislative arms of the Eritrean government. But they were abetted and buttressed by the Ethiopian imperial government, which had found an autonomous Eritrea an irksome anomaly in its autocratic and highly centralised political order.

The dissolution of the federation signalled the launching of the armed struggle in Eritrea, which lasted from 1961 to 1991. Those eventful thirty years were marked not only by tens of thousands of corpses but also by ferocious contestations of identity. History in particular became a battleground. While Ethiopians considered Eritrea to have been historically an integral part of Ethiopia, Eritreans were at pains to portray the two countries as sharply distinct entities. As Eritreans pushed the stakes higher—shifting from the restoration of the federation to the unequivocal recognition of Eritrea's independence—successive Ethiopian regimes resorted to force as the ultimate solution. The few initiatives that were taken for the peaceful resolution of the armed conflict were aborted by the half-heartedness of both parties. Particularly after the 1974 revolution, the military option increasingly became

the choice of both the Ethiopian military regime that had taken the helm and the Eritrean guerrilla movement, which had come to view itself as invincible. Towards the end of the 1980s, the military seesaw tilted decisively in favour of the Eritreans. In May 1991, the Eritrean Popular Liberation Forces (EPLF) triumphantly entered the Eritrean capital, Asmara, heralding the birth of an independent Eritrean state.

Given the alliance that the EPLF had forged with the force that simultaneously seized power in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), and the unstinting support that the latter gave to Eritrean independence, the two countries appeared set for an era of peace and cooperation. On the surface, everything appeared to promise just that. But the outward camaraderie concealed an ambiguous relationship loaded with explosive potentialities—particularly on the issues of the boundary, currency and the hundreds of thousands of Eritreans who continued to reside in Ethiopia in relative comfort. Those issues were at the root of the new round of conflict that flared up in 1998 and that still remains unresolved to date.

In the Sudan, the first shots of the civil war that has just come to an end were fired on the eve of independence. A mutiny in 1955 by Southern units of the Sudanese army stationed in Equatoria province snowballed into the first Anya-Nya movement, as the Southerners' armed struggle spearheaded by the Sudan Africa National Union (SANU) came to be known. The Southerners' quest for autonomous status stood in fundamental collision with the integrationist and assimilationist policies pursued by successive regimes (military as well as civilian) in Khartoum (Lesch 1998:36-43). As the intransigence of the North escalated, the Southerners' also raised the stake higher, from autonomy to independence—in somewhat the same manner as the Eritreans shifted their goal from the restoration of the violated federation to unequivocal independence.

The Addis Ababa Agreement of February 1972 ended the first phase of the civil war by recognising the ethnic plurality of the Sudan. The agreement granted regional autonomy to the South, provided it proportional representation in the national assembly in Khartoum, and recognised English as the official language of the region. Unfortunately, the agreement was abrogated in 1983 by General Numairy, the same Northern ruler who had signed it in the first place, with the imposition of the Islamic sharia law throughout the country and the breaking up of the South into three regions. Exacerbating the situation was the conflict over two vital resources: oil and water (the latter triggered by the Jonglei Canal project, which aimed to drain the southern swamps known as the sudd).

Thus was initiated the second chapter of the civil war known as Anya-Nya II led by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudan

People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), as the military and political wings were respectively known (Lesch 1998:43-48). That second edition of the Sudanese Civil War has lasted two decades. And by some kind of perverse logic, when that civil war seems to be coming to an end, another one with genocidal dimensions is rearing its head in the western part of the country.

While integrationist and assimilationist policies in the Sudan and Ethiopia gave rise to separatist movements, the situation in Somalia was characterised by a state vigorously pursuing a policy of uniting all Somalis under one flag. This quest came to be enshrined in the five-pointed star that the Somalis adopted as their national emblem on independence. Two points of those stars were realised when British and Italian Somaliland united to form Somalia on the morrow of independence. But that still left the Somalis who found themselves scattered among the neighbouring countries—Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. Of all the three regions that were regarded as terra irredenta, it was the Ethiopian region of the Ogaden that became the major target of Somali irredentist aspirations. This led to a minor clash between the two neighbouring countries in 1963 and a major war in 1977–78. The latter, resulting in the defeat and disintegration of the Somali army, augured the end of the regime of dictatorial Siyad Barre regime.

Unable to check the growth of the opposition liberation movements that had sprouted subsequent to the military debacle, Barre fled for his life in 1991. But his demise also marked the collapse of the Somali state, as warlords battled for control of the capital and the northern and northeastern parts of the country broke away to form the more or less independent states of Somaliland and Puntland. In effect, Somalia drifted back to its proverbial statelessness. Redeeming the dismal picture somewhat have been a resilient civil society and the ingenuity of the Somali people that had kept such basic services as banking and telecommunications running. This state of affairs has even given rise to a celebration of what to ordinary eyes has been a state of anarchy as a 'showcase for alternative, consensus-driven state formation', or the 'liberation of Africa from the tyranny of the state' (Brons: 285, 287; cf. 283).

Future Prospects

Clearly, therefore, the postcolonial record has not been much of an improvement on the colonial one. As in so many other parts of Africa, what seems to be unfolding in its northeastern sector—distinguished as it is by endemic conflict and abject poverty—has been what Afro-pessimists would consider a posthumous vindication of colonialism. But neither condemnation nor passive resignation can help the region extricate itself from the current impasse. One has to address the central issue that has made the region a hotbed of

ethnic and inter-state conflict. At the heart of the problem is the issue of identity, more specifically the challenge of reconciling divergent and often contradictory forms of identity—ethnic versus territorial nationalism, irredentism versus territorial sovereignty, self-determination versus interdependence.

Probably the most important lesson that decades of conflict have left behind is the elusive nature of the concept of self-determination. Perhaps too much emphasis has been placed on the right to self-determination than on the imperatives of political pluralism. If the latter is guaranteed, the need to exercise the former becomes less urgent. Self-determination, sweet as its sounds, has been perilous in its exercise, as there is no guarantee that it would not merely help to replace one oppressive elite with another. The nation-state, the ultimate expression of self-determination, seems to have become not only obsolete globally but also a fertile ground for even more deadly conflicts. Difficult as it may appear, the countries of the region have to think beyond and above their national bounds.

The idea of a sub-regional confederation has been mooted more than once in the past. Indeed, in the case of Eritrea and Ethiopia, the short-lived federation, fraught as it was with structural and circumstantial problems, is vindicated in retrospect as the only viable option at the time it was introduced. Although it eventually opted for a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ vote on the issue of independence during the 1993 referendum, even the EPLF had held out federation as one of the options during the period of armed struggle.

It is also interesting that one of the first things that was sponsored by the EPLF government was a conference on the theme of bilateral cooperation. As the convenor of that conference argued in the introduction to the book that ensued from the meeting: ‘nations may determine themselves into bigger polities as surely as they may into smaller entities’ (Tekle 1994:5). One of the Ethiopian participants in the conference, in a plea for future political affiliation, also proposed a ‘confederation or commonwealth’ (Andreas 1994: 28ff). Alas, those positive expressions became pious wishes as the two countries came to be locked in even more deadly conflict some four years later.

A similar fate befell the idea of a confederation of Ethiopia and Somalia in the 1970s. A brainchild of the Cuban leader Fidel Castro, who had befriended the two professedly Marxist regimes in the Horn, it was rendered rather impracticable from the outset by the inclusion of South Yemen, apparently for no other cogent reason than the fact that it was also considered a progressive and allied state by the Soviet bloc. At any rate the idea was buried under the deafening roar of artillery fire as Ethiopia and Somalia entered their bloodiest clash since Somalia emerged as an independent state in 1960.

But the fact that federations or confederations have failed in the past—either in practice or conceptually—does not invalidate the argument that, ultimately, those options, particularly the con-federal one, remain the only ones if the chronic violence that has bedevilled the sub-region is to be removed. It is interesting that, as recently as November 2002, a conference of specialists on the sub-region held in Florida came to a similar conclusion. Its resolution, known as the Tampa Declaration, envisaged a confederation of the countries of the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia). The idea was subsequently broadened into a northeast African confederation to include also Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda.

Those seven countries also happen to be member states of the sub-regional organisation IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority for Development). That organisation was first established in 1986 as the IGADD (Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development) with the objective mainly of combating the recurrent droughts that had afflicted the sub-region from 1974 to 1984. It was reconstituted in 1996 with a broader mission and programmes that included economic cooperation (and eventual integration) and political and humanitarian affairs as well as the initial objective of agricultural development and environmental protection. The formation of ‘a regional identity’ has also been among the declared objectives of the IGAD.

As in the case of kindred regional and sub-regional organisations, the overall record of the IGAD has not been that impressive. Indeed, compared to other similar organisations like ECOWAS (for West Africa) and SADC (for Southern Africa) it has made little visible impact. But in recent years, the picture seems to have changed. The negotiations that culminated in the apparent termination in 2004 of the two major conflicts in the sub-region—that is, the Somali peace process and the Sudan peace agreement, both of which took place in Kenya—were sponsored by the IGAD. But, it was leaders of the member states rather than the organisation or its secretariat as such who played the critical role. Nonetheless, these initiatives hopefully mark a new era of positive engagement by the organisation with the critical political issues of the sub-region.

But a northeast African confederation cannot be willed into existence. There are a host of practical and political problems that need to be overcome before the idea could become a reality. The first practical problem is the scope. The IGAD structure, which includes the two East African states of Kenya and Uganda, probably over-stretches the territorial framework. For these two states, a resuscitation of the old East African Community (including Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) would make much more economic and ethnic sense. That indeed is what is taking place at the moment. A purely Horn of Africa confederation—consisting of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and

Somalia—while making a lot of sense from the point of view of the ethnic inter-dependence of the area, would probably be objectionable to the lesser states, who might be apprehensive of Ethiopian hegemonic aspirations. The expansion of the confederation arrangement to include the Sudan would thus have, at the very least, the salutary effect of allaying such apprehensions, as the Sudan would constitute an effective counter-weight to Ethiopia.

But, whatever the practical problems, the peoples of the sub-region have no other option but to think and act high if they are to break out of the cul de sac into which their political elites have driven them as they sought to give expression to their divergent and sometimes conflicting identities (Samatar 1986: 20). If only to atone for their past misdeeds, the onus for executing this vital task of self-preservation lies above all on those elites, checked and monitored by genuinely pluralist and democratic systems. The forging of such systems remains the supreme challenge of the century.

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De la question nationale en Afrique noire

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Résumé

Je tente de montrer ici, à travers le cas de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, les principales phases d'un processus et d'une problématique de la formation des nations en Afrique. Trois phases apparaissent : la phase des «mondes nationaux» (de la fin du XVIIIe siècle aux années 1870–1880), puis celle de la construction des États-nations (de 1870–1880 à 1980) selon un schéma introduit par la colonisation européenne, soit par classification ethnique (ère coloniale) soit par «homogénéisation» volontariste et autoritaire des populations, sans participation du citoyen; enfin, depuis la fin des années 1980, on a probablement une nouvelle phase, celle des «nations emboîtées», avec la permanence de l'idéal panafricain que voudrait traduire l'idée d'intégration régionale.

Abstract

I am trying to show, through a case study of West Africa, the major phases of the nation building process and problematic in Africa. There are three distinct phases: that of the 'national worlds' (from the late 18th century to the 1880s–1980s), that of the building of nation states (from 1870–1880 to 1980), based on a pattern that was introduced by the European colonisation, focusing, either on ethnic classification (colonial era), or on a voluntarist and authoritarian 'homogenisation' of people, without any citizen participation. Finally, from the late 1980s on, a new phase, that of the 'interlocked nations', appeared with the permanence of the Pan African ideal, expressed through regional integration.

Après avoir été un thème majeur de controverses scientifiques en Occident jusqu'au milieu du XXe siècle, la question nationale ressurgit aujourd'hui dans les sciences de la société, à la faveur de l'éclatement de l'ancien «bloc soviétique» et à cause de la recrudescence des revendications identitaires à travers le monde. Mais en histoire africaine, elle a peu intéressé les chercheurs, malgré quelques timides ouvertures. Dans l'historiographie actuelle, sous l'influence du schéma européen qui veut que la nation s'affirme avec les progrès du libéralisme (Hobsbawm 1992, 1999), on nie généralement

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l'existence de nations en Afrique. Les «liens tribaux» et «l'ethnie» sont évoqués comme cadre essentiel des identités collectives en Afrique ; même lorsque l'ethnie est vue comme «construction coloniale». Thème «quasi obsessionnel» (Chrétien & Prunier 1989) dans la presse occidentale et les sciences sociales à propos de l'Afrique contemporaine, pour certains «tout apparaît comme ethnique» (Thual 1995:155); pour d'autres, il n'y a encore aujourd'hui que de «micro-nations» (Diop éd. 1994) ou de «pseudo-nations» (Sall 1988). Des spécialistes de géographie politique tentent de leur côté de montrer les liens entre les logiques identitaires et les logiques territoriales en Afrique (Pourtier 1989, Jolivet 2000).

Pourtant, chaque État africain insiste sur son «identité nationale» ; les débats comme ceux sur «l'ivoirité» en Côte d'Ivoire sont symptomatiques d'un état d'esprit présent partout. L'historienne malienne Adame Ba Konaré (2000:42) en montre la complexité aujourd'hui en affirmant sa «malianité» en même temps qu'elle se dit «capable d'être tour à tour peule, bamanan, française, tout comme [elle peut] être à la fois de tous ces peuples, par un processus d'intégration». Les tensions et conflits entre États pour la défense des intérêts dits «nationaux» ont été fréquents au cours des quarante dernières années. Le sport même n'est pas en reste dans ce discours «nationaliste» ; bien au contraire. Ces faits s'articulent parfois avec des tensions internes et des guerres civiles où parfois apparaissent les revendications sécessionnistes. Il semble donc qu'il y ait ici, au-delà d'une simple «sociologie des passions», un processus de formation de nations selon un schéma probablement différent de ce qu'a connu l'Occident. L'hypothèse des particularités théoriques et pratiques du processus de formation de la nation en Afrique peut offrir une des clés d'explication des crises africaines et mettre en lumière les défis à relever pour donner une relative stabilité à l'État contemporain et réaliser l'intégration africaine.

L'intégration des populations comme acteurs des identités collectives exige qu'elles s'approprient l'État et en portent les évolutions essentielles. Quelle est la part de ce paramètre dans l'émergence de la nation en Afrique? En même temps que l'Europe impérialiste accentuait ici la mondialisation des économies, des modes d'organisation et de pensée, elle a fait de la frontière la forme marquante de «territorialisation» des identités collectives par le biais de frontières internationalement reconnues. Les identités territoriales que sont ainsi censées délimiter les frontières depuis l'ère coloniale sont-elles synonymes de nations ? Si oui, quelles conditions les font évoluer ? Si non, pourquoi ? La question «nationale» s'articule-t-elle avec celle, actuelle, de l'intégration régionale en Afrique?

Dans la présente communication, nous voulons seulement montrer les phases d'un processus dont, dans son inachèvement, témoignent les États africains aujourd'hui. Nous ne considérons ici que le cas de l'Afrique de l'Ouest aux XIXe et XXe siècles. Trois étapes principales apparaissent. La première est celle «des mondes nationaux» ; elle va de la fin du XVIIIe siècle aux années 1870–80. La seconde est celle «des identités collectives territorialisées» qui va des années 1870–1880 aux années 1980. La troisième est celle, en cours, des essais de «nationalités imbriquées» au plan sous-régional ; elle s'affiche surtout à partir du Plan d'Action de Lagos de 1980, malgré les périls que vivent les États contemporains. Notre approche s'intéresse ainsi à la question des frontières, aux positions et pratiques que les classes sociales dirigeantes (hommes politiques, intellectuels, milieux d'affaires liés aux échanges avec le reste du monde) développent au cours des XIXe et XXe siècles pour tenter de caractériser le projet de construction de l'État-Nation.

Sur le bilan des mécanismes identitaires avant l'État contemporain : le temps des «mondes nationaux» (avant 1870–80)

Nous définissons le XIXe siècle comme temps des «mondes nationaux», c'est-à-dire, des espaces culturels plus ou moins larges où se mêlent des communautés politiques variées traduisant plusieurs niveaux d'organisation et de relations. Ce siècle est marqué par des mouvements de populations qui prolongent bien souvent ceux initiés au XVIIIe siècle, soit sous l'effet des traites négrières et des guerres de conquête soit sous l'effet de nécessités économiques, qui autorisent des stratégies nouvelles de peuplement et d'organisation collective sur une base lignagère. Ce temps est aussi celui de la formation ou de la consolidation d'États (États du «djihad» omarien ; État ashanti ou Danxomé ; etc.), principalement par la dynamique interne des sociétés ouest-africaines. Ce temps s'achève avec les offensives systématiques de l'impérialisme colonial.

Le bilan des formations étatiques du XIXe siècle ouest-africain

En pleine recomposition politique, l'Afrique de l'ouest de ce siècle est en effet l'un des espaces où se réalisent des constructions étatiques importantes. Dans le Sahel, prolongement ou amplification du «djihad» d'Ousman Dan Fodio (1804), plusieurs réformateurs religieux¹ fondent des États sur une idéologie forgée à partir de l'islam², mettent en place des institutions inspirées de cette foi religieuse en même temps que de pratiques sociales pré-islamiques, conduisent une politique économique caractérisée, d'une part, par l'accroissement des échanges commerciaux en assurant la sécurité des

routes et des marchands souvent musulmans, d'autre part, par l'encouragement de la production artisanale à travers la protection de communautés d'artisans localement minoritaires au début. Dans la zone forestière, bien qu'il s'agisse d'entités politiques fondées largement sur la captation des avantages de la traite négrière atlantique depuis le XVIII^e siècle, des royaumes comme l'Ashanti ou le Dahomey se renforcent ; d'autres, comme l'ancien empire yoruba, s'affaiblissent. Tous participent d'un même mouvement de recomposition politique.

En dehors de territoires-limites, définis comme espaces dont l'allégeance à un pouvoir central est récente et «mouvante», il n'est pas toujours évident de déterminer les «frontières» au sens où il faut les entendre aujourd'hui. Dans le cas des États de la révolution islamique, la frontière est celle, vague, de la «Umma» constituée par les réformateurs religieux—chefs de guerre. Du fait de l'instabilité politique due aux nombreuses guerres et révolutions de palais qui caractérisent cette période de recomposition, du fait des déplacements de population qu'entraînent la situation politique et les crises de subsistance fréquentes dans de nombreuses régions (Gado 2001), il a été émis l'idée d'une «militarisation» des appareils étatiques de ce siècle pour survivre ou tirer parti de la traite négrière ou de l'instabilité du début du siècle. L'émergence de grandes aristocraties guerrières et l'utilisation de la guerre comme mode d'exploitation et moyen de subsistance dans les années 1870-1980 ont pour conséquence la désorganisation totale du travail agricole, la multiplication des crises de subsistance et une situation d'insécurité en de nombreuses régions du Sahel. Comme le remarque J.F. Ajayi (1996)

les rivalités politiques et la concurrence économique que ces guerres mettaient en jeu étaient si intenses qu'elles ne respectaient guère ce que nous appellerions aujourd'hui l'ethnicité, c'est-à-dire, les affinités culturelles créées par l'emploi d'une même langue, par la croyance aux mêmes mythes sur l'origine de l'homme ou du groupe, ainsi que par les réseaux de parenté ou l'interconnexion des croyances religieuses...

Dans le cas du royaume ashanti (Wilks 1975), on constate que, si de grandes voies structurent l'espace étatique jusqu'aux confins des zones soumises, le royaume comprend en fait trois niveaux d'intégration selon les visiteurs européens du XIX^e siècle³: le noyau twi du royaume, les peuples de culture akan et soumis aux mêmes lois et coutumes que le premier noyau, les peuples non-akan et tributaires. Ainsi, cet État a des frontières qui épousent les limites du dernier village soumis à l'autorité ashanti, sur des confins «mouvants». Le fait national coïncide-t-il avec ces frontières ? T. C. Mc Caskie (1995) a montré que, à travers notamment l'institution de la «fête des ignames» (asante odwira), existait une idéologie et un projet de l'État ashanti ; l'Asantehene

en symbolise le cœur en même temps que l'on note une articulation permanente entre le passé et le présent du peuple à travers un discours spécifique sur la communauté ashanti. Mais cette idéologie n'implique pas le troisième cercle de régions du royaume, c'est-à-dire, les peuples non-akan. À l'échelle du monde akan, ensemble de peuples défini par une langue et des pratiques sociales presque similaires, on constate que, hors de ceux soumis aux Ashanti, les communautés ainsi désignées du Togo septentrional (les Tyokossi) au centre de la Côte d'Ivoire (les Baoulé) sont non seulement indépendantes les unes des autres ; mais elles ont une conscience différente de leur «akanité» (Valsecchi & Viti 1999). Cet état de choses nous paraît fonction du niveau plus ou moins affirmé de l'influence ashanti ou des rapports entretenus directement ou non avec le royaume ashanti ; il est fonction aussi de l'intensité des rapports entretenus avec des populations voisines mais non-akan. Des chercheurs avaient pour cela mis en doute l'appartenance de certains de ces groupes au monde akan. La nation correspond ainsi à un espace distinct de celui du «monde akan».

Dans le cas du monde yoruba, le réseau de cités et de peuples qui a longtemps servi de base à un puissant empire au-delà des limites actuelles du Nigeria méridional, notamment à l'Ouest, se trouve confronté à une crise politique extrême au XIXe siècle. Mais, ici aussi, on note une variété de peuples, de part et d'autre de l'actuelle frontière entre le Nigeria et le Bénin, se réclamant des mêmes sources culturelles (dialectes directement apparentés, mythes-fondateurs communs qui partent de la légende d'Oduduwa, etc.), d'une histoire mouvementée des relations entre cités-États, en plus de structures économiques similaires (Asiwaju 2004:211). La dissociation entre le fait politique qu'est l'existence ou non de structures politiques à l'échelle de tous ces peuples au cours du siècle, n'empêche pas la permanence d'une conscience collective autour de ces bases culturelles. S'il n'y a plus d'empire yoruba, il y a toujours un «monde yoruba» fait de peuples divers dont on scelle les bases par la mise en scène et le cérémonial autour de l'oba, de l'odo ou de l'oni encore tout au long du XXe siècle (Martineau 2004).

Partout, il n'est pas nécessaire que toutes les populations soient soumises et intégrées dans un espace politique continu. Parfois, lorsque la situation s'aggrave, les révoltes et soulèvements débouchent sur la construction d'un nouvel État (cf. El Hadj Omar et l'empire du Macina ; la construction de l'empire samorien ; etc.) ou la présence d'enclaves indépendantes qui continuent de partager la même culture (langue, civilisations matérielles) sans partager la même religion dans le cas du Sahel. Le résultat effectif de cet état de choses est la part importante des identités régionales, locales, ou même

seulement tribales, sur une hypothétique identité à l'échelle de l'empire ou du royaume.

La nature «charismatique» du pouvoir royal, au sens où Max Weber l'entend comme autorité fondée sur les qualités personnelles et exceptionnelles d'un individu par opposition au pouvoir «traditionnel» et au pouvoir «légal», le mode de soumission des peuples conquis en dehors du noyau initial de conquérants⁴, sont autant de facteurs qui nous font penser que là où les peuples ouest-africains étaient constitués en grandes entités politiques, les identités collectives étaient plus parcellaires et émiettées qu'aujourd'hui, malgré de larges espaces de commune culture. La culture commune était insuffisante à forger un État-nation ; l'exercice d'une autorité politique de type monarchique non plus.

Les formations lignagères

Les formes multiples de sociétés lignagères de la sous-région⁵ montrent encore plus l'émiettement des formations sociales du XIX^e siècle. Les études d'anthropologie sociale ou politique de ces dernières années ont bien souvent fait ressortir cet émiettement ; et souvent les peuples de même culture ont eu rarement des termes pour désigner l'ensemble de la communauté qu'ils constituaient ; car, les dénominations endogènes ont ici porté sur les clans ou les tribus, c'est-à-dire sur un niveau où est en œuvre encore le principe lignager même lâche.

Toutefois, les réseaux d'alliances matrimoniales ou de guerre, les alliances à plaisanterie, une langue commune avec d'innombrables variantes dialectales, les modes communs d'insertion de l'étranger et des structures sociales presque semblables, parfois aussi les mêmes rassemblements festifs, laissent supposer une conscience d'appartenance à un même «monde» que les pratiques culturelles distinguent de «mondes» voisins. Pourtant, au contraire d'un modèle de centralisation politique ou de système tributaire, on a un modèle de pouvoir localisé qui s'exerce à une échelle réduite tout en structurant en réseau tout l'espace culturel considéré.

C'est surtout ici qu'apparaît la «frontière-transition» avant l'agression coloniale. La langue, les coutumes et le genre de vie communs fondent la conscience d'appartenir à un même «monde» dans lequel s'organisent les mêmes types de rituel, les mêmes formes de mythes, les mêmes modes de reconnaissance et d'accueil, voire d'intégration de l'étranger. Les traditions historiques des communautés inspirent cependant différents types de relations à différents niveaux, les mécanismes identitaires intervenant à chaque niveau. Ainsi, au niveau local, elles sont essentiellement des traditions qui façonnent l'unité culturelle, psychosociale et politique d'un groupe lignager, d'une communauté villageoise ; tandis que les traditions du niveau régional

sont à la base des relations inter-communautaires telles les échanges matrimoniaux et commerciaux. On voit par là que, même objet historique, les références et classifications ethniques de l'ethnologie coloniale ne forgent pas des identités d'origine coloniale. L'absence de mode uniforme de légitimité des diverses communautés et l'absence de discours organisé sur le futur de ce «monde éclaté» font toute la différence avec le processus de formation de l'État-nation lorsque émerge un royaume.

Ainsi, le bilan des «mondes nationaux» en Afrique de l'Ouest montre-t-il une superposition et un emboîtement d'entités, sans cesse remaniées par les crises économiques, des guerres, des déplacements et fusions de populations. Là sont les limites d'une recomposition politique, inachevée dans les années 1870–1880, sous l'angle de l'homogénéisation des peuples et donc sous le rapport de l'adéquation État et nation. Les essais d'intégration de peuples culturellement différents n'ont pas manqué dans les royaumes constitués avant la fin du XIXe siècle. Mais il semble que ce soit, au mieux, au prix d'une large autonomie de gestion et en respectant le niveau d'identité collective le plus évident à tous au moment où se produit une conquête, y compris au conquérant lui-même. Les enclaves indépendantes sont donc nombreuses au cœur même des vastes constructions, qui n'ont pas eu le temps (offensives de nouveaux bâtisseurs Africains d'empire ; conquête coloniale) ni les moyens institutionnels et idéologiques de se consolider. Certes, l'espace est, comme partout, une composante de l'État ou de la communauté constituée en entité politique plus ou moins formelle. Mais il s'agit d'une composante dont la valeur, au XIXe siècle, compte moins que les populations qu'on y trouve. L'autorité s'exerce sur des populations, des lignages et moins sur un espace vide d'hommes ; car, plus qu'aujourd'hui, la vraie richesse pour tous était l'homme plus que le territoire. On est loin donc d'une histoire de la nation telle que l'Europe l'a connu depuis le traité de Westphalie de 1667.

Les nouvelles identités territoriales et le nouveau discours sur la «Nation»

Le temps de la «territorialisation obligatoire» (1870/1895–1960/70)

Cette seconde étape, qui tire ses prémisses des premiers établissements permanents des Européens surtout au XVIIIe siècle, commence avec la phase de déploiement effectif de l'impérialisme colonial européen autour des années 1870–80. Elle est celle de la «territorialisation» des identités collectives et recouvre deux moments, celui de la «territorialisation obligatoire» au cours de toute la période coloniale (1870–80 à 1960–70) et celui de la «territorialisation volontariste» de l'État post-colonial (depuis la fin des années

1950–début des années 1960). La frontière matérialisée et internationalement reconnue joue ici le rôle essentiel.

La conquête coloniale introduit en effet une autre logique et un autre rapport à l'espace politique et social. Prévaut à cette époque le principe qui veut que l'espace délimité et reconnu soit le principal support de tout pouvoir. Il irrigue largement la gestion politique et administrative de tous les territoires coloniaux de la sous-région, quelle que soit la puissance coloniale. D'où l'importance essentielle de la frontière. Marqueur d'espaces politiques dans la nouvelle conception, celle-ci est dorénavant aussi marqueur exclusif d'institutions, de lois communes, d'une logique de relations sociales, voire de relations économiques, de l'acquisition même d'une nouvelle culture (langues et cultures du conquérant européen). A cela s'ajoutent les tentatives de classification et de détermination des espaces «ethniques» des colonisés.

Si l'ethnie ne se comprend pas sans la structuration spécifique de l'espace par la colonisation, elle ne se comprend pas non plus sans la classification qui rend possible la structuration de l'espace. Elle se fonde ainsi sur ce que nous pouvons appeler alors le premier âge de l'africanisme.⁶ Dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle, plusieurs termes, à côté de «ethnie», sont utilisés pour caractériser les populations colonisées : «peuple», «nation», «race» et «famille», «ethnie». De l'adjectif «ethnique», introduit par Joseph Gobineau en 1854 pour signifier l'idée d'une certaine dégénérescence raciale, la notion d'«ethnie» est utilisée par Vacher de Lapouge⁷ en 1896 pour qui elle désigne le segment d'une nation conservant une certaine proximité entre elles. L'auteur reprend ainsi le terme grec d'ethnos, qui désignait une société de culture grecque ne possédant pas de «Cités» («polis»). La compréhension de Gobineau sera partagée par de nombreux administrateurs coloniaux, donnant donc au terme «ethnie» une acception qui radicalise la différence entre les populations européennes et les populations africaines.

La principale conséquence de cet état de choses est la distorsion progressive de deux discours identitaires au cours de l'ère coloniale. L'un est vécu par les populations soumises ; il s'inscrit dans les logiques anciennes. L'autre, dit plus tard «moderniste» parce que produit par les élites sous influence (ou forgées par) du colonisateur, s'attache à dépasser la perception dévalorisante des populations colonisées pour tenter de s'engager dans la conception européenne de l'État-Nation. Ce processus, qui marque le XXe siècle africain, va se confondre avec l'affirmation de nouvelles identités nationales forgées à travers l'épisode coloniale et au cours des premières décennies de l'État postcolonial. La distorsion signalée plus haut contribue cependant à brouiller les processus identitaires.

Au cours de l'ère coloniale, on assiste à la mise en place de conditions qui favorisent l'émergence de nouvelles identités territoriales à l'intérieur de frontières reconnues. Certaines sont externes aux colonies ; d'autres sont internes.

À l'extérieur des colonies, il y a le processus de délimitation des territoires conquis progressivement. Deux types de tracé sont apparus ainsi au cours des deux dernières décennies du XIXe siècle. Il y a le tracé des frontières qui délimitent les «possessions» de chaque colonisateur ; il est surtout administratif ; et la création de la fédération de colonies françaises de l'Afrique de l'ouest, l'Afrique occidentale française-AOF (décret du 16 juin 1895) en est le modèle. Il est différent de celui, plus diplomatique, qui distingue les possessions de deux puissances étrangères. Les étapes du tracé des frontières entre «possessions» distinctes répondent dès le début à ce que l'on a appelé la «course au clocher». Mais en définitive, elles mettent en lumière l'application des principes généraux édictés lors de la Conférence de Berlin de 1885 et dont la logique veut que l'espace soit le premier support de l'exercice d'un pouvoir politique. Ces faits sont suffisamment connus pour que l'on s'y attarde. Toutefois, il n'est pas inutile de rappeler que leur établissement a donné lieu à de nombreuses négociations entre rivaux coloniaux. Contre souvent les instructions des autorités centrales, on sait aujourd'hui que l'établissement des frontières par les gestionnaires locaux de la conquête coloniale a rarement correspondu à la prise en compte de la réalité sociodémographique ou sociopolitique des populations africaines. Et cela a été valable même à l'intérieur d'un groupe de colonies comme l'AOF où, contrairement à une idée répandue, les contestations de frontières ont surgi du fait de l'imprécision des tracés de départ ou à cause de réaménagements territoriaux successifs.

Au plan interne, on a l'action des administrations coloniales pour la mise au pas et l'instrumentalisation progressive des chefferies dites «traditionnelles». On a aussi l'organisation d'institutions reliant chaque territoire à la métropole. Au plan idéologique, le contenu de l'enseignement et le discours colonial visent à internaliser des liens quasi individuels entre la métropole et le colonisé (Dozon 2003). On tente de développer ainsi un «patriotisme colonial» que beaucoup de colonisés, souvent auxiliaires coloniaux, traduisent en s'enrôlant volontairement dans les armées coloniales par exemple en 1939–40. L'autre condition interne est la mise en œuvre de l'économie politique coloniale, fondée notamment dans les années 1930 sur la «préférence coloniale» et donc sur l'exploitation économique de chaque colonie presque exclusivement par la métropole.

Aussi, en Afrique de l'Ouest, l'idée de nation apparaît-elle mal ; elle reste floue dans ses dimensions spatiales et anthropologiques ; tant chez les hommes

politiques que chez les intellectuels des années 1950. En effet, au début des années 1950, on emploie plus volontiers des termes dérivés comme «nationalisme», «nationaliste» ou «national», lorsqu'on passe à un registre plus politique de l'analyse de la question coloniale. Et celle-ci, présentée comme processus de domination, voire autre forme de «totalitarisme» en Afrique noire, est dénoncée. Même les élus les plus modérés des colonies françaises (Lamine Guèye, Fily-Dabo Sissoko, Diawandou Diallo, etc.) considèrent que «l'ancien système est mort». Mais ici, sauf dans le cas togolais (et camerounais), le «nationalisme» ne porte pas spécifiquement sur un territoire ou sur l'ensemble de la fédération ; il sous-tend ou prolonge le vent de revendications qui secoue d'autres empires coloniaux ou simplement d'autres parties de l'empire français (péninsule indochinoise, Afrique du Nord). C'est ainsi qu'est introduite spécifiquement la revendication d'indépendance dès 1952–53 (articles de Cheikh A. Diop et Madhjmout Diop); ce courant ne cessera pas de s'amplifier après 1955, visant la fédération et non chaque territoire en particulier, surtout dans les milieux les plus radicaux (associations d'étudiants en France ; gauche de l'Union générale des travailleurs d'Afrique noire (UGTAN) ou du parti du Rassemblement démocratique africain (RDA) comme l'Union des populations camerounaises (UPC) pour qui la «nation» se confond avec l'ensemble des peuples qui forment cette construction coloniale.

Par contre, à travers les prises de position des leaders politiques, les élus notamment, nulle trace du mot «nation» ; très rarement ses dérivés, à propos des affaires de l'union française. Toutefois, le contenu politique hérité de la pensée européenne des XVIIIe et XIXe siècles sur la question nationale est réinvesti ici indirectement. Ainsi, en même temps qu'ils se battent pour instaurer le suffrage universel dans les colonies («nous voulons faire partie de l'union française, à cette seule condition que la démocratie ne craigne pas de se mouiller les pieds en traversant la Méditerranée» déclare L. S. Senghor en mars 1946 à l'Assemblée nationale constituante), certains élus adhèrent à l'idée d'une «citoyenneté de la plus grande France et aussi une citoyenneté de chacune des futures républiques régionales», idée émise en mars 1946 par le député P.O. Lapie. D'autres, timidement, évoquent l'idée d'indépendance, autre palier de la dimension politique de l'identité ; mais c'est pour immédiatement indiquer qu'elle suppose un niveau de développement que n'ont pas atteint les colonies et que la France doit aider à préparer. Ainsi, L.S. Senghor, le 8 août 1946 dans une interview au journal *Gavroche* : «Nous réclamons l'égalité des droits. C'est pourquoi, en attendant une indépendance complète, nous préconisons la solution d'une fédération dans le cadre de l'Union française, réalisable dès à présent». Lamine Guèye et Fily-Dabo Sissoko en condamnent même l'idée. Si, en octobre 1946, les fondateurs du

RDA en discutent, c'est pour écarter la «sécession» au profit de l'autonomie et de l'égalité des territoires dans le cadre de l'Union française. Face à la montée de la revendication dans les milieux jugés radicaux, comme beaucoup d'autres élus, beaucoup finissent comme F. Houphouët-Boigny et L.S. Senghor, par estimer que «l'indépendance est un mythe si [de petites entités économiques] ne sont pas suffisamment équipées et qu'elles ne participent pas à une large union»⁸. Mais presque tous, dans les assemblées métropolitaines, refusent l'assimilation qui marquerait la négation de l'identité culturelle des peuples qu'ils représentent, et réclament des assemblées territoriales de plus en plus autonomes. A l'Assemblée Nationale Française même, les débats sur la question du statut du Cameroun et du Togo laissent apparaître progressivement cette aspiration à l'autonomie de chaque territoire, dimension politique de leur identité. La classe politique française n'est pas dupe. Pendant dix ans (1946–1956), il n'y aura aucune évolution significative, sauf sous la pression des événements d'Algérie et avec l'aval des grands milieux d'affaires coloniaux⁹. La loi-cadre Defferre de 1956 sonne institutionnellement le glas de la fédération et consacre la personnalité politique de chaque territoire.

Il apparaît donc que dans les colonies françaises, avant 1960, la nation est perçue par les classes sociales dirigeantes comme une notion encore hors de portée des territoires pris individuellement : «La colonisation nous a légué un État mais pas une nation qu'il nous faut construire» déclarait F. Houphouët-Boigny en 1960. L'indépendance est un préalable et non un effet de la conscience nationale. Même la lutte de libération nationale qu'imaginent certains¹⁰ vise à mobiliser les énergies pour fonder la nation et non pour faire reconnaître son existence. Il y a, dans les colonies françaises notamment, une évidente influence de la conception jacobine du concept qui explique que, devant la multiplicité des cultures africaines, l'on recourt à une démarche inverse de celle qui prévaut alors dans l'histoire des nations européennes; ce qui n'est pas le cas dans les colonies britanniques. Hors les catégories dirigeantes, les populations ne retiennent de la nouvelle donne spatiale et politique, la colonie, que ses contraintes fiscales, administratives et économiques. C'est le seul fait de l'oppression coloniale qui unit les esprits. Mais en même temps, on s'habitue au cadre dressé par celle-ci ou au mieux, on le subie. Au quotidien et dans les rapports inter-communautaires, on continue de désigner l'étranger par des termes précis et on attache à sa présence des récits qui fondent les règles de son accueil, qu'il soit ou non de la même colonie. Aussi, tout au long de la colonisation, les incidents entre communautés différentes ne sont-ils pas rares (conflits fonciers, conflits de travail ou de partis politiques).

Le problème se présente tout autrement dans les colonies britanniques. L'ancienneté d'une élite occidentalisée et produisant un corps de pensée portant sur la «personnalité africaine» (le pasteur E. W. Blyden dans les années 1850 ; S. Johnson dans les années 1880, etc.), l'action formelle d'une administration britannique qui utilise les «spécificités locales» au mieux de son autorité jouent en ce sens. En effet, c'est déjà dans les années 1870-80 que les «évolués» de Sierra Leone, de Gambie, de Gold-Coast et du Nigeria méridional, marchands Africains engagés dans le grand commerce atlantique ou avocats ou enseignants, développent de nouvelles idées politiques (reconnaissance du principe que la terre est la base de toute vie en communauté ; protection de l'espace colonial contre les tentatives des chefs insoumis; institutions représentatives africaines qui servent efficacement contre les empiètements de l'administration coloniale dans toute la Gold-Coast). Ces idées sont en rupture avec la conception «charismatique» ou «traditionnel» ou «politico-religieuse» du pouvoir africain au XIX^e siècle. L'influence occidentale (et une insidieuse politique britannique de division) n'est pas absente de cette approche ; celle-ci est probablement au départ de la Confédération de Mankessim de 1871 et, plus sûrement, l'inspiratrice de l'Arborigines' Rights Protection Society (ARPS) de Gold-Coast en 1897. Mais, c'est dans la mouvance de cette association d'intellectuels comme J.W. Sew et Casely Hayford, qu'apparaît l'idéal d'une Afrique de l'Ouest unie et le projet de création du National Congress of British West Africa, regroupement politique de toutes les compétences africaines de chaque colonie britannique de la sous-région¹¹.

Les associations se multiplient après les années 1910 ; mais assez vite, l'idéal unitaire fait long feu vers 1925, du fait de l'opposition acharnée des leaders de l'ancien pouvoir africain. Ces idées réapparaissent dans les années 1930 et, avec elles, la floraison d'associations voulant couvrir l'ensemble du territoire ou des régions culturellement «homogènes». Le relais pris partout par une génération d'intellectuels plus nourris d'influence négro-américaine (N. Azikwe, K. N'Krumah, O. Awolowo, etc.), explique probablement l'expression d'une revendication «nationale» prenant plus de distance avec le discours colonial. Les oppositions entre leaders sont, certes, nombreuses. Mais elles ne sont pas marquées par la tendance «assimilationniste» que l'on constate chez nombre de colonisés de la France.

Cependant, la période coloniale a semé partout en Afrique de l'Ouest, à travers ce qui se rattache au respect des frontières coloniales, les ferments idéologiques d'une perception nouvelle de l'espace politique, jusqu'à l'échelle sous-régionale ; et c'est au moins dans les catégories «occidentalisées» et dans la population urbanisée que cela se remarque. Chaque colonie britannique ou ensemble de colonies françaises (AOF) est l'échelle où se conçoit ou bien

se mène toute action de mobilisation des populations ou toute action de masse. De même, la colonisation a introduit, pratiquement à son corps défendant, pressé par les événements qui se déroulent dans d'autres parties du monde colonial, une autre conception du pouvoir et du rôle de chaque citoyen avec le principe électoral ; car, par là, chaque colonisé est introduit à un nouveau processus de formation de la nation qui, comme en Europe, met «l'individu-citoyen» au centre du processus. La liaison entre cette perception et cette conception pouvait permettre une véritable recomposition des sociétés et des nouveaux États nés de la colonisation à partir de la fin des années 1950.

Les politiques volontaristes de construction de l'État-Nation et ses impasses (1960/70–1990)

Pour que l'idée de nation ait droit de cité en Europe, il aura fallu la rencontre entre deux types de discours ; l'un, à la fois spatial et anthropologique, sur des communautés identifiées (ou supposées telles) comme étant d'origine commune et plus ou moins unifiées à un moment de l'histoire; l'autre, plus politique, porte sur les relations de pouvoir en œuvre dans les communautés concernées pour s'incarner dans un territoire. Comme l'ont fait ressortir de nombreuses études sur l'histoire de la nation en Europe, c'est à la fin du XVIIIe que la nation est aussi conçue comme «communauté de citoyens» (la nation française), même si elle est «communauté de sang et de culture autant que de citoyens» (la nation allemande). Aujourd'hui encore, l'idée de nation est loin d'être obsolète ; malgré les progrès de la construction d'entités comme l'Union européenne, elle continue de nourrir des débats et des positions politiques fortes

Partout, l'accession à l'indépendance est marquée en Afrique de l'Ouest par des symboles. Différents de ceux de l'ancienne puissance coloniale, ce sont le drapeau, l'hymne «national», parfois une nouvelle appellation du pays qui rattache l'histoire en cours à un passé précolonial, à des lieux de mémoire. Les dirigeants affirment vouloir favoriser l'émergence d'une conscience nationale à travers la mise en scène d'un patrimoine culturel commun à toutes les communautés du territoire. Il s'agit de comprendre ces lieux comme des lieux de communion de toutes les cultures «authentiques» du pays. Outre le concept «d'authenticité» popularisé en Afrique noire dans les années 1970 par le Président Mobutu, c'est la mise en scène de la nation perçue comme «résultat de la fusion» de toutes les cultures et de tous les citoyens du nouvel État. Autre symbole ici, la célébration annuelle de la «fête nationale», qui, un peu partout, coïncide avec la date anniversaire de l'indépendance. C'est le moment festif de cette communion, exactement comme la «Fête de la Fédération» de 1792 en France, sur des places publiques nouvelles, parfois réaménagées à grands frais. On reprend ainsi à son compte l'héritage colonial,

dans son esprit et dans son projet qui sont ceux de la «nation rassemblée». Les encouragements apportés par la plupart des États aux études historiques ou anthropologiques et sociologiques sur les communautés nationales vont dans le même sens, dans les deux premières décennies de l'ère post-coloniale. On tente partout une politique dite «d'intégration» de toutes les composantes de la population ; chaque ancien colonisé, en tant que citoyen, est censé y voir l'acte de naissance non seulement du nouvel État mais surtout de la nation.

La configuration des relations de pouvoir née sous la colonisation et aiguisée par les péripéties de la «décolonisation», les idéologies du territoire qui leur sont associées, l'articulation enfin de la question des frontières avec la pratique économique et institutionnelle post-coloniale ont, dans les nouveaux États africains, investi les mécanismes d'identités collectives de significations qu'elles n'avaient pas pour la plupart des populations. C'est dans l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre de politiques dites «de construction nationale» que les difficultés apparaissent ; et les ambiguïtés entre logique de rupture et logique de continuité sont permanentes. En effet, on note parfois des politiques foncières «libérales», souvent dans le prolongement de la politique coloniale («la terre appartient à qui la met en valeur» décrète-t-on Côte d'Ivoire), le respect et même la promotion de la liberté de circulation des personnes et des biens dans l'espace «national», la défense d'une «sécurité économique» du pays à travers conventions et accords internationaux. D'autres fois, on est plus restrictif à l'égard de tous ceux qui ne sont pas des «nationaux». Les politiques éducatives visent peu à peu à promouvoir essentiellement un système «national»¹². Le résultat immédiat de ces «politiques d'unité nationale» tient dans l'interpénétration accrue des populations (inter-mariages; installation dans d'autres régions ; etc.), l'extension d'une administration commune, de plus en plus pléthorique parce que visant à la «rapprocher du citoyen». On recourt alors aux politiques «d'équilibrage ethnique» et religieux (ou de «géopolitique nationale») pour les nominations aux hautes charges publiques ou parapubliques, aux politiques de «lutte contre les disparités régionales pour un aménagement équilibré de l'espace national», bien insuffisantes aux yeux de chaque concepteur de coups d'état; car chacun de ceux-ci place son opération sous le signe de la «lutte contre le tribalisme et pour une réelle politique de cohésion nationale».

Dans le contexte de «guerre froide» subie par les nouveaux et fragiles États africains, chaque élite politique a voulu doter son espace politique d'institutions particulières et des instruments d'une vie politique «compatible» avec «les exigences d'unité nationale et de lutte contre le sous-développement». En fait, dans leur fonctionnement, ces institutions sont un «leurre» qui explique la tropicalisation du libéralisme politique ou du

socialisme. Pire ; les coups d'État successifs¹³, la peur des oppositions politiques internes et le culte de la personnalité n'ont fait que renforcer cette particularité de l'organisation et de l'exercice du pouvoir d'État, dans un contexte de rapports internationaux marqué par la «guerre froide». Au nom de quoi, tous ont en fait eu recours à un système de répression et de suspension des libertés publiques qui aboutit au système bien connu du parti unique ou du «parti-État». Les contradictions internes, les conflits d'intérêts individuels, l'instabilité institutionnelle et la modicité des moyens expliquent l'échec de ces politiques de «cohésion nationale».

Outre l'insuffisante promotion de l'idée nationale, le citoyen moyen ne s'approprie pas l'État dont la perception se confond avec l'image du «père-fondateur» ou «Guide éclairé». Les logiques identitaires «particularistes», que l'ère coloniale n'a pas fait disparaître, trouvent ici un terreau favorable aussi bien dans les campagnes que dans les classes populaires urbaines où se reconstituent indirectement des solidarités ethniques dont profitent certains membres des classes dirigeantes. Soumises à un faux discours nationaliste qui met en exergue la trop forte place du citoyen étranger ou la «mercénarisation» de l'immigré, les classes populaires n'hésitent pas à porter un regard de plus en plus négatif sur ce dernier, surtout lors de périodes de crises politiques (coups d'État) ou économiques (à partir de la fin des années 1970). Même la lutte commune de libération nationale, celle de Guinée-Bissau/Cap-Vert, n'a pas été un ciment assez fort pour empêcher les «divorces» fracassants.

Cette situation est aussi le fondement d'une opposition résolue des classes dirigeantes à toute approche «supranationale» des problèmes de la sous-région. Elle introduit, très tôt, dans les relations inter-étatiques une dimension personnelle qui, à bien des égards, explique tantôt les conflits entre certains États sous le couvert de la «défense des droits de la nation» tantôt les essais sans lendemain de politique «unitaire», au gré des relations personnelles des Chefs d'État.

On comprend donc que, depuis 1960, l'Afrique de l'ouest ait été le théâtre de quelques conflits frontaliers, de violences politiques, de «pogroms» contre des populations dites «étrangères». Se mêlent ici des causes multiples et des manifestations diverses qui relèvent de violences tantôt sanglantes (affrontements de soldats ou opérations de police) tantôt simplement verbales (guerres des ondes) ou administratives (expulsions des ressortissants de l'ennemi ; fermetures de frontières ; rappels d'ambassadeurs). Se repèrent tous les signes d'une grave insécurité qui s'accompagne des risques d'instabilité des frontières et d'éclatement des communautés territoriales nées de la colonisation ; car, à cause de la grande porosité des frontières, on retrouve ici, pêle-mêle, des revendications territoriales, l'accusation de trafics divers

(armes, drogue, etc), les accusations réciproques d'ingérence politique et d'aide aux rebellions, etc.

L'histoire post-coloniale—au sens institutionnel de ce terme—est ainsi marquée par l'échec des politiques de construction de l'État-Nation lorsque celles-ci excluent le rôle actif du citoyen au profit de quasi «aristocraties» locales. Les conflits extérieurs et les crises économiques sont parfois le prétexte de cet échec. Les ambiguïtés entre logique de rupture (par exemple la tropicalisation du libéralisme ou du socialisme) et logique de continuité (les perceptions de l'État comme à l'époque coloniale) sont permanentes. Les violences populaires et guerres civiles sont les conséquences visibles de cet échec. Elles posent le problème des nouveaux paradigmes de la construction de l'État-Nation dans l'Afrique de l'Ouest contemporaine.

Le temps des nations emboîtées ou la question de l'intégration sous-régionale (1957/1960–1999)

La troisième phase est celle des «identités régionalisées» pour être des «nations emboîtées». Elle commence dans les années 1920-1930 avec l'appropriation lente du discours panafricaniste par les Africains pour s'affirmer lors des regroupements régionaux ; ces derniers sont compris peu à peu comme espaces de «nationalités plurielles et emboîtées». Le Plan d'Action de Lagos (avril 1980) est ici le véritable point de départ de cette stratégie et de cette perspective historique.

Au début des années 1990, il a été dénombré plus de 200 organisations régionales et sous-régionales en Afrique (Coussy et Hugon éd. 1991). Près de 80 pourcent de ces organisations sont intergouvernementales. Par ce nombre imposant d'organismes créés, les États africains traduisent une volonté au moins de coopération continentale sans équivalent dans le reste du tiers monde. Pourtant, comme le constatait Y. Berthelot (1994:13), «aucun des regroupements régionaux du tiers monde n'a atteint aujourd'hui un poids tel qu'il puisse affecter le système commercial ou accroître significativement le pouvoir de négociation de ses membres dans des négociations bilatérales ou multilatérales». Ce constat est encore valable aujourd'hui, au moins pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Certains analystes (Blanc, Hugon et Pourcet 2000) ont même vu récemment dans ces organisations interafricaines des «carrosseries sans moteur», à cause des résultats médiocres obtenus en matière d'intégration économique.

Faut-il voir ici l'inutilité des regroupements régionaux en Afrique et affirmer qu'ils appartiennent aux «solutions économiques du passé» (O'Brien 1992) à cause de la globalisation ? Rien n'est moins sûr ; car, même au strict plan économique, il est constaté partout que c'est la proximité spatiale qui fonde d'abord tous les échanges et toutes les relations humaines ; et rien ne

démontre encore, sauf pour des minorités financières et économiques, qu'il n'en sera pas ainsi dans les siècles à venir, malgré les progrès techniques. Par ailleurs, l'état actuel des organisations s'explique par leur histoire ; et celle-ci n'est pas que celle des seules relations interafricaines. L'idée d'intégration régionale africaine doit donc être distinguée de celle de regroupement économique en Afrique.

Mais il faut attendre véritablement l'après-deuxième guerre mondiale pour voir se développer tout un courant d'idées en faveur de l'unité africaine et de l'intégration politique des peuples africains. Longtemps, cette dimension politique l'emporte dans toutes les analyses. Ainsi en Afrique française par exemple, on connaît les débats très vifs sur la question des «exécutifs fédéraux» et contre la «balkanisation» de cet empire colonial. L'écho des débats idéologiques qui marquent la guerre froide et fondent les premières thèses «anti-impérialistes» de l'après Seconde Guerre mondiale autant que le «tiers-mondisme» des années 1960–1970 (C. Furtado, Fr. Perroux, G. Myrdal, etc.) a développé davantage l'idée que l'intégration africaine était la meilleure alternative à la dépendance dans laquelle l'Occident tenait l'Afrique. Il faut à l'Afrique «des États fédéraux où l'actuelle distinction en zone française, britannique ou portugaise n'aura plus de place» (Tevodjéré 1958). Les théories de la dépendance économique fondée sur l'opposition «centre/périphérie» (Amin 1970, 1973) alimentent aussi cette justification de l'intégration qui ne doit pas être que politique, mais également économique. Elle doit être un acte de rupture avec le mode de dépendance qu'impose le système capitaliste à l'Afrique et être rationnellement organisée sur une base d'abord régionale avant d'être continentale (Diagne 1973) pour avoir des chances de succès. Plus tard, sont approfondies d'autres justifications de l'intégration régionale africaine, plus fondées sur l'histoire du continent et dans la mouvance de l'idée que les colonisations européennes de l'Afrique n'avaient été que des «parenthèses» (Diouf 1985, Barry 1996, etc.). Elles militent pour la disparition des frontières héritées de la colonisation.

On voit par ces cheminements combien la pensée panafricaniste est restée vivace et dynamique, autant sous la domination coloniale que dans les premières décennies de construction des nouveaux États africains. Mais les objectifs et stratégies plus économiques semblent de plus en plus au centre de la réflexion à partir du Plan d'Action de Lagos de 1980. L'intégration économique régionale est présentée comme l'une des principales stratégies de progrès pour l'Afrique. Avec la profonde dépression économique dans laquelle plonge progressivement le continent, on constate aussi que les années 1980 sont marquées par le recul des tiers-mondismes et la montée en puissance du néo-libéralisme. Jusqu'à la fin des années 1990, la logique politique de l'intégration est plus nettement décalée de la logique économique et financière

qui, du fait des difficultés pressantes, semble définitivement l'emporter dans les analyses de l'intégration régionale ou sous-régionale.

Les années 1990–99, années peut-être de maturation et de transition, mais certainement années de luttes sociales et politiques plus vives en raison de la popularisation de la violence, laissent imaginer que l'Afrique a les moyens de s'engager dans des voies nouvelles de la régionalisation de son développement. Deux conférences africains montrent en tout cas la conscience qu'en ont les dirigeants Africains : le sommet de l'OUA de juillet 1990 à Addis-Abeba au cours duquel, prenant acte des bouleversements en cours, les chefs d'État reconnaissent la nécessité d'impliquer effectivement les populations dans la gestion des affaires publiques. L'année suivante, à Abuja (juin 1991) le sommet de l'OUA se termine par la signature du traité instituant la Communauté économique africaine ; il s'agit notamment de créer, dans un délai de 30 ans, un marché commun africain, un parlement, une banque centrale, un fonds monétaire africain et une cour fédérale. C'est un tournant dans l'approche intégrative en Afrique. Mais en même temps, les faits montrent qu'au cours de la décennie, l'Afrique de l'Ouest n'a pas rompu totalement avec ses vieux démons.

En effet, l'échelle régionale des politiques de développement implique un haut niveau d'interdépendance économique, de cohésion dans les méthodes de gouvernement et d'adhésion aux mêmes valeurs de bonne conduite de la chose publique, une communication accrue et plus d'échanges entre les peuples appelés à créer une communauté élargie, une capacité, toujours en éveil, à prévenir et gérer efficacement les conflits qui surviendraient dans la dite région ; car, sans sécurité collective, il n'y a pas de communauté possible, donc pas d'intégration, en toute souveraineté, de peuples libres. Or, la fin du XXe siècle est marquée par une succession de crises, de drames et de conflits sanglants, à l'intérieur comme à l'extérieur des États. La nouveauté des conflits de la décennie 1990 réside dans le fait qu'il s'agit de conflits qui, presque tous, partent de l'implosion politique (exigence démocratique) et sociale (contre la violence d'État sans amélioration des conditions de vie) d'un État pour faire tâche d'huile dans toute la région : la crise libérienne contamine la Sierra Leone (1997–1998), touche la Guinée (conflit entre les deux pays en 1998–2000) et s'exprime aussi en Côte d'Ivoire depuis le coup d'État de décembre 1999 où les exactions contre des populations immigrées provoquent des réactions «nationalistes» dans les pays voisins (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger). L'irrédentisme casamançais envenime les relations entre la Guinée-Bissau et le Sénégal, provoque la déstabilisation de la Guinée-Bissau. Les mécanismes d'intégration africaine conduits jusque-là par les États à travers des organisations intergouvernementales sont ainsi bloqués.

Panne «d'intégration par la haut» ; mais aussi «panne d'intégration par le bas» ; car, utilisée par les élites ou une partie des classes moyennes comme stratégie de conquête ou de préservation du pouvoir ou comme stratégie de captation d'une partie de la rente financière encore disponible dans l'État, le discours «ethno-nationaliste» ou politico-religieux fait des ravages dans les classes populaires surtout urbaines. «Les peuples africains sont pris dans le piège de l'ethnisation de la vie politique... Valeur refuge..., l'ethnisme est le ferment de la fanatisation, de la manipulation criminelle de la jeunesse et de l'apprentissage de la violence».¹⁴

Conclusion

Si l'articulation «frontières/identité collective/intégration des peuples» a été imparfaite au cours des deux siècles passés en Afrique de l'Ouest, c'est faute d'avoir vu ici s'articuler l'espace politique en même temps que les réseaux de relations sociales comme principe majeur de la cohésion de communautés vivant dans cet espace. La conquête coloniale introduit ici une césure importante dans le champ du pouvoir africain et de sa géopolitique. Les États nés de la colonisation n'ont retenu que la nouvelle logique de frontière, moins pour en tirer toutes les implications favorables au développement sous-régional que pour se faire la guerre, conduire des politiques d'intégration «nationale» déséquilibrées et fondées sur la négation des droits du citoyen à réaliser justement cette intégration, la plus large possible à l'échelle de la région ouest-africaine.

La principale particularité du processus de formation de la nation aujourd'hui réside dans le fait qu'il s'agit d'un processus plus institutionnel que social, à la différence de ce qu'a connu l'Europe des «nationalités» dans le même temps. Le processus actuel d'intégration sous-régionale, aujourd'hui en panne en Afrique de l'Ouest, devrait tirer des enseignements des premières décennies post-coloniales pour ne pas être seulement l'affaire des décideurs politiques. Il faudrait donc que, partout, le citoyen recouvre tous ses droits et que soit promue une citoyenneté régionale. Chacun serait ainsi en meilleure position pour s'initier à tous les enjeux de l'intégration régionale et en porter les combats futurs. Comme l'affirmaient les organisateurs du Forum sur le Développement de l'Afrique en 2002, «l'intégration régionale est avant tout un processus politique qui part du principe que les intérêts souverains sont mieux défendus par une action régionale. Une ferme volonté politique est donc la condition première de l'intégration régionale».¹⁵

Notes

1. Cheick Amadou Lobbo et ses successeurs dans le Macina entre 1818 et 1863 ; El Hadj Omar et son fils Ahmadou dans le Soudan central entre

- 1852 et 1880 ; Maba Diakhou ; Mamadou Lamine en Sénégal dans les années 1980 ; Samori Touré dans le dernier quart du siècle ; etc.
2. El Hadj Omar est exemplaire de ce point de vue comme le montre l'excellent ouvrage de Robinson, D., 1988, *La guerre sainte d'al-Hajj Umar, Le Soudan occidental au milieu du XIX^e siècle*, trad, Paris : Karthala.
 3. T. E. Bowdich, en 1816, J.G. Christaller en 1872 ; M.-J. Bonnat en 1869-1874.
 4. Peul du Macina avec Cheikh Amadou contre Bambara animistes ; populations islamisées à dominante toucouleur avec El Hadj Omar ; noyau ashanti ou noyau fon d'Abomey.
 5. Communautés villageoises fondées sur un ou deux lignages, «Démocraties de classes d'âge», sociétés de classes d'âge à système initiatique, confédérations guerrières forgées sur la base d'ancêtres mythiques, etc.
 6. Pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest française l'africanisme naît à partir de Faïdherbe dans les années 1850-1970.
 7. Cf. Les sélections sociales, Paris 1896, cité dans J.-L. Amselle, 1995.
 8. In *Revue Université des annales*, 21 novembre 1956.
 9. CFAO, SCOA semblent avoir vu dans la «territorialisation» accrue des pouvoirs un moyen d'éviter les prélèvements fiscaux qui s'opéraient au profit des services centraux de l'AOF.
 10. Cf tous les numéros de *L'étudiant d'Afrique noire des années 1954-57*.
 11. Cf. des journaux comme *The Gold Coast Nation* en 1915.
 12. Après 1968, création de nombreux centres universitaires nationaux à la faveur des premiers troubles étudiants à Dakar et Abidjan ; certains comme la Guinée et à un moindre degré le Mali, instaurent l'enseignement des langues nationales.
 13. Plus d'une quarantaine de coups d'État entre 1961 et 1990.
 14. J.-P. Ngoupandé, «Afrique, un chaos désespérant», in *Le Figaro*, 11 décembre 2002.
 15. «Définir les priorités de l'intégration régionale», Forum du développement de l'Afrique, 3^e édition, Commission économique pour l'Afrique, Addis Abéba, février-mars 2002,

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Anglo-Saxonism and Gallicism in Nation Building in Africa: The Case of Bilingual Cameroon and the Senegambia Confederation in Historical and Contemporary Perspective

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Abstract

This article is a comparative study of the impact of the colonial presence in nation building in Africa. The author argues that the colonial presence created identity markers and mindsets which sometimes facilitated but most of the time complicated the nation-building endeavours of African statesmen. The inherited Anglo-Saxon values and Gallic legacies in bilingual Cameroon on the one hand, and Senegal and The Gambia, which is located inside its belly, on the other hand, pose problems in different ways. In the case of Cameroon, the Anglo-French partition of the territory, which was originally a German protectorate, was transcended by the political elite of the two territories to achieve a reunified sovereign state in 1961 owing to a common German colonial past that generated a historical memory of one Cameroon. But Anglophone-Francophone differences in postcolonial Cameroon pose nation-building problems. In the case of Senegal and The Gambia, the British recommended close union between the two states for purposes of economic viability. But the colonially inherited values of the two states supplanted their common African ethnic bonds and militated against political integration. Thus, in both Cameroon and the Sene-Gambia, English and French colonial values constitute identity markers that pose a great challenge to nation building.

Résumé

Cet article est une étude comparative sur l'impact de la présence coloniale dans le processus de construction de la nation en Afrique. L'auteur affirme que la présence coloniale a contribué à la création de marqueurs identitaires et de mentalités spécifiques qui ont parfois facilité, mais également le plus souvent, compliqué les efforts de construction de la nation par les hommes d'État africains.

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Les valeurs anglo-saxonnes et gauloises héritées par les populations de l'État bilingue du Cameroun, d'une part, et d'autre part, par celles du Sénégal et de la Gambie, une enclave du Sénégal, posent des problèmes à divers niveaux. Dans le cas du Cameroun, la division anglo-française du territoire, qui était à l'origine un protectorat allemand, a été transcendée par l'élite politique de ces deux territoires, qui ont ainsi été fusionnés en un seul état souverain en 1961, du fait d'un passé colonial allemand commun, ce qui a permis de constituer la mémoire historique commune du Cameroun ainsi réunifié. Cependant, les différences entre Anglophones et Francophones, dans le Cameroun postcolonial posent diverses questions liées à la construction de la nation. Dans les cas du Sénégal et de la Gambie, les Britanniques avaient recommandé une étroite union entre les deux états pour atteindre une certaine viabilité économique. Toutefois, les valeurs coloniales héritées par ces deux pays ont vite supplanté les liens ethniques communs entre ces deux états et constitué un frein à l'intégration politique. Ainsi, aussi bien au Cameroun qu'en Sénégambie, les valeurs coloniales anglaises et françaises constituent des marqueurs identitaires solides posant un réel défi à la construction de la nation.

Introduction

The mechanisms for the creation of modern African states are too well known with the Berlin West African Congress of 1884-1885 as the great watershed for the take-off. These European-created polities represent an absurd logical frame as far as the relocation of Africans was concerned. What ultimately emerged as inter-state boundaries were, according to Asiwaju (1978, 1984a&b), artificialities at every point, as kingdoms, ethnic groups and families were dissected arbitrarily according to European whims and caprices. Some of the European-created states were so ridiculously small in terms of either land area or population that their existence as sovereign states could hardly go unquestioned. Although the African Union¹ was born in 2002 with the intention of breaking down inter-state African boundaries in favour of greater integration, differences bequeathed by the colonial presence are profound and they have tended to compound Africa's multifaceted problems of nation building.

This paper examines how the colonial presence in Africa created identity markers and mind-sets in the shape of inherited languages and cultures, which sometimes facilitated but most of the time complicated the nation-building endeavours of African statesmen. It focuses on two contrasting cases of the impact of Anglo-Saxon and Gallic values on the building of the nation-state project in Africa—bilingual Cameroon on the one hand, and between Senegal and The Gambia on the other. In the case of Cameroon, the Anglo-French partition was transcended by the political elite of the two territories through reunification owing to shared historical memories, experiences and common

ethnic identities and bonds. In the case of Senegal and The Gambia their colonial inherited Francophoneness and Anglophoneness militated against political union despite the fact that they constituted the same people. In both Cameroon and Senegambia, English and French pose a great challenge to nation building.

The modern Cameroon nation-state is an interesting case study of the question of forging a nation with conflicting and contradictory identities. It displays a multiple identity morphology reflected by its over 250 linguistically identifiable ethnic groups (Tadadjeu 1990:5; Fonlon 1967:196). To this fragmentary ethnic picture of the Cameroonian society,² can be added such crosscutting cleavages of religion (Muslim versus traditional religionist; Christian versus Muslim and so forth); economic modes (pastoral versus agricultural); and different levels of economic development (considerable primary and secondary industry in the south versus little in the north). The ethnic conflicts and cleavages that rock Cameroon are compounded by an ever-widening Anglophone-Francophone identification syndrome that is directly attributable to the legacies of colonialism and is visibly the nation's Achilles' heel and fault line.

Like Canada, Cameroon shares a heritage of an English and French colonial past, and English and French have come to be its official languages. But to the overwhelming number of Canadians, English and French are native languages and are held dearly as their cultural heritage. This is not the same with the Cameroonian situation where English and French are alien languages and are superimposed on a mosaic of over 250 African languages and dialects (Kom 1995:146; Fonlon 1976; Ateh 1996). In the words of Kom, *'l'anglais et le français sont et demeurent des langues étrangères que maîtrise une petite elite ne dépassant guère le 10 à 15 % de la population du pays'* (English and French are and remain foreign languages which a tiny elite that hardly exceed 10–15 percent of the population understand) (Kom 1995:146). Nonetheless, these English and French foreign languages have the capacity of generating conflicts and this has been the Cameroon experience since independence.

English and French serve as a modern identity variable and a source of perpetual friction and tension between Anglophones and Francophones. Since the 1990s, Anglophone Cameroon 'has been at the forefront of ethno-regional protests and demands for the re-arrangement of state power' (Konings and Nyamnjoh (2003:2). These authors opine that:

there appear to be sufficient grounds to justify the claims of Anglophone movements that the nation-state project after reunification has been driven by the firm determination of the Francophone political elite to dominate the

Anglophone minority... and erase all cultural and institutional foundations of Anglophone identity (p. 96).

They note that Anglophones have been regularly relegated to inferior positions in national decision-making process and have been constantly under-represented in the various spheres of public life. This graphical presentation constitutes the Anglophone problem in Cameroon. However, there are circumstances, especially election moments, when Anglophones and Francophones cooperate more because of their African linkages than their Anglophonesty and Francophoneness. Politicians tend to mobilise votes on ethnic bases across the Anglophone-Francophone divide, thereby bringing the two groups together against other Cameroonian groups with whom they do not share ethnic ties. Cameroonians therefore swing between primordial and modern identities depending on the circumstances and this love-hate contradiction has had the unanticipated result of generating national cohesion while at the same time exposing the possible fault line along which an eruption can occur.

The Anglo-French colonial partition of Senegal and The Gambia resulted in the creation of an Anglophone Gambian state in the belly of Francophone Senegal. Although the Gambians and Senegalese share a commonality of geography, history, ethnicity and traditional socio-political organisation, the two states are held apart by the colonial inherited languages of English and French. At the penultimate stage of decolonisation, the British imperialists recognised the arbitrariness of granting sovereignty to a small non-viable state like The Gambia and tried to rectify this anomaly by encouraging union between The Gambia and Senegal. But the small size of The Gambia, combined with its Anglophonesty and Francophoneness of Senegal, militated against this move. The unicity of Senegambian geography, history, ethnicity, languages and traditional socio-political organisations were sacrificed in favour of colonially inherited values.

An interesting observation that comes out of this study is that the primordial linkages or the historical memories between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians melted the colonial divide, resulting in the reunification of the two territories. But Anglophone Gambia and Francophone Senegal, with a dual colonial heritage like Cameroon, are more intensely intertwined but have not been able to constitute a single nation because of colonial differences. The Senegambian confederation that was constituted in 1982 was unfortunately short-lived owing to colonial inherited differences and the fear of hegemonic tendencies by the senior partner in the union. Senegal and The Gambia are two sisterly republics that are bound by the sameness of their Africanity to constitute a single nation but have failed to be so owing to the

Francophoness of the Senegalese and the Anglophoneness of the Gambians. Since The Gambia is located right inside Senegal, nowhere is union more required, urgent and easy to achieve in Africa than between these two states. Like Cameroon, the Senegambia peoples were partitioned between the French and British for their imperial purposes and not in the interest of the African peoples.

Who was behind the unification of Senegal and The Gambia? The initiative for fusion came from the colonising power at the penultimate stage of the independence of The Gambia, while the political elite barely paid lip service to it. Consequently, The Gambia acceded to independence in 1965 and its relationship with Senegal was a catalogue of treaties and cooperation agreements. However, the two countries moved closer to political union in 1982 by the Senegambian confederation, which was merely a political marriage of convenience following an attempted *coup d'état* against the Jawara government in The Gambia. The colonial past and size of The Gambia, and the fear of its political elite of being swallowed by Senegal under the pretext of greater integration, militated against the survival of the confederation and it rapidly collapsed in October 1989. This comparative study of nation building endeavours in Cameroon and the Senegambia, which inherited the English and French language and cultures is of great importance given that the African union that was constituted in 2002 can operate smoothly, only if one takes into consideration the colonial factor as an important dynamic that must be understood.

The Colonial Mould, the Challenge of the Anglo-French Colonial Status Quo and the Making of Bilingual Cameroon

Modern Cameroon, like other African countries, is a European creation. Cameroon became a German protectorate in 1884 after the famous nineteenth century Scramble for Africa. During the First World War in Africa, German Cameroon was conquered by the Allies and divided disproportionately into the British (western) and French (eastern) spheres. The British acquired just one-fifth of German Cameroon, composed of two discontinuous strips of territory along the eastern border with Nigeria, with a total area of 88,036 square kilometres, while France received the remaining four-fifths with a land area of 431,845 square kilometres (Mbuagbaw 1987:78-79; Ngoh 1996:126). This unequal partition of German Cameroon between the British and French ultimately gave rise to an Anglophone minority and a Francophone majority in the new Cameroon nation-state that emerged after reunification in 1961.

During the period of separate administration under Britain and France, the two Cameroons enjoyed an international status, first as mandated territories

of the League of Nations, and later as trust territories of the United Nations (Gardinier 1963; Wright 1930). The Anglo-French colonial boundary, like all colonial boundaries in Africa, was artificial at every point (Asiwaju 1984a, 1984b; Atem 1984). The boundary separated ethnic groups, families and farmlands, and attempts by the British and French colonial authorities to erect and impose customs restrictions between African peoples were resented (Chem-Langhee & Njeuma 1980:26-30).

The ethnic groups in Cameroon that were separated by the Anglo-French colonial boundary are those clustered in the southwestern quadrant in which is situated the Anglophone North West and South West Provinces and the Francophone West and Littoral Provinces. The majority of Cameroon's 250 ethnic groups are clustered in this southwestern quadrant which is geographically located along the Cameroon mountain and plateau chain, and is historically an ethnic shatter zone dividing the Niger and Congo river basins (Courade 1971; Le Vine 1976:272; Ardener 1996).

Which were the separated African ethnic groups from south to north? Along the coastal region of the Anglophone South West Province are located ethnic groups, which have close affinities to those of the Francophone Littoral Province of which the most important are the Bakolle, Bamboko and the Bakweri—all offshoots of the Douala in Francophone Cameroon. Further inland, the Mungo, Balong, Bakossi and Mbo ethnic groups in the South West Province span into the Littoral Province (Ardener 1996). The Lebialem people who are further north of the Manyu Division of the South West Province are a simple extension of the Bamileke people of the Francophone West Province.

The Anglophones of the North West Province and the Francophones of the West Province equally have close ethnic ties. The zigzag migratory movements of the peoples of these provinces since pre-colonial times created an ethnic continuum between the two provinces. The Tikar peoples are found in the two provinces. The kingdom of Nso in the North West Province and the neighbouring sultanate of Bamoum in the Francophone West Province claim a common place of origin from the Tikar country of Rifem (Tardit 1960, 1970; Chilver 1973; Ghomsu 1972). The leaders of these two kingdoms refer to themselves as brothers and their presence is mandatory in each other's territory when certain important traditional ceremonies have to be performed.

These ethnically related Anglophone and Francophone groups or kingdoms are those Cameroonians who under one circumstance are mobilised by, or act because of, deep-seated loyalties. Under other circumstances, they are mobilised by or act because of their modern acquired identities in the shape of English and French. Put differently, at one point these peoples invoke

their African-ness with inspirations from their deep-seated ties. At other moments they are pure Anglophones or Francophones.

The propinquity of Cameroonians of the southwestern quadrant comprising Anglophones and Francophones was underpinned by the keen interest they took in the reunification struggle in the post-Second World War era (Amaazee 1994; Awasom 2000) in contrast to the other Francophones of the Centre-South, East and Grand North Provinces who are not linked to the Anglophones. The Francophone Littoral and West Provinces (neighbours to the Anglophones) constituted the stronghold of the leftist Union de populations du Cameroun (UPC) party, formed in 1948 on the platform of immediate independence and reunification of the British and French Cameroons. When the French disbanded the UPC in 1955, the party moved to the British Cameroons from where it continued to operate until it was compelled to move elsewhere³ (Mbembe 1985; Joseph 1977; Etana 1996). During their sojourn in the British Cameroons, the Francophone politicians behaved as if the Anglo-French international boundary was irrelevant and the two Cameroons were a single country.⁴

Shortly before and after the independence of the French Cameroons in 1960, the UPC nationalists, who were engaged in an armed struggle against the pro-French Ahmadou Ahidjo regime, easily used the territory of their kith and kin of the British Cameroons as a safe haven. Reunificationist forces, championed by John Ngu Foncha's Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) were equally strong in the British Cameroons, partly because of shared historical and ethnic ties with their Francophone neighbour. The British were overtly against the reunification of the two Cameroons⁵ (cf. Chem-Langhee 1976; Awasom 2000) because they had all along prepared that territory for integration with their Nigerian colony. Foncha therefore had to rely heavily and almost exclusively on the financial and logistic support of Francophone southern politicians and to a lesser extent Francophone émigrés resident in the British Cameroons.⁶ In essence, the Cameroonians in the southwestern quadrant were the foremost challengers of the Anglo-French status quo, and they co-operated with each other to obliterate the obnoxious colonial divide through the reunification dream. Despite the closeness of the Senegalese and the Gambians, no such similar development was recorded.

Foncha's victory in the United Nations-organised February 1961 plebiscites, in which the British Southern Cameroons⁷ voted to reunify with La République du Cameroun, was clearly the fruits of political cooperation between the ethnically related peoples of the southwestern quadrant across the Anglo-French colonial boundary. It is precisely for this reason that Ahidjo became scared of reunification, which brought together Anglophones and southern Francophones. Ahidjo saw in the reunification of the two Cameroons

the increase in the political constituency of his southern political enemies. The British Southern Cameroonians who had opted to join La République du Cameroun were a simple ethnic extension of the rebellious peoples of southern Francophone Cameroon who were Ahidjo's die-hard opponents.

Foncha had won the plebiscite by a huge margin with 233,571 votes for La République du Cameroun against only 97,741 for Nigeria (Le Vine 1961). Consequently, Foncha emerged as a political force and was being wooed publicly and privately by 'both the Ahidjo government and opposition groups in and out of the National Assembly of Francophone Cameroun' (Le Vine 1961). Foncha started holding talks with his southern allies in Francophone Cameroon comprising Prince Douala Manga Bell, Dr Bebey Eyidi, Daniel Kemajou, Soppo Prisso and UPC leaders inside Francophone Cameroon and in exile. These talks caused panic within the Ahidjo government circle as it was highly suspected that some sort of south-south coalition of the people of the southwestern quadrant, comprising the Anglophones and Ahidjo's southern Francophone political enemies, was in the offing (Le Vine 1962).

The new coalition that was taking shape was a direct consequence of reunification and was a potential explosive that could unseat the Ahidjo regime in any future elections in a united Cameroon. This possibility haunted Ahidjo and his colleagues, and it is against this background that Ahidjo was upset by the loss of the British Northern Cameroons region. This region was of the same ethnic and religious extraction as Ahidjo's native Northern Cameroon region and it was lost to Nigeria in the UN-organised plebiscite. Without his own kith and kin of the British Northern Cameroons to bolster his position, Ahidjo had to rely on other survival techniques based on the institutionalisation of an authoritarian system of governance, which need not delay us here (cf. Bayart 1978:82-90, 1985, 1973:125-44, 1978:5-35). Suffice it to state that when the bilingual Cameroon Federation took off on 1 October 1961, Ahidjo prevailed on Foncha that they should restrict the activities of their political parties exclusively within their respective territories because of the prospects of the realignment of the Francophones and their Anglophone kith and kin in the southwestern quadrant.

Under the Ahidjo-Foncha entente, Ahidjo's Union Camerounaise (UC) party had to operate exclusively in Francophone East Cameroon, while Foncha's KNDP had to restrict its own activities exclusively within Anglophone West Cameroon (Bayart 1978:84). The threat of an enlarged KNDP comprising Anglophones and Francophones of the southwestern quadrant was therefore averted. Throughout Ahidjo's presidential tenure of office (1961-1982), he succeeded in containing deep-seated ethnic affiliations between Cameroonians of the southwestern quadrant from snowballing into

a political force that could challenge him. As we shall see subsequently, Biya was unable to prevent this realignment in the 1990s.

Essentially the ethnic continuum and cooperation between Anglophones and Francophones in the southwestern quadrant was one important level of identification whose source is pre-colonial and indigenous. This indigenous or traditional identity variable therefore played a crucial role in bringing about the birth of a reunified Cameroon of an Anglophone minority and a Francophone majority and would create a political bridge across the Anglophone-Francophone divide.

The Colonial Mould, the Partition and Independence of the Senegambian into two Sovereign States and Considerations for Integration

The Senegambia region was subjected to similar European experiences starting from the fifteenth century with the Portuguese, after which the Dutch, British and French followed. The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the entry of the Senegambia into the colonial era and Senegal and The Gambia fell to France and Britain respectively.

Like Cameroon, the Senegambia peoples were partitioned between the French and British for their imperial purposes and not in the interest of the African peoples. Britain occupied the River Gambia firstly for strategic economic reasons and later for military reasons related to the disbanding of the slave trade. French presence in the four coastal settlements of St. Louis, Rufisque, Dakar and Gorée resulted in the granting of the franchise to educated Senegalese in 1848 as French citizens (Oloruntimehin 1981:33). However, it was only in 1889 that the French and British actually demarcated the boundaries between their respective territories of The Gambia and Senegal. Following the conquest of Wolof, Tukolor, Samori Toure, and the Mossi, the French set up a single administration for French West Africa in 1895 under a Governor-General.

The French and British partitioned Senegal and The Gambia, which actually constitute the same geographical, historical and ethnic region, given that Senegal actually sandwiches the tiny strip of Gambian territory. The present-day Republic of The Gambia is a petty enclave in Senegal which envelopes it to the north and south banks of the River Gambia from which it derives its name. With a total land area of 11,300 square kilometres, the country represents one of the poorest handiworks of the colonial state-building enterprise because of its size, artificiality, non-viability and ever-increasing pauperisation of its population. It is a strip of land, in the literary sense of the word, of a length of 470 kilometres, and is only 24 kilometres wide in some places along the navigable length of the River Gambia, which dissects

the country. The Gambia is right inside the belly of Senegal and nowhere is union more required and easy to achieve in Africa than between these two states, given that almost every Gambian has a Senegalese blood relative. As H.R. Jarret observes, 'the very elongated shape of the Gambia makes it an extremely awkward country to regard even as a whole national region'.

As a natural geographical unit, the Senegambia can be divided into at least seven regions: Futa Toro, the Quala, the Coastal, the Cayorean, the Savannah and the Lower Casamance. The ethnic groups are the same and the most important ones are the Mandika, Fula, Wolof, Jola, Serer and the Sarahuli. The languages they speak are quite similar.

The socio-political structures of the Senegambian peoples show a great similarity. There are at least four distinct status groups—nobles, freemen, artisans and slaves. For the most part, this social status was ascribed at birth but was slowly modified over the years by societal factors such as marriage, wealth, education and religion.

After a series of negotiations between the British and French, the Senegambia was carved into two distinct territories in 1889 and placed under separate administrations. The colonial demarcation did not automatically disconnect the Senegambian people who were too intertwined. The inhabitants on either side of the frontier had carried on their business as before with little regard to the niceties of non-violation of the other states territorial integrity (Sonko-Godwin 2003).

The Senegambian region constitutes a relatively impoverished region without important mineral resources or a strong agricultural base. Its mono-cultural economy is hinged principally on groundnuts whose prices in the international market often fluctuated. The logic of regional integration made sense and the French unsuccessfully attempted a Federation of French West African states including Senegal which flopped, giving way for the independence of Senegal in 1960.

The independence of Senegal raised the issue of the future of the Gambia, which was a piece of impoverished territory that could hardly stand on its own. Until the late 1950s, independence for the Gambia was not seriously contemplated owing to the poor state of the territory. Under a plan known as the Malta scheme, the British had contemplated integrating The Gambia in the politics of the United Kingdom by sending three elected Gambian representatives to the United Kingdom parliament, but the arrangement failed.

The British realised that the 1889 border settlement with France, which resulted in the birth of modern Gambia, handicapped The Gambia more than Senegal for the territory was too small and artificial to be economically viable. The practicability of The Gambia's independence was therefore in doubt. Thus, from 1958 the British government had hoped for the arrangement of

some form of closer association between The Gambia and Senegal. Governor Edward Windley (1957-62) favoured voluntary integration with Senegal as an answer to doubts about The Gambia's sustainability as an independent state. Before assuming office in Banjul, Governor Windley met with the French colonial officials in Paris, and once in Africa, he travelled to Dakar for informal talks. The discussions focussed on association between the two territories as a technical rather than a political matter. In essence, the British saw integration with Senegal as indispensable and enlightened the Gambian political elite on the matter. Gambians were therefore made to understand that they were inheriting a national territory and boundary that did not make any sense. Political leaders therefore started acting on the situation.

In August 1959, I.M. Garba Jahumba, the leader of the Gambian Muslim League, indicated in a broadcast on radio Dakar that The Gambia would like to join the Mali Federation of which Senegal was a member. The British therefore supported regular inter-ministerial meetings between the Njie administration in The Gambia and the newly independent state of Senegal. In November, the Legislative Council of the Gambia agreed that the idea really needed to be seriously examined. The Gambian political elite therefore inherited the idea of Senegambia integration and used it at various times in the early 1960s as an instrument of political positioning and not as a genuine political goal. P.S. Njie and D.K. Jawara variously castigated and upheld union with Senegal, depending on whether they were in or out of office. In office they used it to obtain Senegalese support. Out of office, they raised the alarm that the idea was a threat to the autonomy of The Gambia.

Starting from 1961, the UP leader, P.S. Njie, moved towards integration with Senegal, with the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee to serve as a permanent link between the two countries to encourage Wolof unity and protect Njie's political lifeline. The Senegalese supported this scheme as a way of allaying the fears of The Gambia of being swamped by their more populous and richer partner. It would serve as a basis for a customs union, which the Senegalese felt would curtail smuggling from The Gambia, which was negatively affecting their economy. The committee was expected to act as a bulwark against separatist tendencies in the Casamance, the Southern part of Senegal separated by The Gambia from the rest of Senegal. Apart from discussions and agreements confined to improving road infrastructure and telecommunication as a necessary step for political and economic union, the committee achieved little success. Meanwhile, Jawara's PPP as the opposition was busy mobilising local feelings against a precipitate comprehensive integration with Senegal.

The successor administration of Dawda Jawara, which came to power after the 1962 general elections, reinvigorated closer integration with Senegal against which it had previously mobilised local opinion. The Inter-Ministerial Committee continued to discuss questions such as postage rates, collaboration in the orthography of local languages and formalities of moving cattle across their common frontier. In October 1962 a joint communiqué was signed by the two governments briefly indicating their willingness and that of the British government to enter into fuller union, and in 1963 the two governments commissioned the United Nations to examine the prospects of union between the two countries.

Both The Gambia and Senegal made a request to the United Nations for assistance on how to achieve integration between the territories with different colonial backgrounds. In a bid to allay the Gambians' fears of the Senegalese, the Gambian government issued a statement to accompany the communiqué. The document indicated the objectives being pursued and defined in clear terms the limits of any concession the Government was prepared to make to the Senegalese. It underscored the principal areas that were to remain under Gambian control in the eventuality of union with Senegal: the responsibility for internal administration, the police, civil service and local government, the Gambian criminal and civil law, the educational system and the maintenance of close ties with the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. The Gambian government would also want to ensure that there was joint representation for matters for which responsibility might be apportioned and clear constitutional safeguards for its autonomy in order to protect the territory's distinctive background and identity. The Gambian people were still suspicious of the Senegalese and the opposition tried to exploit this situation to make political capital out of it. They attempted to stop any moves towards integration with Senegal in parliament and when the United Nations experts arrived in Banjul, they were given a hostile reception. Nonetheless, the United Nations published its report on the prospects of integration between Senegal and The Gambia in April 1964. The UN proposal on the matter was contained in the Van Moek Report, and both Governments met in Dakar to look at the document. The Van Moek Report proposed three options: the total integration of the Gambia with Senegal as the eighth region of the country, which Francophone Senegal supported; a loose federation which appealed to the Anglophone Gambians; and a compromise association which would promote gradual political integration by means of a functional cooperation (Diene-Njie 1996:37).

While pointing to the benefits of total integration in the long run, the document also provided information about the difficulties that were likely to two territories. The Report recognised the impracticability of immediate union

and instead placed greater hopes in some loose form of union, or failing that, a treaty of union between Dakar and Banjul. It is against this background that Jawara envisaged a federal union between an independent Gambian state and Senegal. While preserving a considerable degree of autonomy in local affairs, the Gambian government indicated a willingness to surrender defence and foreign policy to the future federal government. Jawara proposed a new tier of authority above the two-state government, which would be a seven-man council of the alliance with powers to formulate common policies in these two important areas of defence and foreign policy. The Gambians were bent on being sovereign in their domestic affairs in order to protect their political, economic and cultural autonomy and the union proposal they suggested to the Senegalese went beyond a mere association of the two states. As a senior member of the future union the Senegalese did not nurse any fears of losing their cultural distinctiveness like the Gambians. They favoured a closely-knit union to be carefully worked out with The Gambia in order to avoid the problems that led to the collapse of the Mali federation. On a political level, they favoured Gambian representation in the Senegalese National Assembly rather than an additional layer of authority. Economically, the Senegalese favoured a customs union, which would eliminate the vexatious smuggling issue. The Gambian government saw in the Senegalese proposal for a customs union an attempt to infringe on the economic autonomy of The Gambia. They interpreted the political arrangements of having Gambians in the Senegalese National Assembly as attempt to make Gambians a permanent minority.

The union question with Senegal featured prominently during the London constitutional conference on the independence of The Gambia that took place on 22 July 1964 under the chairmanship of Duncan Sands, the British Secretary of State for Colonies. The future relations between The Gambia and Senegal were discussed and two draft agreements on cooperation in foreign affairs and defence were prepared for endorsement by the Legislature of The Gambia. The British government welcomed this move as progress on the part of the Gambian government to establish closer relations with Senegal.

Despite the colonial push and the efforts of the elite in the direction of integration, independence was achieved in February 1965 without the issue of union with Senegal being given any concrete form beyond the signing of protocols. The best alternative for The Gambia and Senegal in 1965 would have been independence and union if independence was to make any economic sense. The Gambian government signed a series of bilateral agreements with the British, which ensured continuous economic assistance after independence and this concealed the reality of the non-sustainability of the state for a long time.

Essentially, The Gambia acquired sovereignty in 1965 without definitively resolving the question of integration with Senegal. Gambians felt that as a minority and as Anglophones, pushing integration too far at the expense of their autonomy in an independence framework would lead to their being drowned by the majority Francophone Senegalese. The Anglophone Cameroonians were not so fortunate because they conceded to the idea of integration with Francophone Cameroon before working out the question of their autonomy as Anglophones. Did the evolution of Anglophone and Francophones in the postcolonial state vindicate the Gambians who had resisted integration with Senegal?

Anglophone-Francophone Relations in the Postcolonial Cameroon State

The immediate paramount question, which confronted a reunified Cameroon, was: which group was to give up its inherited cultural identity in favour of the other, Anglophone Cameroonians or Francophone Cameroonians? Could the two cultures co-exist without competition, conflicts and contradictions or could there be a possible fusion? Anglophones and Francophones had inherited different political, social, administrative and cultural traditions, which came to stand out conspicuously as their distinguishing modern identities.

In pursuing the reunification objective before independence the Anglophone statesmen had clearly indicated their determination to retain their Anglo-Saxon identity in the shape of their political culture and style, language, law, education and administration. During the Founban Constitutional Conference that was held in July 1961 to determine a constitution for a reunified Cameroon, the head of the Anglophone delegation, J.N. Foncha stated that he had agreed with Ahidjo to rebuild a Cameroon nation with due respect 'to the existence of two cultures' and that they had proposed to design a federal constitution 'which would keep the two cultures in the areas in which they [existed] and blend them in the centre'. Foncha indicated that the centre would have very limited powers while the federated states would be allowed to continue 'as largely as they [were]'.⁸ Foncha was therefore envisaging a confederal constitutional framework. The identity issue was a particularly sensitive one for the Anglophone minority because they ran the risk of being at best dominated, and at worst submerged and obliterated by Francophone Cameroon which was ten times the size of the British Southern Cameroons 'with almost four times its population, immeasurably greater resources and a much higher level of social and economic development' (Le Vine 1976:273). Because of this disparity between the two

Cameroons, Foncha's KNDP advocated a loose federal union in which the autonomy and identity of the states would be protected.

President Ahidjo agreed with Foncha that the two Cameroons should unite on a federal basis because of obvious differences inherited from colonisation. However, the Francophone Cameroon Republic, which was already a sovereign state, was in a commanding and privileged position to dictate the terms of the union as the constituent authority (Bory 1968:13-15). In Ahidjo's own words, 'it became incumbent on the Republic of Cameroun [i.e. Francophone Cameroon], which already enjoyed international sovereignty and which possessed its own institutions, to revise its own constitution in order to form a union with the brotherly territory of the Southern Cameroons'.⁹ Ahidjo objected to a confederal system for a reunified Cameroon as being too loose to allow for greater interaction. He opted for a more centralised federal system and this was reflected in the 1961 union constitution. On 1 October 1961, the Federal Republic of Cameroon was born, comprising two states: the Federated State of East Cameroon, which was the former La République du Cameroun and the Federated State of West Cameroon, which was the former British Southern Cameroons.

Ahidjo's federal constitution provided for an all-powerful federal government while the state governments were devoid of any real powers to justify their existence (Gonidec 1969; Gonidec & Breton 1976; Stark 1976; Benjamin 1972; Rubin 1971). As Jacques Benjamin put it: '*la constitution camerounaise de 1961 veut de type fédéré mais le concept de souveraineté des Etats fédérés n'y est pas mis en évidence*' (Benjamin 1972:4) (the Cameroon constitution was a federal type but the concept of the sovereignty of the states was totally absent).

The Cameroon federation was in reality a decentralised unitary state and French values quickly pervaded the federation at the expense of English ones.¹⁰ Ambroise Kom posits that apart from the two stars on the national flag to signify the existence of two federated states in the Cameroon federation, there was a preponderance of Francophone tradition: the highway code, money, and system of administration. As he puts it:

... En dehors de deux étoiles dorées qui, de 1961-1977, ornent la bannière rouge du drapeau du Cameroun pour souligner l'existence de deux Etats fédérés, la partie occidentale du pays adopte, sans la plupart des attributs de la partie francophone. Code de route, monnaie, système de gestion et d'administration qui s'imposent sont ceux de l'ancien Cameroun sous mandat français (Kom 1996:145).

The frenchification of the Anglophone federated state of West Cameroon created shock and disillusionment¹¹ but this was absorbed and disguised by

the existence and dynamism of the West Cameroon government in Buea composed of an executive and a bicameral legislature (the West Cameroon House of Assembly and House of Chiefs).¹² There was therefore a semblance of the exercise of power by the Anglophones in their state and at the federal level. At least there was a visible Anglophone government in Buea that was functioning and Anglophones could therefore claim a degree of political autonomy.

In 1972 Ahidjo dashed the hopes of Anglophone autonomists, who intended to have a say in national politics through their state legislatures—their House of Chiefs and House of Assembly—by introducing a unitary system of government. He achieved this goal through a nation-wide referendum with an overwhelming 99.97 per cent vote approval as results in one-party states often appear. Article 1 of the unitary constitution changed the official name of Cameroon from ‘Federal Republic’ to ‘United Republic’ of Cameroon and this was symbolised by a single star on the red band of the green, red, yellow national flag. The governments of the Federated States of West and East Cameroon disappeared and under law no 72/LF/6 of 25 June 1972, a mono-cameral National Assembly of 120 deputies was established. Under decree no.72-349 of 24 July 1972, the United Republic of Cameroon was administratively divided into seven provinces with the federated state of West Cameroon being divided into the North West and South West Provinces.

Clearly the unitary constitution provided a greater opportunity for Anglophone-Francophone interaction. But in an institutional set up, which was largely French-inspired, the Francophones naturally had the upper hand. The first generation of civil servants in postcolonial Cameroon had obtained their education and training in either exclusively English-inspired or French-inspired institutions. Thus, the Federated States of West and East Cameroon conveniently contained these monolingual civil servants. With the increasing frenchification of the Cameroon administration, culminating in the introduction of the unitary state, the assimilation and marginalisation of Anglophones became inevitable as French was given a higher premium than English in the administrative hierarchy.

In administrative appointments to positions of responsibility, Anglophones were generally made assistants to Francophones, the unwritten explanation being that Cameroon’s institutions were of French origin and tradition¹³ and not English. From this logic it was better for an Anglophone to be an assistant to a Francophone than to head a public institution because Anglophones needed time to familiarise themselves with French administrative practices. In other words, Anglophones needed to be totally assimilated to the French tradition if they were to qualify for top positions in the political and administrative hierarchy of Cameroon. Following this logic, it was therefore easier for the biblical camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for an

Anglophone to become a Minister or a Head of an important ministry or parastatal, not to talk of becoming the President of the Republic.¹⁴

That Anglophones, as a minority, were treated as second-class citizens was an open secret. They complained about domination, marginalisation and the steady but gradual erosion of their identity by the dominant Francophone culture. But there was no overt, forceful, popular or systematic reaction against this state of affairs during Ahidjo's totalitarian reign. The omnipresent totalitarian machinery crudely manhandled the few who dared, the most renowned case being Albert Mukong who spent over a decade in several political prisons in Cameroon for challenging Ahidjo's destruction of the federal constitution and the marginalisation of the Anglophones.¹⁵

The reintroduction of multipartyism in the 1990s was accompanied by the resurgence of secessionist sentiments among Anglophones (see for instance Konings 1996; Sindjourn 1996a; Kamto 1995; Kom 1995; Koning and Nyamnjoh 1997; Chiabi 1997; Chem-Langhee 1997), thereby qualifying Cameroon as a potential candidate for one of Africa's failed states. Anglophone Cameroonians started remonstrating as a monolithic block with the English language as a common identity (see in particular Nkoum-Me-Ntseny 1996) and this unquestionably poses a serious threat to the territorial integrity of Cameroon.

John Fru Ndi, an Anglophone resident in the Northwest provincial headquarters of Bamenda, obstinately launched a political party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) on 26 May 1990, at a time when the government was not ready to concede to political pluralism. The whole incident was dramatised by tactless and irresponsible outbursts from overzealous Francophone government officials and the government media to look more like an Anglophone affair than the simple introduction of multipartyism. Monsieur Emah Basile, the Government Delegate of the Yaoundé Urban Council, and a member of the politburo of the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), openly alluded to Anglophones as *'l'ennemie... dans la maison'* (enemies in the house) while the Minister of Territorial Administration, Monsieur Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya arrogantly stated over the Cameroon Radio Television that *'ceux qui ne sont pas contents n'ont qu'à aller ailleurs'* (those who were unhappy could leave).

The government media, for its part, insinuated that the pro-democracy demonstration of students at the University of Yaoundé, on the evening of 26 May 1990, in support of the introduction of multipartyism, was an exclusively Anglophone affair. Anglophones were demonstrating for the reintegration of Anglophone Cameroon into Nigeria from which Anglophone Cameroon had separated under the aegis of a United Nations organised plebiscite in 1961. The students were accused of singing the Nigerian national

anthem and hoisting the Nigerian flag to demonstrate their yearning for, and fidelity to, Nigeria. Other leading members of the CPDM specifically and unambiguously condemned the Anglophones for 'treachery' and called on the government to mete out exemplary sanctions.

The action of the Cameroon government officials and media had, in essence, resulted in '*l'officialisation de l'identité Anglophone rébelle...*' (the officialisation of Anglophone rebel identity) (Sindjoun 1995:102). The shabby anti-Anglophone propaganda pervaded the Cameroon political landscape particularly in the months proceeding the launching of the SDF, and this contributed to the resignation of J.N. Foncha, the Anglophone architect of reunification, from the ruling CPDM party of which he was the first national Vice-President. In Foncha's melancholy words, he lamented that the Anglophones whom he had brought into the union with Francophones were being ridiculed and referred to as Les Biafrais¹⁶ (Biafrans), 'enemies in the house' and 'traitors'. The constitutional provisions which protected the Anglophones in the 1961 federal constitution had been discarded, and their voices drowned, while the rule of the gun replaced dialogue which Anglophones cherished very much (Foncha 1993). Foncha's resignation sounded like a bomb explosion and cast doubts on the future of the union.

In December 1990 the Biya administration finally bowed to pressures and introduced multiparty democracy alongside a certain degree of freedom of mass communication and association, including the holding of meetings and demonstrations (SOPECAM 1991). Various groups, associations and newspapers mushroomed, and started ventilating and articulating the problems affecting their respective communities or peoples. Anglophone newspapers and pressure groups boomed on selling the image of Anglophone Cameroonians as a marginalised and disadvantaged people.

The multiparty context of the 1990s also favoured the realignment of the Anglophones and Francophones of the southwestern quadrant who had fought for reunification into a political bloc. The 'grand southern alliance' of the people of the southwestern quadrant, which Ahidjo had been preventing from emerging, came into existence. These peoples found common cause in their exclusion from the presidency of Cameroon since independence despite the fact that they were the architects of the reunification of Cameroon. When Ahidjo, a northern Fulani Muslim stepped down from the presidency in 1982, he handed over power to Paul Biya, a Beti from southeastern Cameroon. This was a repeat of the same pattern when Andre-Marie Mbida, Francophone Cameroon's first Premier and of the southeastern Beti ethnic extraction, fell from power in 1957. Ahidjo, a Fulani northerner, succeeded Mbida, a southeastern Beti. Political leadership in Cameroon has therefore swung exclusively along the southeastern Beti to the northern Fulani and back to the

southern-eastern Beti axis. Anglophones and Francophones of the southwestern quadrant were therefore united to break this monopoly and exclusion from the presidency.

The emergence of this alliance of the peoples of the southwestern quadrant was a demonstration of the vitality of deep-seated identities. John Fru Ndi's SDF gradually spread nation-wide but was more widely accepted by the peoples of the southwestern quadrant scattered all over Cameroon than others outside this ethnic and geographical bracket. They quickly distinguished themselves as the chief opponents of President Paul Biya, the heir of their 'traditional enemy', Ahmadou Ahidjo, by organising a series of politically motivated demonstrations and strikes under the Ghost Town campaigns in the early 1990s (cf. Awasom 1998, Monga 1993) with the aim of compelling Biya to convene a sovereign national conference *à la béninoise*.¹⁷

During the multiparty elections organised in Cameroon after the advent of multipartyism in 1990, the Anglophones and Francophones of the southwestern quadrant manifested a large degree of political homogeneity and solidarity as the bulk of their votes went to the SDF. Before the elections the desire for change was high, given the economic malaise the country was undergoing.¹⁸ John Fru Ndi was the popular favourite and the SDF propaganda machine created allies beyond the southwestern quadrant among other Francophones, especially migrants from Bamilike country and the littoral. Paul Biya obtained 39.9 per cent of the votes while John Fru Ndi scored 35.9 per cent with the bulk of his votes coming from the Anglophone North West and South West provinces and the Francophone West and Littoral Provinces (Sindjourn 1994, Awasom 1998).¹⁹ This esprit de corps prevailing amongst these peoples over political matters was so strong that the Beti para-military groups and ethnically biased newspapers nicknamed them the 'Anglo-Bamilekes'.²⁰

While the October 1992 presidential elections revealed the solidarity of the peoples of the southwestern quadrant beyond Anglophone-Francophone lines, the results also came to confirm the popular belief, particularly among Anglophones, that an Anglophone can never be the President of Cameroon but only a subordinate. Against SDF expectations, the Supreme Court, on 23 October 1992, proclaimed Paul Biya the overall winner of the elections²¹ (Dikalo, no. 037 of 31 August 1992). The proclamation of the results was terrible news for SDF supporters and the violence that followed the proclamation led to the imposition of a two-month state of emergency on the Anglophone provincial headquarters of Bamenda. It was widely believed among the Anglophones and SDF supporters that Fru Ndi's victory was 'stolen' in connivance with France because Fru Ndi was Anglophone.

The Biya government reacted to this mounting political disenchantment by announcing the organisation of a national debate on the revision of the 1972 unitary constitution, which had substituted the 1961 independence federal constitution of Cameroon (Kale 1998:1-2). This step was undertaken in a bid to diffuse political tension and establish national consensus. Anglophones seized this golden opportunity of revisiting the constitution by presenting a united front.

Four prominent Anglophones, namely Simon Munzu, Elad Ekontang, Benjamin Itoe and Carlson Anyangwe²² took the initiative to convene an All Anglophone Conference (AAC) 'for the purpose of preparing Anglophone participation' in the announced national debate on the reform of the constitution. Other issues related to the welfare of Anglophones, their posterity, territory and Cameroon as a whole were to be looked into (AAC 1993). Munzu, Ekontang, Itoe and Anyangwe turned out to be the ideologues of the Anglophone cause, or better still the *ingénieur identitaire de la communautaire Anglophone*, to use Sindjoun's elegant expression (Sindjoun 1995:90, 93). The Anglophone turnout for the conference was impressive and was indicative of their frustration and disillusionment with the union with Francophones. Over 5000 Anglophones attended, including academics, religious, business, traditional rulers and socio-professionals and the political elite.

The expectations of the convenors of the conference were high, just as the imaginations and the fantasies of the delegates ran wild about 'the persecuted pure Anglophones' and 'the tyrannical imperfect Francophones'. The All Anglophone Conference issued the Buea Declaration, which in essence called for a return to the federal form of government.

On 27 May 1993, a select AAC Anglophones Standing Committee of 65 members tidied up a draft federal constitution, which they submitted to the Biya government for consideration (Standing Committee of AAC:1993). President Biya snubbed the draft federal constitution, and in a series of interviews in Cameroon and France, he stated that federalism was inappropriate for a country like Cameroon.

Government's refusal to entertain the federal proposal of Anglophones pushed the Anglophone delegates to moot the possibility of outright secession.²³ Anglophones held another meeting, the Second All Anglophone Congress (AAC 11) in Bamenda on 29 April 1994, and resolved to proceed to the unilateral declaration of independence of Anglophone Cameroon if the Biya regime persisted in its refusal to engage in meaningful constitutional talks (Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997:221-27).

In essence, the construction of a centrifugal political identity of Anglophone Cameroon was a consequence of its frustration with the centralising tendency of the hegemonic Francophone state. Anglophones believed a return to the federal system of government would guarantee the protection of their Anglophoneness and provide political space for them to determine their own affairs.

The Anglophone pressure group, the Southern Cameroon National Congress, emerged from the dust of the All Anglophone Congress and quickly developed its motto, 'the force of argument and not the argument of force'. This motto was intended to indicate the non-violent nature and method of the movement to achieve statehood for the Southern Cameroons. This agenda was new and was formulated from the failure of the Biya administration to exercise flexibility and imagination in handling the Anglophone problem.

Although the SCNC adopted the motto of the force of argument, that did not spare them from government harassment in 1997 following an alleged attack on military installations in the Anglophone North-West Province in 1997. Its youth-wing President, Ebenezer Akwanga, was arrested, detained and subsequently tried and imprisoned for 20 years for allegedly possessing illegal weapons and engaging in acts of sabotage. More than a score of other SCNC activists were sent to the Yaoundé high security prison at Kondenge where they are serving long terms of imprisonment. The Biya administration refused all forms of dialogue with the SCNC and preferred to crush the movement by all means.

Because of government high-handedness in handling the SCNC, the Anglophones in the Diaspora, particularly the United States, reorganised themselves and opened a website, the www.scncforum under the coordination of J.J. Asongu, in 1999. The website encouraged discussions and updated its subscribers about developments in the Southern Cameroons on the struggle for statehood. The SCNC in the Diaspora decided to change the name of its discussion forum from SCNCforum to SCNATION in 2001. The change of name followed the unilateral declaration of the independence of the Southern Cameroons in December 2001 by Justice Alobwede, which was accompanied by a government crackdown on the secessionists. The independence declaration was treated as a non-event by the Biya administration and the Anglophones made no attempt to set up any governmental structures. The region only received troop reinforcement and was subjected to an undeclared state of siege. The SCNC in the Diaspora therefore transformed its website from SCNCforum to SCNATION. It proceeded to set up a High Commission in New York with J.J. Asongu as its first High Commissioner. To the SCNC, the status of the Southern Cameroons is a nation, which is under 'the colonial

administration of La République du Cameroun', as they prefer to call Francophone Cameroon. They therefore view the relationship between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon as that between an independent state and an occupying Francophone colonial power. The Southern Cameroons is defined as a former United Nations Trust Territory that gained independence in 1961 and reasserted it in 2001 but is still being occupied by troops from colonial Francophone Cameroon. The struggle of the Southern Cameroonians, as they prefer to call Anglophone Cameroon, is the struggle for international recognition of their statehood and the expulsion of La République du Cameroun from their territory. The initiative for the progress of the Anglophone secessionist movement has therefore been displaced from the national arena to the Diaspora where it has a stronger and an unimpeded impulsion.

Independent Gambia and Senegal, the Protection of Colonially Inherited Values and the Prospects of Integration

Between Gambian independence in 1965 and the birth of the Senegambian federation in 1982, over 30 collaborative treaties were signed between Dakar and Banjul with great care taken not to infringe on the territorial integrity of each other and to protect the ruling elite. The most important of these were the defence treaty and the external representation agreement of 1965; the Treaty of Association of 1967 which created a Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat to service regular meetings of heads of government and ministers in order to promote technical cooperation, an economic treaty in 1970 and the establishment of the Gambia River Basin Development Organization in 1978 (Hughes 1991:2-3). The primary beneficiaries of these treaties were the ruling elites because of their narrow focus and their inability to create a genuine union of the two states. The relationship between The Gambia and Senegal was confined to sectoral agreements falling short of any political integration. But if union was perceived to favour the elite, they would have quickly struck a deal to achieve it.

On 30 July 1981, Kukoy Samba Sanyang displaced the Gambian ruling elite in a coup d'état while President Jawara was in England attending Prince Charles' wedding to Lady Spencer. The government acted promptly by soliciting Senegalese intervention under the 1965 Defence Agreement. The Senegalese military intervened and restored Jawara to power and this incident led to a binding political relationship with Senegal known as the Senegambia confederation.

The treaty of the Confederation allowed for the establishment of common political and administrative institutions, namely a President and Vice-President; a Council of Ministers, a Confederal Assembly elected indirectly

by the two national parliaments and a confederal secretariat, all funded by an annual budget paid for by the member states. The armed forces of the two countries were partially integrated to be stationed anywhere within the confederation. An economic and monetary union was created and external affairs and technical fields were coordinated by the two states (Hughes 1991:5-6). The confederal union between the two states was a direct consequence of the coup attempt against the Gambian ruling elite and was therefore a marriage of convenience and not conviction, as further events were to demonstrate.

The colonial past and size of the Gambia, and the reluctance of its political elite to be swallowed by Senegal under the pretext of greater integration, militated against the survival of the confederation, and it rapidly collapsed in August-October 1989. Gambia's refusal to accept a customs union with Senegal and a more rapid move towards complete economic integration was disturbing to Senegal. The Gambia was more bent on asserting itself and President Jawara on 1 August 1989 demanded that the post of confederal president and vice-president should rotate between the heads of state of the two countries. This demand was perceived by Senegal as a tactic to delay the achievement of greater integration. Senegal unilaterally decided to withdraw its security forces from The Gambia on 19 August 1989, ostensibly in response to security considerations with its Mauritanian neighbours with whom it had border clashes. This embarrassed the Gambian government. President Jawara of the Gambia therefore initiated the necessary legal measures to dissolve the confederation (Diene-Njie 1996:93-99; Hughes 1991:13-16; Sall 1992:19; Sall 1990). The collapse of the confederation was immediately followed by an economic blockade on The Gambia by Senegal before the subsequent normalisation of relations.

The dissolution of the confederation in 1989 meant a return to the kind of institutional relationship that existed before the federation in 1982. In other words the special relationship that was established in the Treaty of Association in 1967 was revived

The advantages of the integration of Senegal and The Gambia are too evident and had been underscored by several specialised studies (cf. Maiga 1993, Barry 1998). It is no secret to the Senegalese and Gambians that experts from the UN in the early 1960s had stressed the benefits to be derived from jointly harnessing the waters of the River Gambia and the integration of transport and communications. The River Gambia can be used to export the iron ore deposits in Eastern Senegal. Full Senegambian integration would benefit the peoples of the two territories tremendously but the Gambian elite nursed the fear that the more populous and developed Senegalese would

sacrifice their interests. This is not actually the case. With reference to the ideal of regional integration, Barry argues that:

the point is not to modify the existing frontiers. It is to unify existing states in ways that enables the zone's people and natural regions to rediscover their homogeneity within a vast supranational framework. Only such a framework, capacious enough to nurture grassroots initiative and autonomy, can help solve the crucial problem of industrialization, agricultural modernization, education, and the development of our cultural identity through the promotion of the study of African languages. It makes no sense to redraw existing boundaries. We must abolish them. That is the way to expand our economic and political system, in an internally driven process of integrated development based on precise knowledge of active, complementary relationships between the zones different natural regions and the diversity of its resources and populations (Barry 1998: xii-xiii).

Despite the benefits that union between Senegal and The Gambia would generate, and the current deteriorating economy of the Gambia, even an appreciation of the NEPAD philosophy within the Gambian political elite is doubtful. NEPAD is publicly nicknamed 'kneecap' and ridiculed. What is even more ironical is the attitude of one of NEPAD's chief proponents, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. Wade has done little or nothing concrete to encourage closer ties with The Gambia, implying that he has no Senegalese-Gambian policy. On assuming power in Senegal in April 2000, Wade pursued a vigorous highly publicised pan-African campaign and is the brainchild of the OMEGA plan, which is incorporated into NEPAD (Kouam). Relations with the Gambia have rather been deteriorating, leading to the Senegalese closure of its frontiers in 2002—an action that brought untold hardship to the fragile Gambian economy. During Wades's visit to The Gambia on 10 October 2004, 24 following the *La Joola* ferry accident, which cost the lives of over 800 Senegalese, Wade, like President Yahya Jammeh of Gambia, openly declared the inseparability of their two economies, not in French or English but in the African Wolof language which is a lingua franca in the capital city of Banjul and adjacent Senegal. Yahya Jammeh even went ahead to declare that the African Union should emanate from Senegambian regional relationship while Wade was talking in an absent-minded manner about reinforcing the defunct Senegambian confederation. If Senegal and The Gambia, which it literally sandwiches, do not have a mind-set for greater concrete integration, then the NEPAD ideology might have to be revisited and reactivated as far as the two states are concerned. Yet informal trans-frontier trade flows between The Gambia and Senegal both day and night in spite of official and bureaucratic obstructionism. The problem of the integration of the two territories therefore lies with the force of inertia of

their political elite and not their populations. The Francophone Senegalese and the Anglophone Gambians might parrot the NEPAD and African Union ideologies but they remain a distant dream and demonstrate the resilience of post-colonial boundaries and mind-sets and the man-made difficulties of the integration of African countries with different colonial backgrounds.

Summary and Suggestions

The paper has examined the problems Anglo-Saxonism and Gallicism pose in nation building in Africa. Despite Cameroon's British and French colonial background, the two territories defied the colonial divide and reunified because of memories of their common German colonial past. But The Gambia preferred to acquire its independence first before exploring the prospects of integration with Senegal. Postcolonial interaction between Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon has been shaped by deep-seated linkages and the colonial inherited languages of English and French, which constitute their modern identities. In a bid to protect their Anglophongness, Cameroon's Anglophones negotiated union with Francophone Cameroon on a federal basis. The federal experiment was discarded after a decade in favour of a unitary state. Under the unitary political order, Anglophones were subjected to the weight of their Francophone counterparts as the French language and culture was given more prominence than English. Being an Anglophone in Cameroon was therefore a disadvantage. The frustration of the Anglophones is compounded by the refusal of the hegemonic Francophone government to consent to the idea of a federal union with the advent of political liberalisation in the 1990s. Francophone alliance with Anglophones during election periods should be seen more as an attempt by disadvantaged Francophone groups to grab political power than a recognition of the Anglophone problem. Anglophone pressure groups have therefore opted for secession at the time the integration of the African continent is high on the political agenda of the African political elite.

Olukoshi (2001) argues that in this age of intensifying globalisation, Africa's future centres on a choice between closer regional cooperation and integration at the expense of the continued pursuit of haphazard individual national strategies. But cooperation must start between neighbouring states and expand beyond, and the most important ingredient for this cooperation is the necessary political will of the elite. The Anglophongness of the Gambians and the Francophongness of the Senegalese effectively obstruct the realisation of the ideals of the African Union at bilateral level. But to this fact must be added the greed, ineptitude and lack of imagination of the political elite. The Gambia and Senegal are too similar and too intertwined to stand as two independent states. This argument may even be taken further to include the

Greater Senegambian region comprising Senegal, The Gambia, Mali, Guinea Conakry, and Guinea Bissau.

Barry argues that the states in the Greater Senegambian region with a population of less than 30 million are burdened with six presidents, hundred of ministers and ambassadors, and thousands of civil servants and parliamentary representatives, all clinging resolutely to their national privileges. His cogent diagnosis is that 'this top-heavy state apparatus is now the main obstacle to regional integration policies [embodied in NEPAD and the AU and] designed to end our common misery, requiring us to pool our energies to achieve a better future' (Barry 1998:xiii). The African elite is simply hampered by their colonial past from pursuing meaningful integration.

If Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon had to discuss reunification as sovereign states, elite rivalry and jealousy would have crippled that effort. But the Anglophone problem is increasingly worrying and threatens the union.

The Gambia and Senegal, which badly need each other, have resisted forging an economically relevant union for the betterment of their populations because of the obstructionism and the poverty of the imagination of the elite. Abdou Diop saved President Jawara from being ousted from power in 1981 and went ahead to guarantee his security with Senegalese gendarmes. Within the context of Senegambia federation, Senegal was inside Gambia and vice-versa. Abdou Diop as a senior partner in the confederation and even his successor, were dwarfed in their thinking owing to their colonial mind-set as Francophones and failed to concretely move forward the union between the two states when Senegal had all the instruments in achieving such a noble objective. The Senegalese leadership needed to have combined imagination, tact, and steadfastness to push the union through because of the overwhelming benefits to be derived from it.

Abdoulaye Wade appears more interested in philosophising and paying lip service to NEPAD while erecting an iron curtain between Senegal and The Gambia. If union with Senegal's neighbour that is situated right inside its stomach is appearing so distant, what can NEPAD mean in real terms to Africa? The prospects of NEPAD and the AU are promising but they must be achieved between neighbouring states, regardless of their colonial past, especially when the peoples of these states share common deep-seated linkages, as is the case between Senegal and The Gambia.

The realisation of the noble ideals of the AU will not come about through speeches and majority consent of the elite but by a well designed osmotic process where the strong shall provide benevolent and pragmatic leadership and pull the rest through the wilderness of misery to the promised land of plenty in a wider continental framework. If Otto Von Bismarck was to consult all the petty and irrelevant German states on the issue of German unity, a

great German nation that shook the world twice in less than half a century would have never seen the light of day. But a united Africa would be an oasis of peace and prosperity and would help rehabilitate the shattered image of the African.

Notes

1. The idea of the African Union being advocated in the 2000s is a plausible one but it is still largely on paper like the defunct OAU. The xenophobia of Côte d'Ivoire's Laurent Gbogbo is a disturbing example among others, and is the antithesis of the movement toward continental unity.
2. The title of Johnson's book captures the fragmentary nature of the Cameroonian society (cf. Johnson 1970).
3. In 1957, the UPC was banned in the Southern Cameroons and the leadership of the party moved to Cairo and later to Guinea-Conakry and Ghana.
4. For a similar attitude of the behaviour of ethnic groups split by the colonial divide, see Asiwaju 1984a. The Gambian, Edward Small, exiled himself to French Senegal in the 1920s where he was agitating in terms of Senegambia as if it was a single territory.
5. The British government threatened to withhold the 'Golden key' to the Bank of England if British Cameroons failed to join the Federation of Nigeria with which the British Cameroon was jointly administered (Tata 1990: 134-136).
6. Interview with Foncha at his Nkwen residence, December 1997. Bamileke business interests, and Soppo Prisso, supported the weight of the reunification campaign.
7. The British Northern Cameroon, like Ahidjo's native Northern Cameroon region, had fallen sway to Usman dan Fodio's nineteenth century jihad (Njeuma 1978) and both neighbouring regions were religiously and ethnically intertwined with British northern Nigeria. The presence of the agents of the Sardauna of Sokoto, the great Muslim spiritual leader, determined the pro-Nigerian outcome of the plebiscite votes in the area.
8. Buea National Archive, Vc/b (1961/2), Fouban Conference, 17 to 21 July 1961. In a similar bid to create a Senegambian union in 1981, The Gambia by virtue of its diminutive size vis-à-vis Senegal and its Anglo-Saxon inherited values opted for a confederation as a guarantor of survival as a distinct entity (cf. Johnson 2002).
9. Buea National Archive, Vc/b (1961/2), Fouban Conference 17 to 21 July 1961.
10. By the end of 1962 the federal government had taken over the few areas allowed under the control of the federated states by the constitution.
11. This was reflected in the writings of the learned Dr Bernard Fonlon, and the pronouncements of Anglophone statesmen, especially Prime Minister A.N.

- Jua (see parliamentary debates, particularly West Cameroon House of Assembly Debates, 1965).
12. The dynamism of the government of the Federated State of West Cameroon was reflected in the formation of eleven cabinets and a change of three prime Ministers, John Ngu Foncha 1961–1965, Augustin Ngom Jua 1966–1968, and Solomon Tandeng Muna 1968–1972. Furthermore, clashes between and within Anglophone political parties diverted the attention of Anglophones from the realities of assimilation. (For details on intra and inter-party squabbles in West Cameroon, see Ardener 1967: 285–337).
 13. The preponderance of French in its east while dependencies and its ubiquitous technical advisers in government ministries ensure a French orientation of public administration as well.
 14. The 1992 presidential elections, which were apparently won by an Anglophone, John Fru Ndi, but hijacked by the Francophone incumbent, Paul Biya, attests to this. The American embassy in Cameroon and the National Democratic Institute in Washington exposed the flawed nature of the elections.
 15. For details on Albert Mukong's saga see Albert M. Mukong, *Prisoner without a Crime*, Paris: Nubia, 1989; *My Stewardship in the Cameroon Struggle*, Bamenda: Nooremac Press, 1992; *The Case for the Southern Cameroons*, Enugu: Chuka Printing Press, 1990. In 2002 the Biya government, under pressure from international human rights organisations, recognised the Cameroon government's violation of Albert Mukong's human rights for decades and in an unprecedented move, it compensated him with over 100 million francs CFA.
 16. This was an allusion to the Biafran secessionists who had unsuccessfully attempted to secede from the Nigerian Federation and plunged the country into a three-year civil war, 1967–1970.
 17. This is the Benin rite of passage from one-party rule to democracy that Cameroonians were advocating. In Benin Republic social and economic unrest resulting from the insolvency of the treasury compelled President Mathieu Kerekou to convene a national conference in February 1990 of 488 delegates who soon declared themselves sovereign. The conference stripped Kerekou of all his powers, suspended the constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, created the post of Prime Minister, and drafted a new constitution which allowed presidential term limits and multi-party elections (Fomunoyoh 2001: 37–50).
 18. An unprecedented economic crisis hit Cameroon after 1987. In 1993 and 1994 civil servants witnessed double salary cuts of over 70 per cent in addition to a 50 per cent devaluation of the Cameroon Franc (CFA).
 19. Similarly the bulk of the local Government Areas and parliamentary seats won by the SDF in 1996 and 1997 elections respectively were obtained within the southwestern quadrant (Sindjoun 1994; Awasom 1998).

20. During the Ghost Town campaigns of the early 1990s, spearheaded by the SDF, pro-Beti newspapers particularly *Le Patriote* and *Le Temoigne* were overtly hostile to the ‘Anglo-Bamis’ whom they saw as the principal threat to the political survival of their kinsman, President Biya. A tract circulating titled ‘Operation Delta’ threatened the ‘Anglo-Bamis’ with death if they did not evacuate Yaoundé and Beti land.
21. The elections were marred by several irregularities, which even the Supreme Court of Cameroon could not conceal and did not go beyond declaring its incompetence to address them. The Washington-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) was critical of the organisation of the elections and blamed shortcomings squarely on President Paul Biya. (See National Democratic Institute for International Affairs [NDI] ‘Report on Cameroon Democratization Process’, Washington DC, October 1992).
22. Munzu and Anyangwe were University Professors of law at the University of Yaounde II. Benjamin Itoe was a Magistrate and a former Minister of Justice while Elad Ekontag was a practising lawyer. These four lawyers came into the limelight during the famous tripartite conference of October–November 1991, which was convened by the Biya government to diffuse tension in the country after a protracted period of civil disobedience campaigns organised by opposition parties (cf. Awasom 1998).
23. The Anglophone leadership actually set 1 October 1996 as the day for the declaration of independence for Anglophone Cameroon. The threat turned out to be a bluff because nothing actually happened on that day except the speech of Ambassador Henry Fussong, the Chairman of the Anglophone Movement for Sovereignty known as the Southern Cameroon National Council (SCNC). Fussong invited Southern Cameroonians to celebrate 1 October 1996 as a day of prayers during which a special prayer should be made to God to ‘save Anglophones from political bondage’. He stated that the independence of the Southern Cameroons was ‘non-negotiable and irreversible’ (*Cameroon Post*, 8–14 October 1996).
24. For details on the visit and speeches made, see *The Daily Observer*, 11 October 2001.

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The Taiping and the Aladura: A Comparative Study of Charismatically Based Christian Movements

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Abstract

The paper utilizes the comparative method to work towards an understanding of cross-cultural religious interactions that eschews the distinction between so-called traditional and world religions. It highlights the importance of charismatic authority based on prophetic vision in two disparate geographical and cultural contexts. Both the Taiping Rebellion (1851–64) and the Aladura churches in southwestern Nigeria in the early twentieth century represented adaptations of Christianity to local circumstances. Although the Aladura churches did not have the politically subversive impact of the famous Chinese rebellion, their popularity as movements of prayer and healing reveal a similar dynamic: of leadership based on visions and extraordinary states of consciousness; rivalries for power based on competing visions; and strategies of routinizing charisma through institutions and Biblical texts. Both movements exhibited a concentration of spirituality, expressed in anti-idolatry and a quest for purity, that mobilized energies and led to dramatic change. Jung's theory of withdrawal of projections may better describe this process than Weber's theory of disenchantment.

Résumé

Cet article utilise la méthode comparative pour une meilleure compréhension des interactions religieuses interculturelles contournant la classique distinction entre les religions traditionnelles et les religions du monde. Il met en lumière l'importance de l'autorité charismatique basée sur une vision prophétique, dans deux différents contextes géographiques et culturels. La rébellion de Taiping (1851–64) et les églises Aladura du sud-ouest du Nigeria, au début du vingtième siècle symbolisaient l'adaptation de la religion chrétienne aux réalités locales. Bien que les églises Aladura n'aient pas eu le même impact politique subversif que la célèbre rébellion chinoise, leur popularité en tant que mouvements de

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rière et de guérison révèle une dynamique similaire : celle d'un leadership basé sur des visions et un état de conscience extraordinaire, mais également sur des rivalités de pouvoir basées sur des visions opposées. Ces deux mouvements ont fait preuve d'une certaine concentration de spiritualité, qui s'est manifestée à travers l'anti-idolâtrie et la quête de pureté, qui a mobilisé les énergies et conduit à des changements profonds. La théorie du retrait de la projection, formulée par Jung, décrit mieux ce processus, que la théorie du désenchantement de Weber.

The present paper grew out of the belief that a comparative approach to the study of religious encounters—in this case between Christianity and Chinese and West African religions—can provide a fruitful starting point in constructing a richer set of concepts and theories to explain such encounters than are currently available. The timeliness of such a reconstruction should be self-evident: cross-cultural religious interaction is part of the patterns of worldwide change known as globalisation, even though that term is more likely to conjure up images of economic and social changes rather than religious ones. In Africa, it is well known that Christianity has advanced by leaps and bounds since the Second World War, even as it has receded in Europe.¹

Yet the theological, historical, and sociological vocabularies and conceptual frameworks for talking about religious interactions in any depth lag behind what is available for discussing the more material ones.² These shortcomings, as applied to Africa, were addressed by the American anthropologist Rosalind Shaw in an article ‘The Invention of “African Traditional Religion”’ in 1990.³ Shaw argues that even as European views of African culture have become more respectful, invidious distinctions have been preserved at the level of nomenclature and classification, as in the distinction between ‘traditional’ and ‘world’ religions which continues to pervade textbooks in religious studies in America. Both the terms ‘traditional’ and ‘world’ beg rigorous definition. The term ‘traditional’, in addition to suggesting religions that remained more or less static—a contention that has been falsified repeatedly—also refers to a great variety of heterogeneous religions on different continents that share only the feature that they do not merit the designation ‘world religion’. Yet the latter term is equally vague. For example, if a ‘world’ religion means one that is not restricted to a particular ethnic group, then Judaism and Hinduism would be disqualified; if it means a religion based on a cosmology that covers the universe, then many Native American and African religions should be included. In short, the labels ‘traditional’ and ‘world’ were little more than tactful re-packagings of the dichotomy between ‘primitive’ and ‘civilised’.⁴ Moreover, Shaw reinforced the critique by the African scholar Okot p’Bitek of the generation of African scholars

who wrote in the 1960s, and 1970s, such as E. Balji Idowu, John Mbiti, and J. Omosade Awolalu, as complicit in this perpetuation. While seeking to portray African religions in a positive light, they did so by reinforcing an image of 'traditional' religion which was relatively static and which emphasised the congruencies with Judeo-Christian ideas, particularly of a Supreme Being. Idowu, for example, argued that all African religions could be defined in terms of a 'diffuse monotheism'.⁵ A large part of the Western baggage that these scholars carried with them lay in the notion that religion finds its primary expression in beliefs and doctrines rather than in action and ritual. The questions that scholars like Shaw and p'Bitek have raised since the 1970s are whether such sweeping definitions do justice to the complexities of African religions, and whether African notions of a Supreme Being can be so neatly combined with Judeo-Christian versions thereof.⁶

A further example of the persistence of such categories, even on the part of scholars who seek to understand Africans on their own terms, is the work of the anthropologist Robin Horton.⁷ Horton proposed a general theory to explain conversion to monotheism, which is not restricted to Africa, though clearly drawn from his fieldwork there. Horton noted that many African religions operated on a 'two-tiered' system: a multitude of 'lesser spirits' which were concerned with more or less local affairs, and a 'supreme being' or creator-god whose sphere was the world as a whole. The creator god was often not the object of direct worship, because it had little relevance to the day-to-day affairs of the local community. But with trade and improvements in communications, the local community came increasingly to confront forces outside it, which increased the relevance of spirits whose powers have a broader geographical range. Hence the tendency to embrace the universal god of Islam and Christianity. Horton emphasised that these world-religions acted as mere catalysts for re-configurations within the existing beliefs and practices of the African religions. Thus, according to his theory, we might expect the new religions to coexist in some form with the old. Also, Horton did not restrict this story to modernisation per se; he also traced the African receptiveness to Islam in earlier centuries to the presence of mobile groups such as traders and pastoralists.⁸

Horton's theory has also come in for its share of criticism. Some have pointed out that it still leaves 'traditional religion' as a residual and relatively static category, which is increasingly seen to be a fiction as far as Africa is concerned.⁹ Others have stressed that embracing a universal god does not necessarily entail ignoring the lesser ones; among the Ewe people of Ghana and Togo, for example, the transition to modernity also brought with it an increased preoccupation with demons, ironically reinforced by missionaries'

preaching about the devil.¹⁰ Still others claim that Horton understated the impact that outside forces played by reducing them to mere ‘catalysts’.¹¹ Nevertheless, we will have occasion to see that some forms of a two-tiered pattern of religious observance persist in some cases, lending at least partial credibility to Horton’s thesis. Furthermore, for all its defects, Horton’s overall thesis of linking religious conversion to involvement in networks of communication and trade does offer a persuasive explanation of the spread of Islam and Christianity in Africa—and has proven fruitful in studies of other cultures as well.¹²

The merits of cross-cultural comparative historical studies as a launching pad for theory have been amply demonstrated by Max Weber, who based his sociology of religion on extensive investigations of Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism, in addition to the Protestantism which had formed part of his own background. Nevertheless, the methodological, linguistic, and terminological difficulties raised by such an approach are formidable and must be considered briefly here. Jürgen Kocka has commented recently on the pitfalls and promises of the comparative approach.¹³ Of the pitfalls, he highlights three, all of which are exemplified in this paper: (i) it relies on secondary literature, because the linguistic skills required for cross-cultural comparisons at the level of primary and archival sources exceed the abilities of most historians, including myself. Indeed, I chose the Chinese and West African cases because there was an abundant secondary literature available. (ii) It entails deliberately taking these cases out of their local context and isolating certain features so that they can meaningfully be compared—a procedure which goes against the grain of many historians’ training and temperament. This of course renders the comparative open to criticism by the specialist, but hopefully in ways that can be useful to both. (iii) The similarities and differences between any two cases (or more) are likely to emerge most sharply precisely in the absence of causal interactions between them. Thus the point is not to argue for the influence of the Taiping on the Aladura, or of Africa on China with respect to missionary activity—or vice-versa. Kocka has pressed this point further by arguing that the very interest in cross-cultural connections which world history exemplifies has taken the wind out of the sails of the comparative enterprise recently.¹⁴ However, I do not see why this need be so: connections can themselves be the stuff of comparison. Encounters between religions and ideologies with disparate roots are taking place all around us and are the stuff of daily headlines. There is no reason why such types of interactions in the past cannot be themselves isolated and compared. Indeed, there are strong reasons why they should be.

This brings me to the positive dividends of the comparative approach, which Kocka also acknowledges. He warns against over-specialisation, particularly in a global age. More specifically, such far-flung, decontextualised comparisons may have great heuristic value. In Kocka's words, 'the comparative approach allows one to identify questions and problems that one might miss, neglect, or just not invent otherwise'.¹⁵ I think this is particularly applicable to the study of religious encounters. It can direct our attention to how peoples assimilate or otherwise combine the beliefs and practices of a new religion with their own cultural systems.

In comparing the Taiping and the Aladura movements, one obvious difference should be stated at the outset. The Taiping ('great peace'), although it began as a religious sect, became directed against the ruling Qing dynasty, fomenting a rebellion (1851–1864) of huge proportions which at its height managed to control a portion of central China roughly equal to the size of France. It had grown from an army of some three hundred men in 1850 to about three million five years later; the number of deaths from the rebellion as a whole is estimated at about thirty million. It was not the only rebellion against the Qing dynasty in the mid-nineteenth century; others occurred in the north and in the Moslem west. All were indicative of a demographic crisis that had overtaken China, compounded with widespread government corruption.¹⁶ The lack of any comparable religious-political phenomenon in West Africa undoubtedly stems, at least in part, from the lack of a single polity in the region, which also made any coordinated resistance to European colonial rule much more difficult. In contrast to the Taiping, the Aladura ('owners of prayer') were focussed on religious matters. It is true that one can find expressions of pan-African nationalism in some Aladura churches, but the degree or intensity of this feature pales in comparison to its Taiping counterpart.¹⁷ Moreover, there was never at any one time a single Aladura church, but a multiplicity of them which were recognised to have similar outlooks.¹⁸

The literature on both the Taiping and the Aladura makes reference to the social composition of the movements in their formative stages, and there are certain superficial parallels between them that could be drawn. Although the early members of the Taiping consisted mostly of desperate peasants and workmen who were members of an ethnic minority, the Hakka, there were also a few prominent Hakka merchants and landowners who joined, whose talents and financial backing were essential.¹⁹ The Aladura churches initially were found to have had a high proportion of clerks who had just arrived in the cities, and with a smattering of wealthy individuals as well.²⁰ Yet the differences probably outweigh the similarities. The initial surge of the Taiping

took place not in the cities or the coastal areas of China that were exposed to Western influences, but in a remote and inaccessible area of southwest China. In this sense it provides a counter-example to Horton's hypothesis. The Aladura churches, by contrast, grew up in the coastal cities such as Lagos, among people who had come from the countryside, and only later spread to rural areas.

This being said, we can turn to the main positive reason for comparing these Chinese and West African phenomena: their charismatic foundations. The Taiping originated with a schoolteacher from Guangdong Province near Canton, Hong Xiuquan, who had studied the Confucian classics for some twenty years in preparation for the official examinations, which he failed four times. In 1837, just after one of these failures, he experienced a period of madness and near-death lasting some forty days, in which he had an extended and vivid dream of being in heaven and facing a heavenly father who ordered him to return to earth to slay the evil demons there. After the battle, Hong returned to heaven to be welcomed by the father, his wife, an elder brother and sister-in-law. The father and elder brother ordered him, against his own inclination, to return to earth once more to continue fighting evil and to usher in a period of great peace (Taiping). Most, though not all, of these dream-images were quite comprehensible in terms of Chinese writings that would have been familiar to Hong. Similar millenarian features could be found in China as far back as the second century A.D. and also existed in other sects, which rebelled against the Qing in the nineteenth century. However, in 1843 Hong read a Christian tract which clarified doubtful points in his vision and reinforced its authenticity in his mind: the father was Jehovah, the elder brother was Jesus, and Hong himself was God's second son. Hong was further convinced of this by a partial coincidence of Chinese characters between the transliteration of Je-ho-vah and Hong's own name—a mode of persuasion which has been dubbed 'glyphomancy' and has been found in other cases of Chinese conversion as well.²¹ And as another local study has shown, Hong was by no means idiosyncratic in having such visions and incorporating in them a few Christian concepts within a larger body of Chinese beliefs about the supernatural.²²

Hong's early preaching emphasised the Ten Commandments and the importance of right moral action—an emphasis consonant with the Confucian tradition in which Hong had previously immersed himself. As the Taiping movement turned political—scholars disagree on exactly when—the evil demons become the Qing dynasty. From this point on, the Taiping ideology combined the moral emphasis with the punitive and fearsome aspects of the Old Testament God and the Book of Revelations, which led to a strict mili-

tary discipline in a highly effective way that reminded Max Weber of Cromwell's model army.²³

Turning to the Aladura churches, much of the charismatic authority of their leaders was based on the power to heal illnesses through prayer. At the risk of some simplification, one can point to four different churches: (i) The Cherubim and Seraphim traces its beginnings to a prolonged trance by a fifteen-year old girl in Lagos in 1925, Christiana Abiodun Akinsowon, who had just been confirmed in the Anglican Church. Like Hong, she found herself in heaven, addressed by angels, but was told that she would die unless she met someone who could really pray. Her family brought an older itinerant evangelist, Moses Orimolade Tunolase, the son of a priest in the Yoruba Ife cult and also a visionary, to pray for her, and she recovered. The two began to hold regular prayer meetings, which attracted much public attention and eventually developed into the church. (ii) The Christ Apostolic Church traced its origins to the influenza epidemic of 1918, which neither Western medicine nor Yoruba medicine could cure. A group who believed that prayer alone could heal met at the home of J.B. Sadare, a goldsmith, who had experienced visions before the epidemic, and who named it the Precious Stone Society. It continued to meet, and during the Depression it experienced a great revival thanks to another powerful visionary, Joseph Babalola, a semi-skilled worker of Anglican background. (iii) The Church of the Lord Aladura was founded by Joseph Oshitelu, an Anglican schoolteacher, who had a series of visions between 1925 and 1929, including an eye as bright as the sun, but also of witches, which he managed only gradually to overcome. Once having done so, he founded the church in 1930, by holding open-air meetings and speaking in tongues. He became known as the 'last Elijah'. Oshitelu did not pay as much attention to healing at first, but as his church grew in the 1930s he could not afford to ignore it. (iv) The Celestial Church of Christ was likewise the child of a single prophetic figure, Joseph Oschoffa, raised a Methodist in 1947, who assumed the title of 'Pastor-Founder'.

Inseparable from charismatic authority is the problem of its routinisation, which both Taiping and Aladura leaders had to face in their lifetimes.²⁴ In themselves, powerful movements are likely to generate personal rivalries and struggles for power; when such rival claims are supported by rival visions, the effort to maintain stability and continuity is rendered all the more difficult. This was true both of the Taiping and the Aladura churches. In China, Hong's authority was first exercised over a group known as the Society of God Worshipers in a remote area of Guangxi Province in the 1840s; it unleashed among the people a wave of further visions and other shamanistic features

which had been part of the folk religion in the area. From this emerged two other powerful leaders, one a peasant, the other a charcoal burner, both without the Hong's literary training, and who claimed to be the voices of Jesus and God respectively.²⁵ The second of these, Yang Xiuqing, became the chief military strategist of the rebellion. From these experiences, Hong probably concluded that the routinisation of his charisma could come none to soon. When the rebels took over the city of Nanjing in 1853 and proclaimed it the heavenly capital, Hong hastened to introduce measures modelled on the imperial dynasty with the intent of establishing a new one: a hierarchy of titles and regalia, palaces, concubines, a new calendar, and a new set of civil service exams. This meant that, taken as a whole, the Confucian elements predominated over the Christian ones in the movement.²⁶ The establishment of this structure did not, however, prevent the rivalry from escalating, as Yang Xiuqing arrogated to himself the additional title of Holy Spirit and began to challenge Hong himself. The result was bloody internecine warfare, which began in 1856, when Yang was assassinated. This undermined the physical and moral strength of the rebellion and was a major factor in contributing to its eventual failure.

Hong also realised early on that his personal vision would have to be buttressed by scriptural authority in the religious sphere. During the formative years of the God Worshippers' Society, he was actually in Canton studying the new Chinese translation of the Bible. During the final years Hong himself withdrew increasingly from public ceremony and view. While most scholars interpret this as a retreat into mental illness, Jonathan Spence argues that Hong was actually working on a Biblical commentary and revision, attempting to bring its stories into line with his moral code and to reconcile the Old Testament genealogy with his original vision and hence to legitimise his lineage and ultimately his dynasty. He came to believe he was the incarnation of King Melchizedek, mentioned fleetingly in Genesis 14 as 'priest of the Most High God' at the time of Abraham.²⁷

The tendency to factionalism and the need to buttress charismatic authority with a more stable set of institutional and intellectual structures were also prominent features of the Aladura churches. The most dramatic case was the Cherubim and Seraphim, where a much-publicised split occurred between the middle-aged Orimolade and the 22-year-old Abiodun; this was but the first of six splits in seven years! Clearly age and gender issues were involved—most of the women in the movement sided with Abiodun—but the splintering continued long after Orimolade's death in 1933.²⁸ The evolution of the Christ Apostolic Church from the small Precious Stone Society was also not without its schisms and secessions, but the leaders realised that they needed

some guidance apart from their personal visions, and affiliated successively with several foreign organisations—one American, one Canadian, one Welsh—that held to faith healing as a central doctrine.²⁹ The Church of the Lord Aladura and the Celestial Church of Christ, both more closely tied to a single founder-figure than the other two, were better able to weather the schisms that occurred there as well, because both leaders paid attention to organisational matters early on. Both incorporated a principle which effectively routinised the charismatic impulses: that of splitting the ‘prophetic’ branch of the hierarchy from the administrative one. Prophets were promoted on the basis of their spiritual gifts, of having visions and interpreting those of others, and were not expected to engage in the day-to-day running of the church itself—a structure which reflected widespread African practice.³⁰ And even the Cherubim and Seraphim found a way of channelling certain types of visionary material so as not to endanger the church organisation: visions were reported to the leaders, who decided how they were to be interpreted.³¹ Moreover, all the Aladura churches stressed the importance of Bible study to reinforce and stabilise the visionary impulse. All in all, this routinisation was highly successful, as the Aladura churches continued to expand after independence, even to the African diaspora communities in Europe.³² It is clear that the Aladura churches succeeded because they incorporated certain familiar aspects of indigenous religions—such as interpretation of dreams, prophecies, dancing and clapping during the services, into a Christian framework—in a way that the churches founded by missionaries had failed to do.³³

The phenomenon of charisma and its associated features strikes us as something that does indeed transcend the distinction between ‘traditional’ and ‘world’ religions. Weber acknowledged this by describing charismatic authority as irrational and extraordinary, a type of authority radically opposed to that of traditional elites or of bureaucracies.³⁴ Charismatic leaders are by no means unknown in the West, whether as leaders of religious revival movements or as political ‘geniuses’ such as Napoleon or Hitler. The two cases considered here, however, point to a feature which is probably taken more seriously outside the West, namely the prophetic role of visions experienced in an abnormal state of consciousness. Weber rightly argued for taking such phenomena at face value, rather than attempting to explain them away as somehow pathological. An ethnographic study of 488 societies in different parts of the world revealed that 90 per cent of them reported that such altered states of consciousness were a part of their accepted cultural patterns, at least for certain individuals.³⁵

This brings us to a final and most interesting point of similarity, which, for want of a better term, we might call the *concentration of spirituality*.

Even though, as we have seen, both movements managed to integrate foreign elements into an indigenous cultural matrix, this by no means meant that all pre-existing aspects of native religions were uncritically carried over into the new. Quite the opposite is the case: both Hong and the Aladura prophet-leaders used Christianity, particularly its monotheism, as a means to sweep away large portions of indigenous beliefs and practices. The most conspicuous example of this in both cases was the campaign against idolatry, based of course on the First Commandment. One of Hong Xiuquan's first acts upon assuming his new calling was to smash the tablets to Confucius in the school where he taught (a gesture to be imitated, incidentally, forty years later by a youthful admirer of Hong who would go on to become China's most famous Christian, Sun Yat-Sen).³⁶ Later the Taipings also destroyed images and temples to local divinities throughout the area which they occupied, including Buddhist and Taoist shrines. Similarly, the rejection of fetishes, charms, and statues to local deities was a common denominator among the Aladura churches. Babalola's revival of 1930 featured conspicuous burnings of such objects; Oschoffa summarised his founding vision of the Celestial Church of Christ as follows: 'many Christians there [in the mainline churches] who are on their death bed do not see Christ because they had become idol worshippers before their death. This is the task entrusted to me'.³⁷

The anti-idolatry can be seen as part of a desire for some sort of purity that was evident in both movements. This included many features that we normally associate with Puritanism: prohibitions against alcohol, tobacco, opium, gambling, and a distrust of sexuality. During the Taiping rebellion, the leaders enforced strict separation of the sexes in separate camps; even husbands were not allowed to cohabit with their wives. At the same time, women were organised into fighting units with their own officers. The avowed purpose was to concentrate one's energies on the military task at hand—segregation was promised to end when peace came.³⁸ The Aladuras, while not so severe, did insist on separation of men and women in church. Indeed, the CCC constitution, previously referred to, contains a list of prohibitions which reflect the Puritanical impulse: tobacco, alcohol and pork are forbidden, as well as black and red clothing (white robes are worn to church), wearing shoes in church, coloured candles (again, white only), and menstruating women (a common indigenous taboo, though one with Biblical sanction).³⁹ The focus of purification is clearly the church itself as a sacred space, a familiar feature of African religions.⁴⁰ Yet innovation was present in this aspect as well. This is seen in the fact that corpses are not allowed in the church: funeral rites are at the home and gravesite only. This is a departure

both from the previous Yoruba practice and from that of the mainline Christian churches.⁴¹ Services in the Celestial Church of Christ begin with Psalm 51, which is about the cleansing of sin.

It is also clear from the case studies that this concentration of spirituality sets the Aladura churches apart from the indigenous religion in certain ways. All the case studies agree that the Aladura movement is more than simply a reshuffling of previous Yoruba religious elements. Something new is added. To quote Turner,

Many observers have commented on this central conviction, among the independent groups in Africa—that the “impersonal and remote (God) had all at once descended from this heaven, and met them as the holy, incorruptible, but also as the loving God”.⁴²

At the same time, the Aladura practices set them apart from the mainline Christian churches as well. Because these churches had remained European in ritual and had not incorporated much of Yoruba practice, the frequent result was the ‘two-tiered’ behaviour that Horton hypothesised, namely of going both to church and to also the native priest or doctor when the need arose. The members of the Aladura churches did not do so as much; their religion served as a new and genuine synthesis of indigenous and Christian elements.⁴³ Nevertheless, one notices that the ‘two-tiered’ approach does replicate itself in another form, namely of crossovers between the mainline and the Aladura churches. Some of the latter allow dual membership, and one study has noted a significant number of ‘clandestine’ Aladuras who find it more fashionable to belong to a mainstream church but continue to come to the Aladura services as well.⁴⁴

Certainly the ‘quest for purity’ is a phenomenon not unique to the Taiping and the Aladura churches; a collection of essays, edited by Walter E.A. van Beek, appeared in 1988, and included case studies of the Taiping, Calvin’s Geneva, the New England Puritans, as well as the Wahhabis, the Fulani Jihad, the Iranian revolution, and Communism—among others.⁴⁵ Most of these movements shared a political dimension; the editor’s introduction stresses the obsession with evil in all the cases under consideration, which invariably led to the failure of the movements to attain their ideals. The Aladura case suggests, however, that this characterisation may be too restrictive.⁴⁶ Concentrated spirituality may involve a quest for purity that accentuates the positive to a greater degree. Thus, whereas the concentration of religious energy in the Taiping was directed to military discipline, in the Aladura it is directed to prayer. The sheer amount of time spent in church is one indication, evident from the descriptions of the weekly round of services for the various denominations.⁴⁷ Daily morning services are not uncommon, although often

for particular groups within the church, and there are special evening services several times a week in addition to the Sunday service which lasts two to three hours. Recall that the original purpose of the Aladura churches was faith healing, a good example of concentrated spirituality. Many churches also emphasise fasting as a means to spiritual power.⁴⁸

Many will recognise this narrowing of range of religious beliefs and practices to mobilise one's energies and change one's behaviour—and that of the world—as resembling the asceticism which Weber pointed out in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Nonetheless, the commonalities of these African and Chinese movements diverge from Weber's model in some significant respects, particularly his use of the concept of rationalisation. In his writings on the sociology of religion, Weber elaborates this concept as based on such features as a consistently worked-out cosmology and a methodical calculation of means and ends to achieve a result (such as salvation). Neither of these fully captures the phenomena under examination here.⁴⁹ The world was energised for the Taipings and the Aladuras, but hardly disenchanted. Emotions and visions were as much a component of the religious experience as was intellect. Although Bible study was important, there was also a deliberate attempt to preserve the visionary experiences. Several Aladura churches have regular services in which members are encouraged to enter a semi-conscious state, so as better to communicate with the spiritual powers.⁵⁰

A more adequate theoretical interpretation is provided, I believe, by certain ideas of Carl Jung, although not necessarily in ways elucidated by Jung directly. One does not have to subscribe to Jung's notion of a fixed repertoire of archetypes that reside in a human collective unconscious to appreciate his understanding of the power of visions as numinous religious experiences. Like Weber, Jung traced the roots of modern, secular Western society to religious changes. He also envisaged a process of disenchantment, which he described in psychological terms as a 'withdrawal of projections'.⁵¹ By this he meant the growing conviction that belief in deities and spirits are mere superstitions, figments of one's imagination. This could be a very dangerous process, Jung believed, because a person's need to project, i.e. to displace psychic contents onto objects, did not disappear just because these objects were no longer available. The result is that projections become unconscious and thereby more powerful:

After it became impossible for the demons to inhabit the rocks, woods, mountains, and rivers, they used human beings as much more dangerous dwelling places ... A man does not notice it when he is governed by a demon; he puts all his skill and cunning at the service of his unconscious master, thereby heightening its power a thousandfold.⁵²

Jung mounted a powerful critique of the Enlightenment on this basis, associating its campaign against superstition on the one hand with the fanaticism and destructiveness of the French Revolution on the other. 'Our fearsome gods', he wrote, 'have only changed their names. They now rhyme with -ism'.⁵³

While the Taiping and Aladura phenomena do not fit Jung's scenario of secularisation and unconscious projection, they do exhibit the process of psychological divestiture of identification with a multitude of deities and spirits and the concomitant intensification of identification with one God. It was the very simplification of the beliefs and the concentration of the practices themselves, which enhanced their transformative power. This process involves the whole person, not just the intellect or the emotions. Once again, this is a phenomenon that cuts across the usual division between 'traditional' and 'world' religions.

The construction of an ideal-typical model of concentrated spirituality affords material for further comparisons among religious and secular movements across the world. It may possibly be applicable to the recent wave of Pentecostal churches as well, which likewise transgresses the boundary between 'traditional' and 'world' religions. In any case, such a model, if tested against a variety of cases, can perhaps lead to a better understanding of at least one type of response that occurs when disparate religions meet and interact.

Notes

1. Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 1; Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 9-10, 131.
2. Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 248; Walls, 10, 158.
3. Rosalind Shaw, 'The Invention of "African Traditional Religion"', *Religion*, 20 (1990):339-353.
4. *Ibid.*, 340-2.
5. *Ibid.*, 345-6. Cf. Okot p'Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (Kampala: East African Literature Bureau, [1970]), 41, 84-88.
6. These critiques tend to support the thesis of Jean and John Comaroff in seeing the residues of missionary Christianity as a type of colonisation—that of imposing Western forms of thought on African consciousness. See Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution. Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, 1997). This position has called forth its share of critics, who put greater stress on the ways in which Africans shaped the Christianity—particularly its practices, as distinct from belief—in their native

- territories. See Elizabeth Elbourne, 'Word Made Flesh: Christianity, Modernity, and Cultural Colonialism in the Work of Jean and John Comaroff', *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 435-59. The Comaroffs respond to some of their critics in vol. 2, ch. 1. For a more general critique of cultural imperialism, see Ryan Dunch, 'Beyond Cultural Imperialism. Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity', *History and Theory* 41 (2002): 301-22.
7. See Horton's critique of Mbiti and other 'devout' interpreters of African religion through 'Judeo-Christian Spectacles', in *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West. Essays on Magic, Religion and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 189.
 8. Robin Horton, 'African Conversion', *Africa* 41 (1971): 85-108, esp. 101-105; 'The Rationality of Conversion', *ibid.*, 45 (1975), 219-35; 373-99.
 9. Thus Terence Ranger, 'The Local and the Global in Southern African Religious History', in *Conversion to Christianity*, (ed.), Robert W. Hefner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 65-98; Isichei, 96, 228.
 10. Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil. Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), xxiii, 109-110.
 11. Humphrey J. Fisher, 'The Juggernaut's Apologia: Conversion to Islam in Black Africa', *Africa* 55 (1983): 153; Robert N. Wyllie, *The Spirit-Seekers: New Religious Movements in Southern Ghana* (Missoula, MO: The Scholars Press, 1980), 100; Carolyn Ifeka-Moller, 'White Power: Socio-Structural Factors in Conversion to Christianity in Eastern Nigeria, 1921-1966', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 8 (1974): 59-60.
 12. For a sympathetic evaluation involving African and Indian cases, see Deryck Schreuder and Geoffrey Oddie, 'What is "Conversion"? History, Christianity and Religious Change in Colonial Africa and South Asia', *The Journal of Religious History* 15 (1989): 496-518.
 13. Jürgen Kocka, 'Comparison and Beyond', *History and Theory* 42 (2003): 39-44.
 14. *Ibid.*, 42.
 15. *Ibid.*, 40.
 16. My account of the Taiping is drawn mainly from: Jonathan Spence, *God's Chinese Son* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996); Rudolf G. Wagner, *Reenacting the Heavenly Vision: The Role of Religion in the Taiping Rebellion*, China Research Monograph, no. 25 (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1982); Jen Yu-wen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Vincent Y.C. Shih, *The Taiping Ideology* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967).
 17. See H.W. Turner, *African Independent Church*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 2: 312-314, 321-322, which includes the text of a hymn 'Africa shall rise' and mentions the fact that some Aladurans believe in a universal sense of mission to spread African Christian religious sensibility to whites as well. The Taipings, on the other hand, believed that their struggle with the

Qing was to restore an ancient belief in the Supreme God that had become corrupted over the millennia by the worship of many gods.

18. The discussion of the Aladura churches is drawn primarily from: J.D. Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968); Akinyele Omoyajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim. The History of an African Independent Church* (New York: NOK Publishers International, 1982); Afeosemimi U. Adogame, *Celestial Church of Christ. The Politics of Cultural Identity in a West African Prophetic-Charismatic Movement* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999); and Turner (see n. 17).
19. Jen Yu-Wen, 34; Spence, 106.
20. Peel, 83-85; Turner, 2: 18; Adogame, 50. On prominent members, see Ayokunnu Ogunranti, 'Pastor and Politician: Isaac Akinleye, Olubadan of Ibadan (1862-1955)', in *Varieties of Christian Experience in Nigeria*, (ed.), Elizabeth Isichei (London: The Macmillan Press, 1982), 131-136; Omoyajowo, 'Mother in Israel: Christianah Olatunrinle in Ondo (c. 1855-1941)', *ibid.*, 141-146. In a more recent study, Adogame found members of the Celestial Church of Christ in both urban and rural areas (Adogame, 50).
21. Spence, 32; David K. Jordan, 'The Glyphomancy Factor: Observations on Chinese Conversion', in Hefner, 285-303.
22. Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China, 1857-1927* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 7-15.
23. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1920), 1: 508.
24. This deviates from Weber's ideal-typical presentation of the concept, in that Weber linked routinisation to succession following the death of the charismatic leader. See *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 297.
25. Spence, 107-108; Jen Yu-Wen, 50.
26. Thus Shih's detailed discussion of the sources of Taiping ideology devotes 17 pages to Christianity and 107 pages to the Chinese classics!
27. Spence, 254-261, 291-297.
28. Omoyajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim*, ch. 4, esp. 82; Peel, 269-276.
29. Turner, 1: 33; *Lamin Sanneh, West African Christianity. The Religious Impact* (London: C. Hurst, 1983), 184-186, 194-197.
30. Turner, 2: 38-39; Adogame, 75-76, 99.
31. Peel, 126-127; Omoyajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim*, 140.
32. See Adogame, 'Engaged in the Task of "Cleansing" the World?: Aladura Churches in 20th Century Europe', in *Transkontinentale Beziehungen in der Geschichte des Ausereuropäischen Christentums*, ed., Klaus Koschorke (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2002), 73-86. On individual churches, see Omoyajowo, *Diversity in Unity. The Development and Expansion of the Cherubim & Seraphim Church in Nigeria* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984); Jacob Kehlinde Olupona, 'The Celestial Church of Christ in Ondo: A Phenomenological Perspective', in *New Religious Movements in*

- Nigeria*, ed., Rosalind I.J. Hackett (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 49.
33. Omoyajowo, 'The Aladura Churches in Nigeria since Independence', in *Christianity in Independent Africa* (ed.), Edward Fasholè-Luke, Richard Gray, et al., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 105. See also the paper by Olufunke A. Adeboye on the disdain of the Pentecostals for the Aladuras because they had retained too much of the 'traditional' religion, 'Pentecostal Challenges in Africa and Latin America: A Comparative Focus on Nigeria and Brazil', *Afrika Zamani*, nos. 11&12, 2003-2004.
 34. Weber, *From Max Weber*, 245-8, 295-6.
 35. Erika Bourguignon, 'Introduction: A Framework for the Comparative Study of Altered States of Consciousness', in *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change* (ed.), Erika Bourguignon (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973), 9-11.
 36. Harold Z. Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 15.
 37. CCC Constitution, quoted in Adogame, *Celestial Church of Christ*, 17. Cf Peel 95; Omoyajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim*, 16, 94; Turner, 2: 85.
 38. Spence, 120-122, 184-185; Jen Yu-Wen, 120-121.
 39. Adogame, *Celestial Church of Christ*, 131; on the last, cf. Turner, 2: 43; Olupona, 61.
 40. Walls, 118.
 41. Adogame, *Celestial Church of Christ*, 171; Turner, 2: 254-255; Omoyajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim*, 148.
 42. Turner, 2: 337. The internal quote is from Ephraim Andersson, *Messianic Movements in the Lower Congo* (Uppsala, 1958), 180.
 43. The point is made by Turner, 1: 12; Omoyajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim*, 182; Omoyajowo, 'Aladura Churches', 109.
 44. Gabriel I.S. Amadi, 'Continuities and Adaptations in the Aladura Movement: The Example of Prophet Wobo and His Clientele in South-Eastern Nigeria', in Hackett, 89.
 45. Walter E.A. van Beek, ed., *The Quest for Purity. Dynamics of Puritan Movements* (Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 1988). The collection includes studies of Calvin's Geneva, the New England Puritans, the Wahhabi movement, the Fulani Jihad, the Iranian Revolution, as well as the Taiping and Communism.
 46. *Ibid.*, 5-9, 16-17. The editors stress the negative side—the continuous campaign against sin and evil which ultimately renders these movements self-defeating. The Aladura, I think, provide a counter-example of a 'puritanical' church with a positive attitude.
 47. Peel, 157-165; Omoyajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim*, 150-151; Turner, 2: 114-121; Adogame, *Celestial Church of Christ*, 159-162.
 48. David D. Laitin, in his *Hegemony and Culture. Political and Religious Change among the Yoruba* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 36-42, looks to another theoretical model to understand the Aladura: that of the Islamicist

Humphrey J. Fischer. Fischer proposed a three-stage model based on the long-term penetration of Islam in West Africa: (i) quarantine, where foreign traders practised Islam in isolation from the native population; (ii) accommodation, where Islam spreads while incorporating native practices; (iii) reform, a reaction to accommodation in the name of purifying the faith. The concentration of spirituality would be an example of a 'reform' phase. Laitin also interprets the early missionaries to the Yoruba—recaptured slaves, refugees, and other marginal peoples—as illustrating the 'quarantine' stage. My difficulty with this approach lies with the middle term, accommodation. For Islam, it meant adapting increasingly to African customs. For Christianity, by contrast, the expanded conversions of the late nineteenth century seemed to work in the opposite direction, to greater identification with the customs of the foreigner (as evidenced by the adaptation of English names by the Yoruba in Lagos and other trading cities). Also, 'accommodation' misses the increasing racism that distanced Europeans from Yoruba Christians at this very time. Cf. Humphrey J. Fischer, 'Conversion Reconsidered. Some Historical Aspects of Religious Conversion in Black Africa', *Africa* 43 (1973), 24-40.

49. Weber, *Religionssoziologie*, (1:251-253); trans. in *From Max Weber*, 280-281. My interpretation also differs from Peel's, who uses Weberian terminology, pp.120-122.
50. Peel, 164-5, Adogame, *Celestial Church of Christ*, 161. On the balancing of emotional and intellectual components, see Turner, 2: 119-121.
51. C.G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (1937), in *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (ed.), Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, et al., 20 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953-1979), 11: 82-83.
52. Jung, *Marginalia on Contemporary Events* (1945), *ibid.* 18: 594.
53. Jung, *Two Essays in Analytical Psychology*, *ibid.* 7: 203.



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Pentecostal Challenges in Africa and Latin America: A Comparative Focus on Nigeria and Brazil

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Abstract

Latin America and Africa are among the continents that have experienced a Pentecostal explosion within the last half century. In fact, each of the case studies for this paper, Nigeria and Brazil, has a very vibrant and visible, though small, Pentecostal component in its population. This paper compares the contemporary challenges faced by Pentecostals in both countries, and argues that these challenges, to a large extent, are reflective of wider socio-political and economic issues faced by the nations as they grapple with the realities of nation building and related economic issues. A visible impact of this on the Pentecostal movement in both nations is a gradual reduction in the 'other-worldly' focus that had characterized earlier manifestations of Pentecostalism; and a corresponding rise in the engagement with temporal or 'this-worldly' concerns. It is in this sense that the shift from classical or traditional Pentecostalism characterized by the holiness doctrine, to what has been dubbed 'neo-Pentecostalism', characterized, among other things, by the 'prosperity gospel' becomes understandable. In these two countries, there also appears to be an unrelenting negotiation between Pentecostals, who espouse the biblical position of spiritual warfare and deliverance on the one hand, and their respective traditional cosmologies, which emphasize the role of spiritual agents on the other hand. Despite the differences in the socio-political contexts and historical backgrounds of the two countries, it is remarkable that similar processes are discernible in the transformation of the Pentecostal movement and the reaction it has engendered in the larger society.

Résumé

L'Amérique Latine et l'Afrique font partie des continents ayant connu une véritable explosion pentecôtiste au cours de la dernière moitié du siècle. En réalité, chacune des études de cas de cette contribution, en l'occurrence le Nigeria et le Brésil, dispose d'une communauté pentecôtiste très dynamique et très

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visible au sein de sa population. Cet article compare les défis contemporains auxquels sont confrontés les Pentecôtistes dans ces deux pays, et soutient que dans une large mesure, ces défis reflètent des questions sociopolitiques et économiques plus vastes surgissant en même temps que le processus de construction de la nation et d'autres questions économiques connexes, comme en attestent, la réduction progressive de l'«intemporel» qui caractérisait les premiers temps du pentecôtisme, et l'engagement croissant pour les choses temporelles ou «de ce monde». C'est dans ce contexte que l'on doit situer l'évolution du pentecôtisme classique ou traditionnel caractérisé par la doctrine de la sainteté, à ce que l'on a surnommé le «néo-pentecôtisme», caractérisé, entre autres, par le «prosperity gospel» (l'évangile de la prospérité). Dans ces deux pays, il semble également y avoir une négociation acharnée chez les Pentecôtistes, qui épousent la position biblique relative à la guerre et à la délivrance spirituelles, d'une part, et les cosmologies traditionnelles respectives de ces derniers, qui mettent l'accent sur le rôle des agents spirituels, d'autre part. Malgré les différences de contexte sociopolitique et historique de ces deux pays, il est impressionnant d'observer que des processus similaires sont en train de s'y dérouler, au niveau de la transformation du mouvement pentecôtiste et de la réaction que ce dernier a engendrée au sein de la société.

Introduction

There has been a massive explosion of Pentecostalism globally within the last half-century. In Latin America, the explosion could be traced to the 1960s while the African experience has been dated to the 1970s. Different waves of Pentecostal activity have also been identified within the two continents; the trend has been a shift from classical or traditional Pentecostalism to a new Pentecostal experience or what has been dubbed 'neo-Pentecostalism'.¹ Whether 'classical' or 'neo-Pentecostalism', a common thread that runs through Pentecostal Christianity is the experience of a new life articulated in personal narratives of conversion, and the transition from an 'old' life to a 'new' one. This 'new' life is controlled by the Holy Spirit, which is manifested in glossolalia, pneumatic gifts, charismata, and in diverse miracles. Again, the distinctions between 'classical', 'modern' or 'neo-Pentecostalism' illustrate the responsiveness of the movement not only to local changes but also to processes of 'modernity' and the globalization of Christianity.

The comparison attempted here is both spatial and thematic while the choice of case studies is informed by certain similarities between them. Africa and Latin America both belong to the global South. This implies that they face similar problems of underdevelopment, poverty, and sharp social inequalities, though with varying nuances. Added to the Brazilian case is the racial factor, and all these have a bearing on societal response to Pentecostalism. While the central focus of this paper is on Pentecostal challenges,

there is also a discussion of origins, personnel and changes in the Pentecostal movement and these are all situated within specific socio-cultural milieux and historical contexts. Brazil and Nigeria are large nations, each with a population of over 100 million people (Brazil 184 million, Nigeria 137 million) and with a very visible and active Pentecostal component. Brazilian Pentecostals are known as *crentes* locally while their Nigerian counterparts are called 'born-again' Christians.² It is the view of this paper that the peculiar socio-economic challenges of the global South have indirectly affected the development of the Pentecostal movement. Its original 'other-worldly' focus of holiness and 'shunning the world' is being gradually replaced by a more temporal concern with material prosperity, healing and other existential issues. The comparative approach adopted here thus show remarkable similar processes in the transformation of the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria and Brazil.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first looks at the historical background of the Pentecostal movement, first at a global level and then in Brazil and Nigeria. The second section discusses the five Pentecostal challenges identified in the two countries. These are: opposition from other faiths; the challenge of Christian ethics and church strategy; the challenge of political participation and public involvement; the challenge of transnationalism; and the challenge of Christian unity. The last section concludes by drawing out the implication of all these challenges and attempting some generalizations about the Pentecostal experience in the global South.

The Historical Background of the Pentecostal Movement

Global Pentecostalism

The task of establishing an exact origin for the global Pentecostal movement is not an easy one. While some scholars believe that the experience of Pentecost in the Upper Room as recorded in the Bible (Acts 2:1-4) should mark the beginning of Pentecostalism, others see the movement as being an offshoot of the powerful revivals (or Awakenings) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the Anglo-Saxon world. In the former group is Allan Anderson, who identifies the experience of being 'filled' or 'baptized' with the Holy Spirit, which Jerusalem believers had on the Day of Pentecost, as the distinguishing 'proof text' of Pentecostalism.³ J.M. Bonino, in addition, speaks of a modern Pentecostal movement thus implying an old or ancient brand of Pentecostalism. According to him, "it seems clear that what we find in the Pentecostal movement of the last ninety years reflects a persistent tradition attested throughout the history of Christianity".⁴ He further cites the argument of a Peruvian Pentecostal theologian, Fernando Campos, that a

certain Pentecostalism is a permanent dimension of the Christian faith, and that the Pentecostal movement of our times is an expression of that 'Pentecostalism' under the condition of modern culture and religious life.⁵

On the other hand, scholars like David Martin see Pentecostalism as an extension of Methodism spearheaded by John Wesley in the eighteenth century.⁶ This Methodism has been interpreted not just as a religious movement, but also as a cultural revolution. According to Martin, its primary concern was finding the supernatural in the fabric of everyday life.⁷ He also emphasizes the ways in which Pentecostalism replicated Methodism; in its entrepreneurship and enthusiasm, and in its splintering and fractiousness.

There is yet another body of scholars who emphasize the American origins of the Pentecostal movement. They write of the great revivals in the opening decade of the twentieth century led by Charles Parham and William Seymour. Parham is acclaimed as the pioneer of Pentecostalism among North American whites among whom he ministered at Topeka, Kansas; William Seymour, on the other, is seen as the champion of the movement among American blacks through the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 in Los Angeles. In addition, recent Pentecostal historiography emphasizes the black origins of the movement and seems to recognize Seymour as playing a more crucial role than Parham in the early days of Pentecostalism.⁸ However, given the many beginnings of the movement in different geographical locations, it might be more productive to look at its rise within particular localities such as Nigeria and Brazil with which we are concerned here.

In terms of belief, Pentecostal doctrines are generally encapsulated in narratives of conversion, Holy Spirit baptism, and spiritual warfare. The conversion experience deals with a change from an 'old life' to a 'new' one. This produces a change of conduct in the converts, who now consciously try not to return to their 'old life' represented by their pre-conversion years. The next experience for the Pentecostal convert is the baptism of the Holy Spirit reminiscent of the Pentecost experience earlier discussed. The convert receives the power of the Holy Spirit with the physical evidence of speaking in tongues (glossolalia). Endowment of other spiritual gifts could also follow. This prepares converts for a more effective service for God and enables them to live a victorious Christian life that is above sin. It also empowers them to confront the devil and other 'evil forces', and enlist on the side of God in the ongoing 'spiritual warfare' between God and the devil. In addition to all these, the convert is obliged to share the good news of the gospel with others who have not been converted (referred to as 'unbelievers' in Pentecostal discourses). This good news contains the saving power of Jesus Christ and the benefits of a 'new life' in Christ. These benefits range from miracles of

healing and deliverance from both physical and psychological ailments to material blessings and prosperity. The ultimate benefit, however, is everlasting life with Jesus in heaven, which the believers are promised at the end of their lives.

Brazilian Pentecostalism

Brazil is a traditional Catholic nation. However, German Lutherans introduced Protestantism to it in 1823 and the religion gradually expanded among the local people. Scholars of Brazilian Pentecostalism speak of three successive waves of Pentecostal expansion.⁹ The first was from the 1910s to the 1940s. It saw the arrival from the United States of Churches such as the Christian Congregation (1910) and the Assemblies of God (1911). An Italian immigrant, Luigi Francescon, who had been converted in Chicago, founded the Christian Congregation in Sao Paulo. The Assemblies of God was established in Belem, State of Para, northern Brazil by two Swedish Baptists immigrants from Chicago named Gunnar Vingren and Daniel Berg.¹⁰ The Assemblies of God (hereafter AG) drew its early members from the poor working classes in the rubber plantations in Para. The collapse of the rubber industry in 1912 was believed to have sent many of the people back to their native lands in the northeast thus spreading the Pentecostal message in hitherto Catholic strongholds.¹¹ The Christian Congregation in Sao Paulo expanded at a quicker pace than the AG before World War II because Sao Paulo was densely populated.

Altogether, during this first wave, which has been described as the 'Classical phase' of Brazilian Pentecostalism, the early converts were drawn from the lower classes. There was also considerable emphasis on faith healing. In addition, members' conduct was regulated by the church through strict rules of dressing and behaviour, and there were clear boundaries that separated members from the 'world'.¹² In 1930, the AG was nationalized and the headquarters moved to Rio de Janeiro.¹³

The second wave took place from the 1950s to the 1960s during which time the Pentecostal movement fragmented and the first national churches emerged, namely, Brazil for Christ (1955) and God is Love (1962). However, the pioneer of the second Pentecostal wave was the Church of the Foursquare Gospel, which incidentally was a foreign church from the USA. It later gained independence from the Americans in the 1980s.¹⁴ This second phase has been dubbed the modern period of Brazilian Pentecostalism. According to Andrew Chestnut, state emphasis on industrialization attracted many rural dwellers to the big cities.¹⁵ Unfortunately these people could not be employed because they were unskilled. They were therefore constrained to sell their labour cheaply in the informal sector and to inhabit the slums in the big cities. It was

this group of low-income earners that responded to the Pentecostal message. Moreover, this period coincided with the era of 'populist nationalism' as Brazilian leaders sought to develop their country by looking inwards and reducing ties to the global market.¹⁶ It is within this context of local nationalism that the development of a totally Brazilian Church becomes understandable.

The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel brought several innovations to Brazilian Pentecostalism. It introduced large tent meetings, healing crusades and the use of the mass media for evangelism. Manoel de Mello, the first Brazilian to establish a major Pentecostal Church, founded Brazil for Christ. He adopted Foursquare-proselytising strategies and added his own local flavour.¹⁷ He is presented in Brazilian Pentecostal historiography as a very shrewd man who got involved in politics for the purpose of group survival. God is Love Pentecostal Church is believed to have broken away from Brazil for Christ while exhibiting elements of classical and modern Pentecostalism.

The third wave began in the late 1970s and subsequently became strengthened in the 1980s. This last wave was exemplified by churches such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (hereafter UCKG) founded in 1977 by Edir Macedo and the International Church of the Grace of God established in 1980. This period in Brazil was characterized by a debt crisis, inflation and unemployment, which affected the middle as well as the lower classes. It is thus claimed that those alienated by the exclusive modernization process, and neglected by the Catholic Church, found solace in the Pentecostal churches.¹⁸ This third wave, also called the neo-Pentecostal phase, is epitomized by the UCKG with its doctrinal tripod of exorcism, prosperity gospel and faith healing. The special emphasis on exorcism is said to be reflective of the 'enchanted' worldview of Brazilians.¹⁹ 'In traditional Pentecostalism, the demons are kept at a distance; in the IURD [Portuguese acronym for the UCKG], they are sought out and confronted'.²⁰ This dispensation also permits a liberalization of Pentecostal dressing and conduct.

Of all the Pentecostal churches, the Assemblies of God is the largest, representing a third of all Brazilian Protestants. The UCKG ranks as the next in line with almost 4 million members. Behind all these is the historic Roman Catholic Church, which traditionally was the foremost Church in Brazil with tremendous socio-political influence. It makes up 74 per cent of the total population, while Pentecostals constitute less than ten per cent. The local religious landscape also comprised Afro-Brazilian religions whose worshippers make up about 5 per cent of the population.²¹

Nigerian Pentecostalism

Christianity took root in Nigeria in the nineteenth century. The main missionary groups then were the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Wesleyans (Methodists), the Roman Catholic Mission, the America Baptists and the Presbyterian Mission. Their initial spheres of influence were Badagri, Lagos, Abeokuta and Calabar from where they gradually moved into the interior.²² The Pentecostal movement started only in the twentieth century. Again, just like the Brazilian case, three distinct phases could be discerned in the development of the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria. The first phase could be dated from the 1930s when the movement originated, up till the late 1960s. This phase was characterized by interactions between indigenous Pentecostal forms called the *Aladura* and foreign denominational Pentecostal Churches from the USA (the Faith Tabernacle) and Britain (the Apostolic Church).²³ The *Aladura* (lit. practitioners of prayer) movement had started in the early 1920s as a result of the longing in certain Christians for deeper spirituality and reawakening which the mainline churches could not offer. This has been interpreted by Ogbu Kalu as the ‘power question’ in the African cosmology to which earlier mission Christianity had no answer.²⁴

Examples of *Aladura* bodies include the Cherubim and Seraphim founded around 1925 and the Church of the Lord established in 1929. Most of the founders of these bodies were individual prophets who claimed to have seen heavenly visions and received a divine call to preach the gospel.²⁵ Their activities include fervent prayers, spirit possession (which many observers believed was influenced by traditional religious practices) and public evangelism. Some shunned the use of traditional medicine and the services of modern doctors, believing in divine healing. The contact of the leaders of the *Aladura* movement and the doctrines and practices of the Apostolic Church, which they found agreeable, led to a warm relationship between the two. The result of this was the emergence of a group of churches distinguished by the practices of ‘tarrying’ for the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, as well as by a concern for effective prayer, visionary guidance, and of a more spontaneous African style of music and worship.²⁶ All these were not new to the *Aladura* movement; they were indeed the original *Aladura* trademarks. What the Apostolic Church connection did was to reinforce the tenets and inclinations of the *Aladura* and to give it a more Pentecostal twist. Indigenous Pentecostal churches such as the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (hereafter RCCG) clearly epitomized this dialogue with their emphasis on miracles, healings, glossolalia and fervent prayers. Meanwhile, as indigenous churches were springing up in the Pentecostal mould after 1931, more denominational Pentecostal churches from the USA and Britain were spreading into Nigeria. Such ministries

included the Assemblies of God (1940), which became very popular in the eastern part of Nigeria, the Full Gospel Apostolic Church (1949), the Apostolic Faith and the Foursquare Gospel Church (1955).

The second phase covered two decades: the 1970s and 1980s. It saw the rise of interdenominational campus Fellowships, the amplification of the holiness message and a strong emphasis on biblical inerrancy.²⁷ This development was not peculiar to Nigeria. It also characterized the Pentecostal transformation in other parts of Africa²⁸ and was in fact led by a new elite of graduates whose identification with the movement seemed to have enhanced its social rating. The Deeper Life Christian Ministry founded by W. F. Kumuyi is a product of this phase, which was also characterized by an evangelistic fervour. At the other end of the spectrum is the ministry of Benson Idahosa whose activities seem to have straddled the second and third phases of Nigerian Pentecostal expansion. These and other Pentecostal churches of this period became increasingly intolerant not only of the mainline churches, which were considered 'cold', but also of the Aladura churches for accommodating elements of traditional African religions.²⁹

The third phase is the contemporary period, which could be dated from the early 1990s till date. This neo-Pentecostal move features a relaxation of the classical 'holiness doctrine'. The emphasis is now on the prosperity gospel and faith. A few of the churches also emphasize deliverance and healing. New churches were established such as Mountain of Fire and Miracles (1989), Sword of the Spirit Ministries (1989), Christ Embassy (1991), Fountain of Life Church (1992), House on the Rock (1994) and Daystar Christian Center (1995). These churches are led by young, upwardly mobile, educated professionals who appropriated modern marketing techniques in their evangelism. Some of these new churches have also taken over public space hitherto considered unconventional for worship purposes. Such spaces include stadia, cinemas, theatres, nightclubs and conference halls of hotels. Older churches such as the RCCG also began to expand and incorporate aspects of this neo-Pentecostalism. All these produced a visible explosion in the Pentecostal movement. Meanwhile, the socio-political context within which this explosion took place was characterized by tremendous tension occasioned by the oppressive military regimes of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (1985–1993) and General Sani Abacha (1993–1998).³⁰ The untold hardships, impoverishment and sufferings experienced by the masses in the wake of the Structural Adjustment Programme drove them into the Pentecostal churches that promised prosperity, 'breakthroughs', and healing of physical and other types of psychosomatic ailments. The failure of the state as an agent of modernization thus enlarged 'the political space for religious actors' who

minister not only to individual needs, but also diagnose and prescribe spiritual remedies for the political and economic problems of the nation³¹.

The Nigerian religious landscape also comprises other groups. However, it is difficult to give authoritative demographic statistics because census figures have always been contested in the nation for political reasons. The 2000 edition of Patrick Johnstone's *Operation World* in which Christians are said to be 52.6 per cent and Muslims 41 per cent of the Nigerian population has been faulted because it is a Christian source. The US State Department, however, estimate that Muslims outnumber Christians. According to this source, Muslims make up 50 per cent of the population and traditional religious adherents (and those with no religion at all) constitute about 10 per cent. The remaining 40 per cent are Christians. Pentecostals constitute 9.2 per cent of the total population while Roman Catholics are the largest Christian denomination in the country.³²

Pentecostal Challenges

Opposition from Other Faiths: The Challenge of Pluralism

In Brazil, Pentecostals face stiff opposition from Roman Catholics who regard them as 'wolves', stealing sheep, and who classify their activities as fundamentalism, denigrating Pentecostalism as a religion of the underclass. This rivalry is also carried over into the political realm, as Pentecostals seek an active political role and opportunities to ensconce themselves in leadership positions, in order to break the Catholic hegemony and put an end to the discrimination they are suffering in the hands of Catholics. First the AG in the mid 1980s and later the UCKG in the 1990s mobilized their members in corporate political contests against the Catholics.³³

Another belief system with which Brazilian Pentecostalism has had to contend, though not as tensely as Catholicism, is the Afro-Brazilian religion of Umbanda. This is a popular traditional religion that places healing and spirit-possession at the core of its practice. That is why some scholars consider the Pentecostal practice of exorcism ('deliverance') and divine healing as adaptations from Umbanda.³⁴ In fact, research has shown that, before converting to Pentecostalism, many Brazilians would have visited one *Umbanda terreiro* (centre) or the other in search of healing and solution to other personal problems. It was only when relief was not forthcoming from the *Umbanda terreiro* that they resorted to the Pentecostal temple.¹⁵ The fact that Umbanda still remains the first resort of the people continues to make the religion a rival of some sort to Pentecostalism, and, of course, to other Christian forms. David Lehmann, however, offers interesting perspectives on these issues which imply that the religious rivalries are not as serious as

they seem, at least at the cultural level. He warns against the erection of cultural boundaries between Catholicism and Pentecostalism due to some convergence between Catholic and Pentecostal forms.³⁶ The UCKG, for instance borrows from popular Catholic practices in its adoption of prayer petitions, called *pedidos de oracao*. This, according to Lehmann ‘evidently echoes the petitions to saints left by the faithful in Catholic churches, as in the use of Holy Oil, in anointing and a multiplicity of derivative purification rites’.³⁷ He makes a similar observation on the cultural space between Brazilian neo-Pentecostalism and the traditional religion against which it preaches:

.... the preachers use gestures, imprecations and other paraphernalia reminiscent of—or indirectly borrowed from—the cults to overcome and expel the spirits in which the cults and their practitioners believe. This is a particularly high-profile, spectacular example, and involves a measure of caricature which the cult practitioners find highly offensive, but others are more subtle.³⁸

Miriam Rabelo also made similar discoveries in her study of what she terms ‘religious confluence’ among Afro-Brazilian religion, ‘progressive Catholicism’ and Pentecostalism in northeast Brazil.³⁹

A remarkable effect of the Catholic/Pentecostal tussle, especially in the religious sphere is the development of charismatic Catholicism or what has been called a ‘Catholic Awakening’.⁴⁰ In Africa, Kwame Bediako has also described a parallel ‘Pentecostalization’ occurring in the Anglican Churches.⁴¹ However, the most important opposition to Nigerian Pentecostals is from Islam and the dividing line is drawn not just between Muslims and Pentecostals, but also between Muslims and Christians generally. The most recent religious crisis in Jos and Kano areas of Nigeria in May 2004 testify to this. The militancy of Islamic fundamentalists in northern Nigeria is thus matched by the uncompromising disposition of southern Pentecostals, bent on ‘winning the country for Christ’,⁴² as they demonize all Muslims and other ‘unbelievers’.

While traditional religion does not appear to pose so much threat to Nigerian Pentecostalism, scholars have expressed some concern about the increasing tension between Muslims and Pentecostals in the country, and about the implications of such hostility for national unity. This particularly has to do with the increasing politicization of the Pentecostal identity vis á vis the Islamist politics of Northern Nigeria.⁴³ The Brazilian situation does not in any way compare with this. There is thus the need for peculiar remedies to be sought. The solution might be found in the promotion of ecumenical dialogue among the different religious stakeholders, enthronement of religious tolerance as a principal democratic virtue, and the eradication of the ‘winner-

takes-all' syndrome in Nigerian politics, which always makes some section of the population complain incessantly of being marginalized.

The Challenge of Christian Ethics and Church Strategy

A number of the internal ambiguities of Pentecostal churches are subsumed under this heading. First is the issue of conversion. Scholars of Brazilian Pentecostalism point to differences in conversions. The distinction is generally made between once for all/complete conversions, which involve self-exclusion from full social engagement, and a continuing, instalmental form of conversion.⁴⁴ These conversion types have important implications for society and politics. While a few Pentecostals have 'abdicated' their citizenship due to their otherworldly focus, others have jumped indiscriminately into politics. To mediate these extremes, there is the need for a spirituality that addresses socio-political issues through a more pragmatic theology.

Andrew Chestnut has also shown in his study of Brazilian Pentecostals, how their conversion challenges the traditional masculine prestige complex on the one hand, and economically 'empowers' the men, on the other hand. This male prestige complex has been described as "a pattern of conduct characterized by aggression and intransigence in interpersonal relationships".⁴⁵ Bars, brothels and soccer stadia are identified as the social space within which men collectively reaffirm their 'masculine persona' through drinking, sex and sports. What Pentecostalism does is to remove men from this social space, which Chestnut also characterizes generally as the 'street' (*rua*), and to construct a new identity for them within the family and the church, which are presented as sacrosanct spaces.⁴⁶ The result of this change on the personal economy of the convert is that he is more buoyant, and the prosperity of the family increases. However, Brian Smith is quick to point out that because this economic improvement is not based on "new economic opportunities that ... [the men] are better able to exploit nor [on] material aid from outside, but from their own changed personal consumption patterns", it does not lead to a significant advance in social mobility for the individuals concerned.⁴⁷ The challenge here thus lies in the fact that the onus for upward mobility is again returned to the average crente who has to contend with the harsh economic conditions of Brazil.

There is also the issue of the pitfalls inherent in the Faith gospel, especially its emphasis on materialism. The Faith gospel is a global doctrine of Pentecostalism (though with local nuances), which preaches the right of the believer to material prosperity and divine health.⁴⁸ This element of material prosperity has, however, been singled out for special emphasis by some Pentecostal preachers. The resulting 'prosperity doctrine' thus claims that material wealth is not only desirable but is indeed the natural heritage of the

'born-again' Christian. This prosperity doctrine thus served, in the words of Ruth Marshall, to 'integrate the born-again experience of redemption with social mobility, conspicuous consumption and the legitimation of wealth in a time of scarcity'.⁴⁹ The Christ Embassy in Nigeria, for instance, has been involved in scandals in which members embezzled funds from their workplaces and were alleged to have donated large chunks of it to the church.⁵⁰ Even the Redeemed Christian Church of God has had its own share of such scandals.⁵¹ This has negatively affected the image of the neo-Pentecostal churches whose Pastors are largely considered as religious entrepreneurs.⁵² Nevertheless, the prosperity doctrine has been identified by some scholars as part of the efforts at reconstruction and innovation made by neo-Pentecostals in adapting to a hostile and increasingly difficult environment.⁵³ In other words, the new Pentecostal churches are increasingly responding to the needs and aspirations of Nigerians amid the prevailing socio-economic uncertainties in the society.⁵⁴ Shorn of its abuses, the prosperity doctrine thus reflects Pentecostal reaction to the exigencies of a harsh environment.

In Brazil as well as in Nigeria, the issue of the training of Pastors has generated tensions. While the more denominational Pentecostal Churches have seminaries and Bible Colleges where their clergy are trained, the neo-Pentecostals emphasize charismatic and pneumatic gifts above formal training. And the tendency among the latter is to regard seminary-trained pastors as 'overeducated' and lacking in evangelical zeal and devotional fervour.⁵⁵ So while the Pastors may be educated (many of such neo-Pentecostal Pastors in Nigeria are in fact University graduates) they lack professional pastoral training and grooming, they only learn on the job. Such pastors 'graduate' by establishing their own congregations, and they insist they have been equipped by the 'divine call', which they had in a dream, vision, prophecy, or through some inner illumination. They therefore consider this call to be more important than formal training. This explains their inadequacies. This also describes the situation in most one-branch ministries in Nigeria. In Brazil, the UCKG unlike the AG, which has its own seminary, presents a situation in which the laity is made up of individuals that are more educated than those in the clergy.⁵⁶ This created a social distance between them. Again, where younger pastors are more educated than the older ones, there is friction and palpable tension within the church political circles. This holds true for Africa as for Latin America.

Another ethical challenge faced by Pentecostals is the issue of how to maintain their distance from the world system, which is considered corrupt, and at the same time utilize its technology to proselytize. A case in point is the appropriation of media technology by Pentecostals for evangelism. But

while doing this, they are also aware of ‘the corrupting influence’ of the media. More interesting is the ambivalence demonstrated in the disposition of Pentecostal leaders to the society. On the one hand they condemn the world for its hedonistic pleasures and pursuits, while on the other hand they adopt the very entrepreneurial techniques and aggressions of the world to promote themselves in the religious market place. For example in Brazil, the UCKG has a television network (Rede Record de Televisao with thirty channels), which is considered the third largest in the nation, about thirty radio stations, recording studios, a newspaper, a magazine, and several other business ventures with which it finances its mission activities.⁵⁷ In Nigeria too, some Pentecostal churches are beginning to own television stations. For instance, the RCCG owns Dove TV while the Loveworld Christian Television Network belongs to Christ Embassy. This is in addition to the fact that several other Pentecostals regularly buy airtime on other private and public television and radio stations to broadcast their programmes to a mass audience. In addition, they have also taken over several public spaces such as stadia, hotels, cinemas, school halls, civic centres, restaurants, nightclubs etc, which they regularly hire for their worship services. Hence spaces hitherto ‘criminalized’ by Pentecostals as the ‘abode of sin’ are now being appropriated for religious purposes. This ambiguity and seeming inconsistency has generated considerable tension in relations between Pentecostals and other religious groups, which feel the latter are using all possible avenues to ‘entice’ their own members and also to encroach on public spaces to which everybody is expected to have equal access.

The Challenge of Political Participation and Public Involvement

The initial Pentecostal attitude to politics both in Brazil and Nigeria is that believers should not be involved in order for them not to soil their ‘testimonies’. But with time, this attitude has been displaced by a more favourable disposition to politics. In Brazil and indeed in the whole of Latin America, there is increasing Pentecostal participation in politics. This change of attitude is attributable in part to the desire to break Catholic hegemony and put an end to the discrimination suffered by Pentecostals generally. Pentecostal entry into politics has also been explained as an act of cultural defence, ‘as a reaction to changes in the social milieu threatening to undermine the group’s capacity to maintain its culture’.⁵⁸ Since 1986, the AG and the UCKG have played important roles in Brazilian politics. The churches fielded candidates for electoral contests and supported other evangelical candidates. Pastors actively mobilized electoral support for members and some-

times, such support was 'divinely' buttressed by prophecies. In the general elections of 1994, the UCKG elected 12 deputies. In 1998, it had 28, and by 2001 was already trying to form a political party.⁵⁹ However, this growing Pentecostal enthusiasm for politics has been criticized as not being qualitative enough. According to Brian Smith, Brazilian Pentecostals have no overarching political ideology to guide them other than a desire to make society reflect biblical values. Added to this is a lack of intellectual underpinning with which to articulate a 'social ethic that is comprehensive and flexible enough to guide them and other policy makers (including non-Pentecostals) facing complex political, economic and social problems'.⁶⁰ To make matters worse, some Brazilian Pentecostal politicians have not also lived above board in their conduct in public office. Many of them have been accused of corruption, and are said to have reneged on the promises they made before the elections. There is also a general concern that Pentecostals are not supportive of public policy decisions 'reached by consensus if the moral values they hold as absolute are at stake'.⁶¹

The Nigerian case is very different. During the struggle for democracy in the 1990s (which scholars have dubbed the 'Second Liberation Struggle') leaders of mainline churches, together with human rights activists, were at the forefront of the campaign against corruption and military dictatorship. Individuals like Olubunmi Okogie (now Catholic Cardinal), Matthew Hassan Kukah (Secretary of the Catholic Secretariat) as well as Bolanle Gbonigi (a retired Anglican Bishop) became popular as unrelenting critics of the military government. The Catholic Church even had a Justice, Development and Peace Commission, which coordinated its activities in defending human rights. Drawing from Catholic social doctrine, the Commission maintained that the church had a duty to oppose undemocratic government and protest the violation of human rights.⁶² However, Pentecostal churches did not join in this struggle. Instead, they characterized their own intervention as a spiritual offensive aimed, not at an oppressive socio-political system, but at the devil and other malevolent forces ('powers and principalities') who must be dealt with through prayers. This Pentecostal reaction made the human rights movement to accuse it not only of social insensitivity, but also of complicity with the military dictators.

However, it appears the problem lies in the different perception of the situation by the Pentecostal movement, on the one hand, and the human rights movement, on the other hand. The Pentecostal focus has always been on evangelization and personal salvation. In terms of public involvement, Pentecostals are generally interested in social work—schools, orphanages, health institutions; outreaches to drug addicts, 'area boys' (street urchins),

prostitutes and lately, HIV/AIDS victims—than in politics. This gives the impression that Pentecostals would rather seek to nurse and rehabilitate the victims of a predatory socio-political system than to directly challenge the oppressive structures of such a society. In fact, the recent growing interest of Nigerian Pentecostals in politics is a reaction to the Muslim agenda, or to the Pentecostal perception of what the agenda is.

There is thus a need for Nigerian Pentecostals to create a public role for themselves, which goes beyond social work by intervening in political issues. This is because Pentecostal churches not only have an enormous potential to influence public morality, they might also be able to impart some democratic skills given their internal democratization of access to spiritual power, and the manner in which they have engendered tolerance and love among members of diverse origins. Paradoxically, there is also the need for them to reform their internal authority structures, which are more authoritarian than democratic, and preach by example if they are to be taken seriously by the rest of the society. This internal authoritarian structure is similar to the Brazilian case, which has been described by Chestnut as ‘participatory authoritarianism’.⁶³ Another vital contribution, which the churches could make to the political development of the nation, is to re-orientate their members by emphasizing personal responsibility and de-emphasizing the miraculous. This would go a long way in making individuals accountable for their choices and actions.⁶⁴ All the above recommendations could be summed up by Paul Freston’s words that ‘at the institutional level in Africa, Pentecostal Churches may be better in their overall effect on democratic *consolidation* even if less important for democratic *inauguration* than mainline churches’ (emphasis mine).⁶⁵

The Challenge of Transnationalism

Pentecostal churches have the vision to evangelize the whole world. In fact, the world is their parish.⁶⁶ To this effect; they finance missionary outreaches to other countries both within and beyond their own vicinity. According to Karl-Wilhelm Westmeier, for the Latin American Pentecostal, the regions in need of mission also include the United States, where they had quite a number of missions, thus taking the gospel back to ‘the lands from where they were first missionized’.⁶⁷ This observation equally holds true for African Pentecostalism with regards to their mission outreaches in Europe and the United States. In Brazil, the UCKG has established several transnational branches (225 as of 2001). Its first foreign mission was to the USA in the 1980s.⁶⁸ By 1993, it had established branches in several Latin American, African and European nations. By late 1998, the church had spread to at least 52 coun-

tries outside Brazil.⁶⁹ Similarly, in Nigeria, the RCCG established its first transnational branch in Ghana in 1981 and by 2003 it had branches in over 50 nations (30 of these are in Africa).⁷⁰

The main challenge of this transnational expansion is the relatively poor reception these Pentecostal churches encounter in areas outside their culture zones. The UCKG for instance, found it easier to proselytize in areas with which it had cultural affinities, e.g., in other Latin American countries, among Hispanics in the USA, in Portugal and other Lusophone African countries, and among West Indian and West African migrant communities in Europe. In the latter case, the UCKG is simply regarded as a 'black' church.⁷¹ In the same vein, the RCCG has not been able to attract the nationals among whom its transnational branches are established. In the US, Europe and in Asia, it is identified as a 'Nigerian' or 'black' church popular among Nigerian diasporic communities and other migrant groups.

Three factors could be held responsible for this alienation, which cuts across Latin American and African transnational churches planted in the global North. One is the emphasis on demons and other supernatural explanations for events and various human predicaments. Ogbu Kalu describes this as an attempt by Pentecostals to preserve the African configuration of the spiritual universe. He identifies several similarities in Pentecostal beliefs and those of African traditional religion in respect to the knowledge of the spiritual world. This, to him, is not syncretism, but represents elements of continuity in the religious lives of Africans.⁷² Again, this has been described by Gifford as an 'enchanted' worldview, which incidentally is prevalent, not only in Africa, but also in Latin America (via the Afro-Brazilian religion).⁷³ It is this same worldview that underpins the 'deliverance theology of many of the Pentecostal churches. The problem lies in the fact that these Pentecostal churches have been unable to adapt to cultures in which people do not share the same worldview that emphasize the activities of witches, demons and other spiritual agents. There is therefore little common discursive ground between these Pentecostals and their host nations. The second factor has to do with the boisterous worship style and aggressive evangelical strategies of the Pentecostal churches, which also need to be adapted to suit the receiving societies.

The third factor is the practice described by Paul Freston as 'direct ecclesiastical transplant' according to which 'the UCKG and most other Brazilian Pentecostal denominations' employ in their trans-national outreaches, virtually the same techniques that have served them well in Brazil.⁷⁴ This practice is also to be found among African Pentecostal denominations. While its failure rate is high, this doctrine works well in

areas with some similarities with the Pentecostal home nation. A case in point is the success of the UCKG in South Africa. The reasons for this success, according to Freston are: similarity of context—‘considerable urbanization, good infrastructure and a certain cosmopolitanism and racial diversity’.⁷⁵ The second reason is the fact that the UCKG was able to take advantage of the frustrations of unmet hopes and aspirations in the wake of the inauguration of South African democracy. Thus the UCKG ‘... [appealed] both to the disappointed as well as to those who need moral reinforcement to take advantage of the new opportunities’.⁷⁶ He however offers no explanation for the paucity of white South Africans in the UCKG, which interestingly reflects the preponderance of blacks and coloured peoples in mainstream Brazilian Pentecostalism. Meanwhile, other studies of African Pentecostal transnationalism show that this policy of direct ecclesiastical transplant is mostly counter-productive.⁷⁷ All these boil down to the issue of effectively translating the Pentecostal package from one culture to another.⁷⁸

The Challenge of Christian Unity

The fragmentation of the Pentecostal movement both in Africa and Latin America has posed a great challenge to Christian unity, not only within Pentecostal circles, but also within the larger Christian body. Ecumenical bodies such as the Evangelical Association (AEVB) and the National Council of Pastors of Brazil; and, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) have not been able to impose overall unity on the different groups.⁷⁹ The existence of more than one ecumenical body within the same region itself gives room for ample politicking and inter-group tussles. Even within a single group there are cleavages. The high incidence of splinter groups (break-away churches) has not helped matters either. And it appears that the Pentecostal democratization of access to spiritual power earlier discussed, sometimes backfires when individual Pentecostals kick against the authority of their spiritual mentors by claiming they also have enough ‘spiritual capital’ to start their own ministries.⁸⁰ It is necessary that unity be consciously pursued among Pentecostal churches. This would serve as a stepping-stone not only for greater Christian unity but also for inter-religious ecumenism. And according to Kingsley Larbi, this unity should not only be pursued horizontally but also vertically. There should be cooperation between Pentecostals from the global South and their counterparts in the North. Such networks and rapprochement should not be one in which the South is always looking up to the North for help, but one of mutual dependency, where one considers the other as vital and necessary for its progress and development.⁸¹

Conclusion

The Pentecostal challenges examined above are by no means exhaustive. They represent some of the core issues facing Pentecostal Christianity. A major question often asked in the Nigerian case is why the vitality of the Pentecostal movement has not been translated into a moral reform of the society. The Nigerian society still remains very corrupt despite the intensity of the Pentecostal campaign. The reason for this could partly be found in the failure of Nigerian Pentecostals to reform their own institutional structures. They need to abide by their own constitutions, exercise power accountably and generally embody good political practices. It is only then that they can positively affect the nation. It is sad that the crop of self-avowed 'Christian' leaders that Nigeria has had, both at the national and state levels have not lived up to the expectation of the populace in terms of personal integrity and accountability.⁸² Ironically, the 'models' of integrity and transparency eulogized in popular discourses have not been Pentecostals but individuals like the late Tai Solarin (an agnostic), Gani Fawehinmi (a Muslim), the late Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti (a mainline Christian) and Professor Wole Soyinka. Similarly, in Brazil, Pentecostals politicians often fall short of societal expectations; though a large section of the lower strata of the congregations still maintain the reputation of being honest and hard working people. There is thus the need for the churches in both Africa and Latin America to live according to what they preach and reform their structures. If one considers the Pentecostal churches merely as a reflection of the contradictions that exist in the larger society, then such a reform may not be feasible. After all, the churches are cultural products of particular milieux and thus cannot be radically different from the society that spawned them. However, considering Pentecostal claims that they are the 'salt' and 'light' of the world, the onus is thus on them to be different from the larger society, which difference would place them in a position from where they could positively affect their environment.

It is also important to note that the Pentecostal movement in both Nigeria and Brazil has carved a niche for itself as a religion of the lower and middle classes; as an urban phenomenon (it usually spreads from the urban to the rural areas); and, as a movement that appeals more to youth and women than to older men.⁸³ In many Pentecostal congregations, women constitute up to two thirds of the total membership. The feminization of poverty and the fact that women are always at the receiving end of socio-cultural oppression are partly responsible for this. While the gospel of prosperity and its promise of social mobility appeal more to the youth and young at heart, women, regardless of their age category, are particularly drawn to Pentecostal congregations

that emphasize deliverance and healing miracles. Another interesting observation about Pentecostalism is its ability to provoke parallel reforms in other religious systems. We have already mentioned the ‘pentecostalization’ of Anglican churches in Nigeria, and the growth of the Catholic Charismatic movement. Similar developments also occurred in Brazil. But more remarkable is the fact that even Muslim youth groups in southern Nigeria are becoming ‘charismatic’. The NASFAT (Nasir-Lahi-l Fathi), for instance, organizes night vigils, prayer camps, fasts, and prescribe rituals similar to those of Pentecostals. More research is still needed on such Muslim ‘charismatic’ groups.

In some Latin American countries i.e. El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Mexico, scholars have found out that the Pentecostal upsurge is gradually approaching an anti-climax.⁸⁴ Several factors are held accountable for this. These include dissatisfaction with the inability of women to become full pastors, poor quality of preaching and teaching by uneducated ministers, clerical financial scandals, and ‘burnout’ from efforts to live up to the rigorous moral demands of Pentecostalism. Others are: the attraction of materialism among better-off converts, uneasiness with a life of ‘isolation’ from ones non-Pentecostal neighbours, ‘poaching’ of members by other Pentecostal churches, and new aggressive evangelization campaigns by Catholics. Given the contextual similarities in many of the Latin American countries, it is likely that this downward trend may also spread to Brazil if some of the above issues are not addressed urgently. But could the same be said of Nigeria? Some of these symptoms are already manifesting in Nigerian Pentecostalism, though with some variations. What some pastors lack in pastoral training, they have been able to cover up with the performance of miracles. Disgusted with the magical and manipulative nature of some of the miracles, the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission early in 2004 banned Pentecostal pastors from airing miracle services on national television. Discrimination against women from attaining clerical posts exists in Nigeria too. But many women are now ‘breaking away’ from their mother churches to found their own ‘ministries’, while several others partner with their husbands as co-pastors in the church; and on the death of such husbands succeed them as Presidents of the ministries. Only a few of the Pentecostal churches e.g. the RCCG has given full clergy rights to women.⁸⁵ The possibility of a ‘burnout’ due to the rigorous moral demands of Pentecostalism is also remote because it is only the older Pentecostal churches that make such demands. Most of the neo-Pentecostal churches are regarded as being liberal and even permissive by the older ones. They do not shun the world in the same way as the older churches but maintain that the believer should navigate through the world system to get the best that it has to offer.

However, a serious cause for concern is the increasing rate of clerical scandals reported in the media. This has the potential of discouraging serious-minded members if the church does not arrest the situation immediately. Moreover, as most mainline churches (Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Catholic-Charismatic) are also ‘pentecostalizing’ their proselytization methods—they now have open-air ‘revivals’ (crusades), healing services, and emphasize the Holy Spirit—many disillusioned Pentecostals may go back to their former mainline churches. After all, what attracted them to the Pentecostal movement is now available in the mainline churches. Again, the issue of ‘poaching’ of members equally applies to Nigeria but with another interesting dimension. The seeming specialization of churches in the spiritual products they offer in the religious marketplace has made it relatively easy for prospective clients to move freely from one church to the other depending on their individual needs and preferences. Thus people know where to go for deliverance ministrations, for healing, for prosperity messages, and, of course, for the ‘old-time’ preaching on holiness. Apart from the stable nucleus of permanent members of particular churches, there is also a larger crop of ‘affiliates’ who move freely from one church to the other.

The big lesson for Nigerian Pentecostals from the Latin American example is that the Pentecostal explosion should not be taken for granted. Even where socio-political conditions remain hostile, solace is now available in other churches apart from the Pentecostals. And if care is not taken to reform the Pentecostal church and make it more responsive to socio-political issues, it may begin to lose its cutting edge and popular appeal. Brazilian female Pentecostals also have a lot to learn from their Nigerian counterparts, particularly those who have broken through gender barriers in the churches to found their own ministries thus creating alternative spaces of operation for themselves. Finally, the ecumenical bodies or umbrella associations of Pentecostals also have a big role to play in ensuring high moral standards in the churches, and promoting unity, not only among Pentecostals, but also within the entire Christian community. That would give Pentecostals the necessary leverage to enter into inter-religious dialogue with other faiths, thus paving way for the much-needed peace in all the communities and nations concerned.

Notes

1. D. Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 16-17; R.A. Chestnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 45-48.
2. Chestnut, *Born Again in Brazil*, 3, 7-9.

3. Allan Anderson, 'The Origins, Growth and Significance of the Pentecostal Movements in the Third World', Paper given at a Postgraduate Seminar, University of Leeds, November, 1997, 1.
4. J.M. Bonino, 'Changing Paradigms: A Response' in M.W. Dempster, B.D. Klaus and D. Petersen (eds.), *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 123.
5. Ibid.
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80. For more on the concept of 'spiritual capital' see: Olufunke Adeboye, 'Dispensing Spiritual Capital: Faith-based Responses to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Nigeria', Paper Presented at the African Scholars Colloquium, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA., April 2006.
81. Larbi, 'African Pentecostalism', 166.
82. Dr Chinwoke Mbadinuju, governor of Anambra State of Nigeria from 1999 to 2003, who regularly made a public show of his 'deep' Christian commitments, led a government that was characterized by grand corruption, extra-judicial killings and administrative ineptitude. Even at the federal level, large-scale corruption and insensitivity to the suffering of the masses characterize the present administration of Olusegun Obasanjo, who has made no secret of his Christian conversion experience.
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Maritime Policy and Economic Development: A Comparison of Nigerian and Japanese Experiences since the Second World War¹

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Abstract

It is now generally recognized that the maritime sector could, if properly harnessed, play a critical role in the development of regional, national and global economies. This is in view of the growth-pole potentials of ports and ancillary industries. Although a comparison of Japan, a leading global power, and Nigeria, a vastly underachieving African country, might sound far-fetched, the effort is rewarding, as shown in this article, for its implications for public policy formulation and implementation. This paper attempts a comparison of the evolution and implementation of policies relating to the development of ports, the mercantile marine and port industries in both countries. Focusing on the roles of the government and the private sector, it locates the discussion in a wider, global comparative context. The prospects and challenges of regional development through the agency of the maritime sector in both Nigeria and Japan are considered in the light of such concepts as 'maritime industrial development areas (MIDAs)' and 'developer ports'. Pertinent lessons in comparative history and public policy analysis are highlighted in the paper, which has benefited from primary research in both countries.

Résumé

Il est à présent largement reconnu que s'il était bien exploité, le secteur maritime pourrait jouer un rôle crucial dans le développement des économies régionales, nationales et globales, au vu du riche potentiel que représentent les ports et les industries secondaires. Même si la tentative de comparaison entre le Japon, une grande puissance mondiale, et le Nigeria, un pays africain qui a grand peine à se développer, semble pour le moins exagérée, l'effort en reste tout de même gratifiant, comme le montre cet article, du fait de ses implications sur le plan de la

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formulation et de l'application de politiques publiques. Cet article tente de mener une comparaison de l'évolution et de l'application de politiques liées au développement portuaire, ainsi qu'à la marine marchande et aux industries portuaires de ces deux pays. En se basant sur le rôle du gouvernement et du secteur privé, cette contribution situe le débat dans un contexte international et comparatif plus large. Les perspectives et les défis de développement régional par l'intermédiaire du secteur maritime, au Nigeria et au Japon, sont considérés à travers ces concepts comme correspondant aux «zones maritimes de développement industriel» et aux «ports de développement». Cet article formule des leçons pertinentes en matière d'histoire comparative et d'analyse de politique publique, et s'est inspiré de la recherche fondamentale dans ces deux pays.

Introduction

It is now generally recognised that the maritime sector could, if properly harnessed, play a critical role in the development of regional, national and global economies. This is in view of the growth-pole potentials of ports and ancillary industries (Hanappe and Savy 1980). Although a comparison of Japan, a leading global power, and Nigeria, a well-endowed but vastly underachieving African country, might sound far-fetched, it has been accomplished with implications for public policy formulation and implementation (Olukoju 1996b, 2001b).

This paper attempts a comparison of the evolution and implementation of policies relating to the development of ports, the mercantile marine, shipbuilding and port industries in both countries.² Focusing on the roles of the government and the private sector, it locates the discussion in a wider, global comparative context. The prospects and challenges of regional development through the agency of the maritime sector in both Nigeria and Japan are considered in the light of such concepts as 'maritime industrial development areas' (MIDAs), 'export processing zones', and 'developer ports'. Pertinent lessons in comparative history and public policy analysis will be highlighted in the paper, which has benefited from primary research in both countries.

Ports and Regional Development

Seaports constitute the hub of the maritime sector of a nation's economy. For one thing, they are generally regarded as gateways between their hinterlands and forelands—the overseas territories to which they are linked by commerce and other elements. They thus serve as conduits in the exchange of merchandise between opposite ends of the intervening oceans. Moreover, without them, shipping and shipbuilding cannot exist and it is the capacity of a port that determines the volume and regularity of its shipping. Hence, our

discussion will focus largely on ports. However, ports do not exist for their own sake or as mere conduits of trade, but are expected to exert a developmental impact especially on their hinterlands. To be sure, a port has several hinterlands stretching from the port itself to as far as transport links and competing outlets permit. While the proximate hinterlands are likely to be captive to it, other areas may be contested by other ports depending on their differential access to transport facilities (Olukoju 1996b).

That said, a critical issue that is germane to our discussion is the potential of ports as growth poles. Do ports really generate development in their immediate or remote hinterlands? If so, what accounts for this or under what conditions can this be achieved? If such conditions are known, how can the developmental impact be optimised? In any case, what criteria should be employed to measure the developmental impact of ports and how reliable are they?

With regard to the measurement of the economic impact of ports, the Canada Ports Corporation once developed a computerised Economic Impact Model, which supposedly ‘measures the economic benefits of the freight handling activities of [Canadian] ... ports on the local, provincial and national economies ... [and provides] a realistic and defensible assessment of the economic contributions of the ports’ (Tessier 1991:183). This assertion was based on certain observable results. Canadian ports were reported to have generated jobs (direct and indirect), revenue, and personal income quantified in billions of dollars, which derived from port and related activities. However, critics have expressed doubts about the reliability and propriety of such measurements. Some contend that ‘port impact’ studies of this kind were designed by port authorities to justify or attract port investment. Others argue that it is misleading to attribute regional development to the ports, which are ‘only one element in a large number of producing and distributing systems’ which generate economic changes in a given region (Goss 1990:217). It may also be noted that accurate quantification of the regional impact of ports is difficult to achieve in the face of the diffusion (that is, of origins and destinations) of port traffic beyond the narrow confines of a region or nation (ibid: 216).

These foregoing criticisms should not be confined to ‘port impact’ studies as such but may be extended to the whole question of the significance attached to ports in economic development. Orthodox historians would naturally be wary of any explanation that ascribes sole or unduly exaggerated importance to a single causal factor: the pitfall of monocausal explanation. It is in this light that one should view the tendency to attribute developments generated in a region to either the geographical or transport factor. But as is indicated

below, the human factor appears to be overwhelmingly important in this age of technology.

Whatever reservations that one may have about the reliability of the quantification of the social and economic impact of ports and their allied industries on the adjoining cities and regions, it is hardly debatable that port activities and shipping generate employment, and induce industrialisation and overall economic growth. The striking example of Maritime Industrial Developments Areas (MIDAs) in post-Second World War Europe aptly illustrates the immense growth-pole potentials of ports. Even so, it must be conceded that there is a symbiotic relationship between the port itself, on the one hand, and the port-city and port-induced industries, on the other. Economic boom or depression in either a port's forelands or hinterlands immediately affects the port and the silting of the port or the loss of its comparative advantage to rival ports would be reflected in the fortunes of its hinterlands, particularly those that are dependent on it.

A related issue is the role of human agency in these developments. Without prejudice to the now discredited thesis of environmental or geographical determinism, we may note that the development of the maritime sector and, indeed, of the wider economy, reflects the degree of the harnessing together of technological, political, economic, physical and other factors. However, what can hardly be controverted is that human agency can reverse or ameliorate the natural disadvantages of a port or initiate developments in its hinterland or foreland to the advantage or disadvantage of the port (Olukoju 1996c). This is most clearly manifest in the formulation and implementation of policies which achieve port (re)development and foster shipping and industrial growth. Government is more suited to this sort of intervention because it has the capital that such large-scale works entail and it also has the capacity to absorb the impact of the long gestation of such low-return investments. It is capable of formulating policies reversing the natural disadvantages suffered by certain ports and regions. This will be made clear in this study of Japan and Nigeria in the aftermath of the Second World War. We begin by outlining the development of the Japanese maritime economy and policies.

Maritime Policy and the Japanese Economy

It goes without saying that maritime economies and societies are closely associated with the sea. In this connection, the length and nature of a nation's coastline, the magnitude of its mercantile marine and port-related industries, the level of development of internal communications and the political and economic framework in which these developments take place determine to a large extent the growth and development of its maritime sector. Japan, as an

archipelago, is abundantly endowed with hundreds of seaport outlets of varying sizes and importance whereas Nigeria has only one natural harbour at Lagos. In terms of population, the respective figures are both in excess of one hundred million though the absolute figures for Nigeria are rather imprecise. Though both countries each have populations in excess of one hundred million persons, Japan has a considerable edge in the level of its economic, social and political development. It is the second largest economy in the world with a well trained, highly motivated and skilled workforce. While it has made giant strides in technological and scientific development, the reverse is the case with Nigeria. With the exception of a brief period of Allied Occupation after the Second World War, Japan has always been a sovereign nation with a rich and proud tradition. Conversely, the Nigerian nation state was formally established under British colonial rule which lasted from 1861 to 1960.

A good starting point in our discussion is to elaborate on the geography of Japan in relation to its maritime economy. Japan consists of the four main islands of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu aligned in a northeast-southwest axis. There are also other islands, including the Okinawa chain, lying in the direction of China. These islands are deeply indented and, so, contain many natural harbours. The key ports include Yokohama, Osaka, Kobe, Nagoya, Tokyo, Kawasaki, Shimizu and Dokai. Under the Port and Harbour Law of 1950, the ports were classified in accordance with their importance to the national economy. By 1960, the most important, known as Specially Designated Ports, were Osaka, Kobe, Nagoya, Tokyo, Shimonoseki, Yokkaichi, Moji, Kokura, Dokai, Shimizu, Kawasaki and Yokohama. The next group consisted of Major Ports, about eighty in number, which included Hakodate, Muroran and Otaru on Hokkaido, Niigata, Tsuruga, Sakai, Saigo, Aomori, Chiba, Yokosuka, Kinuura, Hiroshima and Iwakuni on Honshu, Kochi, Niihama and Komatsujuma on Shikoku and Kagoshima, Beppu, Hakata and Nagasaki on the Kyushu islands respectively. There were also over thirty Ports of Refuge spread all over the islands (Olukoju 1996c, 1997).

As is well known, the modern economic history of Japan, and the point of take-off for its rapid transformation into a global leader, was the Meiji Restoration, which took place in January 1868. Guided by a patriotic leadership committed to catching up with the West, Japan underwent such social, political and economic transformation that it had become a leading regional power by the end of the century and a world power by 1914. The Meiji government pursued a policy of rapid industrialisation and modernisation encapsulated in the slogans *Shokusan Kogyo* (industrialisation) and *Fukoku Kyohei* ('Rich Nation, Strong Military'). Hand in hand with industrialisation went the development of infrastructure with Western technical

assistance. A notable, though futile, effort to undertake major port engineering works was the Nobiru port project, the failure of which was a spur to more successful efforts elsewhere (Masuda 1981). All along, it was clearly understood that the national government had a leading role in harbour improvements and fleet development. With regard to the ports, which were categorised into first and second class, as well as local ports, official policy stipulated that it was the duty of the national government ‘in line with the national interest ... [to] plan, improve and manage ports’ (Nakamura 1983: 54). Hence, the national government undertook the construction of breakwaters, seawalls and other protective facilities; anchorages and other facilities. It was also responsible for up to half the cost of land reclamation and other port projects. Ports which were accorded second-class rating were consigned to the local governments, which still received subsidies from the national government. Local ports were administered by public bodies and did not receive any financial assistance from the government.

Prior to the Second World War, Japanese ports policy had given prominence to government intervention and control, without totally eliminating private sector participation. From the end of the Second World War, the Port and Harbour Law of 1950, revised in June 1951 and April 1957, streamlined the roles of various actors in that sector of the economy. Beyond classifying the ports, the Law allocated responsibilities among the various stakeholders and set out goals and targets to achieve. A striking feature of port policy was the overwhelming role of the central government in initiating policies relating to provision of infrastructure, tariff setting and coordination of policies and services with overall national development. The effective implementation of these laws—the Port and Harbour Law of 1950 and its amendments, and the Law for Emergency Measures for Port Improvement—contributed largely to the rapid developments of the 1950s and after (Takeuchi 1983:33).

The Port and Harbour Law of 1950 marked a turning point in Japanese port development and administration as it clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of port authorities in post-war Japan (Olukoju 1997). To be sure, the Law was based on the foundations of Japanese political economy, especially, the tradition of centralised planning, budgeting and tariff-setting, and the reality of Allied Occupation. With regard to the latter, the Law borrowed extensively from the practice in the United States. While port management bodies, including private sector operators, were involved in the day-to-day administration of the ports, the central government continued to play supervisory and interventionist roles in port administration and development. The Ministry of Transport (now renamed the Ministry of Land,

Infrastructure and Transport) exercised this responsibility on behalf of the central government by performing the following functions:

- (a) formulating national port development policies and necessary laws and regulations;
- (b) offering advice to port management bodies;
- (c) scrutinising and coordinating port and harbour plans for the major ports;
- (d) setting technical standards for port planning, design and construction;
- (e) fostering technical innovation in ports;
- (f) financing construction works;
- (g) executing port construction; and
- (h) developing and maintaining channels out of port areas.

Still, other ministries were involved in health, security, customs administration, environmental, financial, immigration and legal aspects of port administration in Japan. It is striking, however, that unlike in many other countries, including Nigeria, Japan does not have the equivalent of a National Ports Authority. The Ministry of Transport coordinates activities in this sector while each port is managed by its management body in line with the Port and Harbour Law. Yet, there are areas of overlap of authority between municipal authorities and port management bodies. A striking example is the issue of waterfront development which lies at the interface between the city and the port. Here, the Port and Harbour Law encounters the City Planning Law; and the Ministries of Transport and Construction also have to share responsibilities. Inevitable disagreements are easily resolved through negotiation (Nakamura 1983).

A cornerstone of port policy was the decision to make ports the lynchpin of regional development. Related to this is the understanding that ports should not be run merely as commercial enterprises which have to make profits or, at least, balance their books. The regional developmental impact of port development projects was considered a sufficient return on port investment. A third element of port development policy was the emphasis on research and engineering. Hence, the Port and Harbour Research Institute and the Ports and Harbours Bureau have invested in human capacity and innovative technology in the area of port engineering.

In general, port policy was responsive to the spectacular development of the national economy in the 1960s. In particular, it had had to contend with the negative effects of the massive growth and concentration of population in the Pacific Industrial Zone. This required the rectification of regional disparities and the dispersal of the population and resources concentrated in

a few regional centres. Consequently, the Law to Promote the Construction of New Industrial Cities was enacted in 1962 and fifteen such cities were developed across the country, though mainly along the coastline. An Act of 1964, which provided for the creation of Special Areas for Industrial Development, produced six Special Areas based on the earlier identified industrial bases. In all of this, the ports served as the hub of development. At such locations, urban and regional development plans, containing infrastructure, city planning and industrial components, were implemented (*Ports and Harbours in Japan*, 2002:65).

Specifically, port and regional development has been pursued through 'developer ports', created in depressed regions as a catalyst of industrial and urban development (Olukoju 2004). This was the case in Kashima and Tomakomai on the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido, respectively. At both places, much expense was incurred in developing artificial ports in economic backwaters. With the development of the ports, urban centres emerged with the migration and settlement of people, mainly workers, the provision of social and economic infrastructure, and the establishment of industries. Although port impact studies have generated their own controversies, it can still be established that the ports registered manifest socio-economic impact on the adjoining communities. This may be gleaned from the increase in port traffic, the growth in industrial output and the rise in demand for commercial products by a burgeoning urban settlement. Remarkable changes took place in Kashima, a city (and region) that developed in the aftermath of the development of a 'developer port' in a hitherto backward area of Japan.

The development of the port and the industrial projects had an immediate social and economic impact on Kashima, the Ibaraki Prefecture and wider areas of Japan as far afield as the mega-cities of Tokyo and Osaka. There were dramatic changes in the absolute size of the population, and in the number and composition of the labour force. The population of Kashima increased five-fold from 57,000 in 1960 to 300,000 in 1975, while the number of workers rose sharply from 28,000 to 122,000 within the same period. However, the proportion of workers engaged in primary, secondary and tertiary industries changed significantly. In 1960, the bulk (20,000) was engaged in primary industries while 3,000 and 5,000 respectively were employed in secondary and tertiary industries. In 1975, the trend had been reversed: the highest proportion (58,000) was employed by secondary industry, followed closely by tertiary (52,000) while primary industry employed only 12,000 (Takeuchi 1983:38).

These figures demonstrate the rapid transformation of what had been an agricultural area into one of industry and commerce. The erstwhile economic backwater had become a large industrial zone, with implications for population

movements and standards of living. Urbanisation necessitated the provision of public infrastructure such as roads, waterworks and sewerage. In terms of the percentage of the population with access to potable water supply, Kashima had exceeded the average for the Prefecture and almost equalled the national average by 1980. More remarkably, the transformation of Kashima affected the larger cities, such as Tokyo and Osaka, from which people and industries drifted (Takeuchi 1983:40-41).

The direct impact of the construction of the port on the maritime trade of the region was most remarkable. The number and tonnage of foreign shipping increased dramatically from zero in 1968 to 980 and 24,302 respectively in 1975. The domestic traffic increased from 104 vessels with a tonnage of 24,000 in 1965 to 7,974 vessels and 7.56 million tons respectively in 1975 (Akatsuka 1977:98).

At Tomakomai, no less dramatic changes followed the construction of a 'developer port'. As was the case at Kashima, port development at Tomakomai (West) transformed the regional economy and society. The volume of industrial output and number of employees increased dramatically. The number of factories rose from about 70 in 1951 to about 270 in 1975 while the labour force swelled from about 5,000 to some 12,000 within the same period. The volume of commercial sales tripled from about 50 billion yen in 1958 to 150 billion yen in 1972 and the number of stores quadrupled from about 500 in 1952 to well over 2,000 by 1972. The statistics buttress the assertion that 'the location of industry (at Tomakomai)... enhanced by port construction, improved the industrial structure of the entire nation and increased its overall economic growth potential' (Takeuchi 1983:44).

In general, ports policy was responsive to the changes in the local and global economies. Hence, during the period of accelerated economic development in the 1960s and the consequent shortage of port capacity, the government enacted the Law on Emergency Measures for Port Development and drew up the first Five-Year Port Development Plan in 1961. Both measures were coordinated with the overall national development plan—the Plan to Double the People's Income—and resulted in a considerable expansion of port facilities (Ports and Harbours in Japan 2002:65) As the examples of Kashima and Tomakomai show, the policy did achieve the goal of regional economic development. Although the results were uneven, it has been claimed that the development plan had succeeded in 'promoting new industrial zones in areas outside of existing development zones ... Development has not only provided thousands of people in these areas with jobs, but it has helped to revitalize the economies in these areas' (Ports and Harbours in Japan 2002: 66). A related development in maritime policy towards the ports was the coordination of port and city planning in the 1970s. This was characterized

as 'The Era of Port and City Co-Existence' (Takeuchi 1983:36). Closely connected with this was the injection of environmental considerations into port policy. The declared aim was 'the creation of a pleasant port environment' (Nakamura 1983:62). These programmes integrated such activities as waste disposal through landfills, creation of green zones and provision of environmental protection facilities along the coastal zones. The consequence was an improvement in the living environment in spite of the intensification of port, industrial and urban developments. By the early 1990s, maritime policy aimed at creating 'ecoports', which took 'animals and plants into consideration as well as humans' (*Japan Times* 18 March 1994: 2). In response to population explosion, the Japanese also intensified the process of 'taking the cities to the sea'—extending the cities into reclaimed areas of the coast (Matthews 1989). Finally, the comprehensive policy by the Ministry of Transport in 1985, captioned 'Ports and Harbours Towards the Twenty-First Century', unveiled a strategic (long-term) plan to make the port area a highly diversified but functionally integrated complex consisting of diverse components—economic, social, recreational and technological. The constituents of the policy were outlined in 'An Enriched Waterfront Policy' (*Ports and Harbours in Japan* 1993:23).

The development of a strong mercantile marine has been the other plank of Japanese maritime policy since the Meiji Restoration of 1868. This consisted of fleet development and shipbuilding, two related industries. The encounter with the American naval expedition led by Commodore Matthew C. Perry in 1853 had demonstrated the overwhelming superiority of Western naval and mercantile technology. Hence, it was decided to adopt measures to counter the looming danger of the possibility of foreign take-over of Japanese coastal shipping as had happened in neighbouring Asian countries. The government consequently accorded priority to shipping and shipbuilding to reduce dependence on foreign shipping lines and to boost foreign trade and conserve foreign exchange. In any case, as the mercantile marine is known to be a reservoir for the navy, national security considerations also informed the interest in the development of the mercantile marine. However, the government did not act alone; it involved and fostered the private sector in the development of Japanese shipping and shipbuilding industries (Details in Chida & Davies 1990).

The judicious blend of patriotism and the profit motive had ensured that by the 1890s, Japanese shipping lines had been firmly established in coastal shipping. The notable shipping lines had enjoyed enormous patronage from the government in the form of subsidies and monopolies of cargo or routes. The career of Yataro Iwasaki of Mitsubishi epitomised the public-private

sector partnership in the formulation and implementation of a maritime policy that adequately served national and private interests. The Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK), which emerged in 1885 from a merger of Mitsubishi and rival lines also exemplified the official policy of fostering indigenous shipping lines that were capable of facing up to the challenge of foreign competition. Official policy in this regard was Darwinian: it supported the strong against the weak so that enforced mergers could create firms strong enough to face foreign competition. This strategy proved successful as NYK proved too strong—with further state support—for rival foreign lines like the British-owned Peninsular and Oriental (P&O) Steam Navigation Company, which was forced out of the Shanghai-Yokohama route after a rates war. Meanwhile, by 1890, another government-aided line, the Osaka Shosen Kaisha (OSK), originally established in 1884, also emerged from a process of government-induced mergers among rival lines in 1884. A third such line, the Toyo Kisen, established by a businessman known as Asano, was also fostered by the government and funded largely by Zenjiro Yasuda, founder of the Yasuda zaibatsu. This was in the aftermath of the passing of the Zosen Shorei Ho (Shipbuilding Promotion Law) in 1896.

The maritime policies of the Japanese government before the Second World War were anchored on certain laws passed to promote the development of the maritime sector in the wider context of national economic development. The Navigation Promotion Law and the Shipbuilding Promotion Law of 1896 were passed to grapple with the shortfall in tonnage and the fact that Japanese shipping still accounted for just ten per cent of total foreign trade. Subsidies were granted to shipbuilding and special focus was given to building an ocean-going, as opposed to a coastal, fleet. The Long-Distant Sea Liner Service Law of 1910 was designed to encourage the growth of Japanese ocean liner services. In 1918 the government directed the Nippon Kogyo Ginko (The Industrial Bank of Japan) to give low-interest loans in aid of shipbuilding in Japan. That bank was to be a major and crucial source of shipbuilding finance in Japan down to the present (Chida and Davies 1990: 35). Various policies and laws were also employed to assist the maritime industry during the inter-war depression and after (*ibid* 47-50). The point to note is that the government played an important role in promoting growth in the sector in the overall interest of the nation.

As is well known, the Second World War had a devastating effect on Japanese economy and society, and culminated in defeat and Allied Occupation from 1945 to 1952. Japanese maritime infrastructure, especially the naval and mercantile fleets, was destroyed to varying degrees. The fleet was the worst hit but the shipbuilding infrastructure sustained only about

twenty per cent damage in all. A turning point in post-war maritime administration was the introduction in 1947 of the Kei kaku Zosen (Programmed Shipbuilding Scheme) sponsored by the government. This has been described as 'the most significant action taken by the state to promote the growth of its shipbuilding and ship-operating industries ... [The] scheme has remained in existence to the present day' (Chida and Davies 1990:69). The scheme supplied virtually all the capital required by the resurgent shipping firms to order tonnage from their shipbuilding counterparts. This had a mutually beneficial or symbiotic effect on Japanese shipping and shipbuilding industries. As the latter soon broke into the export market, the scheme began to focus more on the requirements of the shipping lines.

In May 1947, the Senpaku Kodan (Shipping Corporation) was established to operate the Programmed Shipbuilding Scheme. In the disbursement of funds under the scheme, the Kodan supplied 70 per cent while the ship-owner provided the balance. The vessels thus acquired were jointly owned in that proportion but the latter was given the option of buying the Kodan's share within a ten-year period. A striking feature of the arrangement was the stipulation that the money advanced by the Kodan did not have to be paid if the ship-owner was not making a profit. Such favourable conditions resulted in the rapid growth of the merchant fleet.

Funding for the scheme was initially provided by the Fukkin (The Rehabilitation Finance Bank) but this was terminated in 1949. In its place, the Counterpart Fund of the US Aid to Japan (the Mikaeri Shikin) filled the gap between 1949 and 1952, when it was abolished following the signing of the Peace Treaty between the US and Japan. From 1953 to date, the Nippon Kaihatsu Ginko (The Development Bank of Japan) has been responsible for financing investment in the maritime sector. The Kaigin, as the Bank is better known, is a semi-governmental organisation charged with making public funds available to key industries from postal savings and social insurance premiums. It lends to such projects at less than market rates. A notable feature of this period was the indiscriminate disbursement of the funds leading to the proliferation of shipping lines and the aggravation of competition.

Consequently, by the early 1960s, Chida and Davies note, excessive competition among these lines had prevented the shipping industry from fulfilling the government's expectation that shipping would make important contributions to the national economy. State policies had thus proved to be 'counter-productive and self-defeating' (1990:140). Eventually, the government passed the Kaiun Saiken Niho (The Two Laws for the Reconstruction of the Shipping Industry) in June 1963 and they came into effect in April 1964. The import of these laws was the enforced mergers of several major shipping firms to create nucleus companies each with a

minimum of half a million deadweight tonnage (dwt). Such nucleus companies were to act as 'parent' companies to others within their new grouping. The combined tonnage capacity of the 'parent' and associated firms in each case was to be in excess of one million tons dwt. Firms which took part in these mergers were assured of continued support under the Programmed Shipbuilding Scheme and the Interest Subsidy Scheme. They were also entitled to the postponement for five years of interest rate payments on outstanding past loans obtained from the Development Bank of Japan. This policy produced six main groups of shipping firms from a combination of 88 firms. The nucleus companies were NYK, Yamashita-Shin Nihon Kisen Kaisha, Showa Kain, Japan Line, Kawasaki Kisen and Osaka Shosen-Mitsui Senpaku (Mitsui-OSK Line) (Chida and Davies 1990:144, Table 5.1). In all, the reorganisation produced positive results as the shipping companies, both nucleus and associated, soon made profits and paid dividends within the five-year target set by the government. 'Excessive competition', it has been noted, 'was eliminated, individual firms increased their efficiency by internal changes and there was a gradual improvement in the world shipping market' (Chida and Davies 1990:145). The general improvement in the global markets and the cooperative attitude of the Seamen's Union, which was naturally apprehensive that the reorganisation might entail huge job losses, had also contributed to this favourable outcome.

It may be noted that government maritime policy towards shipping and shipbuilding was a proactive response to various dynamics. Up to the 1960s, priority was accorded to reorganising and expanding the fleet. By 1967, with the achievement of that objective, attention shifted to ensuring the provision of adequate supplies of tonnage to facilitate the ongoing phenomenal growth of the economy. Again, emphasis was no longer placed on merely earning foreign exchange from shipping, since massive exports had improved the balance of payments position. Now, though the account of the shipping industry was still in the red—given the huge capital outlays of the period—the goal was to ensure efficiency in shipping services. Shipping was now developed to meet the needs of an expanding economy, which required massive imports of raw materials and, accordingly, exported manufactured goods on a large scale. Yet another development from the late 1960s was the growing financial strength of the Japanese shipping industry which reduced its dependence on public funds for fleet development. However, the oil crisis that followed the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, among others, severely affected Japanese shipping which was saddled with a large amount of idle, excess tonnage. This necessitated another round of mergers in the shipbuilding

industry, which produced seven large firms and two groups of smaller ones (Chida and Davies 1990:152-69).

It is clear from the foregoing account that Japanese shipping and shipbuilding benefited from government policy in the face of global and domestic vicissitudes. As well, those industries also served the ends of the state in promoting industrial and economic development, conserving foreign exchange and generating employment. Coupled with ports policy, this was a major plank in the official attempts at promoting overall economic development. A notable feature of these policies is their dynamism, responsiveness and coordination both in the face of challenges and in the pursuit of a common goal. The Nigerian experience is examined below as a complement to the foregoing discussion.

The Nigerian Experience in Port and Maritime Development and Administration

The beginning of modern port development in Nigeria may be traced to the British occupation of Lagos, a notorious centre of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, in 1861, and the subsequent colonisation of the Nigerian hinterland. Lagos and Port Harcourt eventually emerged as the leading ports following extensive and expensive harbour works. At Lagos the most extensive works carried out during the colonial period (1861-1960) took place before the Second World War, while Port Harcourt was created from scratch (as in the case of Kashima) in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. The details of the harbour works have been provided elsewhere and need not delay us here (Olukoju 1992b, 1996a). We shall rather focus on maritime policy in terms of port development and administration from the colonial period to recent times.

Port development policy oscillated during this period from concentration to diffusion (Ogundana 1970, 1972). The former refers to a policy of concentrating investment in, and developing, a few ports, at the expense of the rest while the latter involved developing a multiplicity of seaport outlets. Such contraction and expansion reflected the prevailing global and local economic conditions which dictated the demand for shipping and port facilities. Hence, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, major public works (including harbour works) were suspended or deferred especially as the volume of maritime trade and shipping had contracted. Conversely, the optimistic outlook fostered by a trade boom (as in the immediate aftermaths of the two world wars) or the expectation of one, induced the formulation and implementation of port development projects.

In terms of the administration of Nigerian ports, policy was characterised, up to the mid-1950s, by a combination of duality of control and multiplicity

of authorities. First, the duality of control meant that private interests such as the United African Company and the foreign shipping lines, specifically, Elder Dempster Shipping Line, controlled certain activities such as lighthouse (Olukoju 1992a, 1992b, 1994, 2001-2002), and controlled certain ports (such as Burutu). Second, there was a multiplicity of authorities in the ports, especially the major ones like Lagos and Port Harcourt. Among these were the Railways, Customs, Port Engineering and Marine, each handling specific aspects of port operations, such as tariff collection, transport, pilotage and harbour works. These government departments were embroiled in an acrimonious inter-departmental rivalry which impeded the effective coordination of services and port operations (Olukoju 1992c). The management of the crisis entailed a series of investigations and administrative reorganisation but it was not until the Nigerian Ports Authority was established in the mid-1950s that a semblance of order was established. Paradoxically, maritime administration in Nigeria has since degenerated into a jungle of competing authorities hindering and meddling with the efficient operation and administration of the ports.

By virtue of the Ports Act 1954 (Cap 55) of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, the Nigerian Ports Authority was established as the sole authority in control of Nigeria's ports in place of eight government departments. The NPA came into being with jurisdiction over the operation of cargo-handling; maintenance, improvement and regulation of harbours and approaches; dredging, pilotage services, lighting and navigational aids, and related services. The NPA embarked on indigenisation ('Nigerianisation') of its staff and the construction of a wharf extension at Apapa and harbour works at Port Harcourt. Yet, within a decade, its activities had come under the scrutiny of a commission of inquiry. The Justice Beckley Tribunal found out that the NPA had engaged in redundancy and jobbery in its appointments, and its operations had been bedevilled by ethnicity, corruption and inefficiency. The civil war caused the enforced contraction of Nigerian maritime operations following the closure of eastern Nigerian ports such as Port Harcourt and Lagos became the only functional seaport. In 1969, the military government formally placed the ports of Warri, Burutu and Calabar, hitherto under private control, under the control of the NPA.

The civil war was followed by the requirements of reconstruction and the oil boom in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. Massive imports engendered by these developments resulted in unprecedented port congestion, characterised by the infamous cement armada whereby ships carrying cement stayed outside the ports in a long queue of vessels waiting to berth and offload their cargo. The country incurred huge losses in demurrage and damaged cargo, in addition to the unscrupulous dealings of some Nigerians and

foreigners. The government then embarked on massive port development not only to cope with that exigency but in anticipation of increasing demand. But the slump of the 1980s forestalled the latter and left the country with under-utilised facilities.

Meanwhile, port administration was undergoing certain changes which worked against efficiency and motivation of staff. First, the appointment of a military Port Commandant in the face of the port congestion of the 1970s eroded the influence and efficiency of the NPA Board, and breached the norms of due process and accountability. Second, the public sector reforms of the 1970s dampened the morale of NPA staff, who were now made to work under civil service conditions of service, especially pay. Third, certain powers of the NPA were transferred to the Minister of Transport, who became the supervisory authority for the Authority. The consequence of these developments was that the NPA 'moved from an autonomous status to that of a department of the Federal Ministry of Transport with its centralised control, no user representation advisory board and all the trappings of civil service bureaucracy' (Ovbude 1991:276).

These changes had wider and deeper implications for the NPA and the entire ports sector. The most striking is that the Authority was not consulted when the Ministry embarked on some important projects within its area of competence. This was the case with the Tin Can Island and Sapele ports. In the former case, adequate preliminary investigations were not carried out and, so, the NPA was saddled with dredging costs that would have been avoided. In the latter, the new port was too close to another at Warri, thus making it a white elephant project. The Sapele project and the construction of five berths (instead of the two recommended by the NPA) at Calabar were undertaken by the civilian government of President Shehu Shagari for political reasons.

A related policy thrust was the 'commercialisation' of port administration in Nigeria in the late 1980s. By Decree 25 of 1988, the NPA was listed among thirty-five state-owned enterprises slated for commercialisation. Ninety-two others were to be privatised. The aim was to make the NPA make profits on its operations. Such a policy implied that the government would give the operators a free hand not only in day-to-day administration but in the setting of port charges and the collection of revenue. Unfortunately, the professed aim was never achieved, although the NPA (then renamed Ports PLC) was finally weaned off its dependence on state subventions as it succeeded in earning enough and making profits from its services to shipping and other port-users. However, the government never gave its officials a free hand at least to the extent of appointing the Authority's Board of Directors and interfering in other ways. The NPA was never rid of political jobbery,

sinecurism and large-scale fraud which had destroyed (or subsequently decimated) other government parastatals, such as the NNSL and Nigerdock, which were supposed to be financially solvent.

In all, port development in Nigeria has had a measurable impact on city and regional development though the extent varies with each port. To be sure, the export processing zone developed around Calabar port in eastern Nigeria has yet to make the expected impact. A recurring factor in the decline of the port is that its natural hinterland is in the Republic of Cameroon. This has robbed it of a critical factor in its development, unlike the case at Lagos and Port Harcourt.

That said, the most profound case of port-induced urban and regional development has been that of Lagos, which generated a huge population concentration in an adjoining metropolitan area that extends inland up to Ota, some forty-five kilometres to the north. Major developments at Apapa have also fostered an industrial zone that has grown in depth since the 1960s. Industrial zones have also sprouted at Ilupeju, Yaba and Ikeja as the port exerts its direct and indirect impact on its immediate hinterland. By 1971, the Lagos metropolitan area was dotted with six industrial estates. By 2000, functional estates included those at Apapa, Agidingbi, Amuwo Odofin, Gbagada, Iganmu, Ijora, Ikeja CBD, Ilupeju, Kirikiri, Matori, Ogba, Oregon, Oshodi/Isolo/Ilasamaja and Surulere (Light Industrial) (Akintola-Arikawe 1987:116, Table 6). The industrial estates at Ikeja and Mushin had owed their existence to the industrial policies of the Western Region government since the late 1950s but others too had developed since the 1970s. The extent of the impact of port development at Lagos may be judged by the rise and development of the Agbara and Ota-Ifo industrial estates in the 'metropolitan shadow' some twenty to forty kilometres away (Akintola-Arikawe 1987:125).

As well, the western railway linking Lagos with Ibadan and Kano, major urban, commercial and industrial centres, has also spread the impact of the port several hundred kilometres into the Nigerian hinterland. The same process has been replicated, though on a smaller scale, at Port Harcourt, the terminus of the eastern railway. The port literally created the city following its development in the inter-war years (Anyanwu 1971; Olukoju 1996a). There, as in Lagos, the port serves as an industrial and commercial hub, and its hinterland extends to the administrative and commercial centres on the railway, like Aba and Umuahia.

A related issue is fleet development, which began in earnest with the establishment in 1959 of the Nigerian National Shipping Line (NNSL). The politics of that act has been studied elsewhere (Olukoju 2003) but it should be stated that the project was flawed from the start and it was, in any case, unlikely to have fared better given the hostile world in which Nigerian

shipping had had to operate, and the unpatriotic and irresponsible management of the maritime sector of the Nigerian economy to date. Meanwhile, the NNSL tottered until it finally collapsed in the early 1990s, ironically in the immediate aftermath of the United Nations Commission for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Code on Liner Shipping which had sought to assist underdeveloped countries to gain a share of their maritime economy, especially the shipping trade (Karandawala 1989). The government of General Ibrahim Babangida had even proceeded to promulgate a National Shipping Policy (Decree 10 of 1987) to give effect to this code. The Decree established a National Maritime Authority as the clearinghouse of the maritime sector and the agency for the allocation of shipping space. Unfortunately, the basic precondition for meaningful participation by Nigerians in the shipping business—an indigenous fleet—was lacking and when the government instituted a fund for fleet development—the Ship Building and Ship Acquisition Fund—that facility was simply turned into an open sesame to the looting of the treasury. The Fund was depleted and its beneficiaries not only failed to redeem their loans but merely bought scrap (worthless vessels) which were un-seaworthy. In the event, Nigerians could not utilise their forty per cent quota and merely fronted for foreign operators. The policy died a natural death and the NMA fell into the grip of a succession of incompetent and corrupt administrators who merely collect rent and fail to develop the mercantile marine or the maritime sector. The same verdict applies to the Nigerian Ports Authority, which, like the NMA, exists to collect rents on shipping. Similar unscrupulous leadership ran the NNSL aground while its counterparts in other parts of the Global South (Sri Lanka, for example) have managed to stay afloat (Dharmasena 1989; Iheduru 1996; Olukoju 2003).

Conclusion

In spite of the glaring differences in the levels of development, geography, history and economies of Nigeria and Japan, some striking similarities may be identified. First, both countries have approximately the same population; in the 110–120 million range. Second, they both had significant historical transitions in the 1860s—the British colonisation of Lagos, Nigeria in 1861 and the Meiji Restoration in Japan in 1868—which shaped their subsequent histories. Third, they both attach great importance to the maritime sector, especially the ports, in national development. Hence, their governments formulated policies to promote port and fleet development, including recourse to subsidies, direct state investment, reliance on fostered indigenous capitalism and centralised tariff setting. Fourth, such policies were driven by maritime nationalism, directed primarily at the West, and each nation sought to dominate regional shipping. Fifth, the government in each case played, and

continues to play, a leading role in port and economic development. This state-led port development and administration, however, has produced differential policies and results in their different contexts. We shall now examine these disparate policies and fortunes.

Having made sufficient allowance for the evident differences in the polities, economies and societies being studied, we can still identify factors making for success or failure in the formulation and implementation of policies in Nigeria and Japan. To be fair, as we have noted above, Japan is much better endowed with natural harbours and has a longer and incomparably richer seafaring tradition. Moreover, the Japanese also have a long tradition of central planning—one in which Nigerians have not only had a comparatively short experience of operating but with an abysmally poor record. This point is important because this has enabled the Japanese to achieve better policy coordination and implementation, the bane of public policy in Nigeria.

In addition, the stronger economic base of Japan has permitted the commitment of a considerable amount of human and physical capital to port and regional development. This was especially so at the height of the unprecedented and long-running economic development from the 1960s to the ‘bubble economy’ of the 1980s. Hence, it has been possible for her to invest in port, city and industrial infrastructure without expecting quick returns. This particular attitude was critical to the philosophy and execution of port policies and projects. In contrast, Nigeria did not optimise its investments and earnings during the oil boom of the 1970s. Its port projects, as we have shown for the civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, were designed for political ends. Consequently, the contracts were over-valued and the facilities were generally redundant.

Furthermore, the Japanese developed indigenous engineering technology for the ports, shipbuilding and ancillary projects. They learnt from their initial setbacks in port construction at Nobiru and Mikuni to indigenise Western technology which was adapted to their peculiar circumstances. Nigeria, like Japan, had also had to train its engineers and technicians abroad but it has yet to domesticate the knowledge thus acquired. Nigerian port projects, like other major public infrastructure projects, have always been handled by foreign firms and the hopes held out by the Nigerdock Company as the nucleus of a shipbuilding and repair industry have foundered on the rocks of corruption and mismanagement.

Moreover, while the government of Japan continues to play a dominant role in port administration and development—directly through its agencies and indirectly through the local port management bodies—it did not foreclose private sector participation. Indeed, under the Port and Harbour Law of 1950

(and subsequent revisions), local port management bodies were restrained from competing with private sector operators in 'the most lucrative areas of port operations' (Olukoju 1996b:278). In effect, the Japanese had long operated the public-private sector partnership, which Nigeria is just adopting through an unfolding programme of (regulated) port concessioning.

In concluding this comparison of Nigerian and Japanese maritime policies and economic development, it must be acknowledged that official policies in both countries had had chequered fortunes. First, over-optimistic port investment, especially during a boom or in anticipation of one, had always created excess or redundant port capacity. A sudden change in economic fortunes or a sharp drop in demand for shipping and port facilities had always burdened either country with huge deficits. However, the Japanese had always managed to cushion the effect with their powerful export-oriented economy, which made up the shortfall, a contrast with the Nigerian import-dependent economy.

Port policies had also generated city and regional development to varying degrees. In Japan this was evident in all the designated development areas. In Nigeria, Lagos and Port Harcourt evidently owed their industrial regions to the fact of port development. Apart from the difference in the scale of impact, the Nigerian case, however, shows a lack of integration of port, industrial and urban development policies. A major reason for this is the nature of the political economy: inter-governmental relations in a Federation had not always been smooth sailing and policies have not always been properly coordinated. At best, Nigerian ports have generated an uncoordinated urban and industrial sprawl characterised by chaotic traffic and sanitary systems.

Second, both nations had also had variable experience with the development of the mercantile marine. In each case, it had entailed huge outlays out of public funds thus inflicting huge costs on the Treasury but, again, the Nigerians had been worse off. In their case, the entrepreneurs in this sector, exploiting primordial and political connections, took loans which they never bothered to repay and the Ship Acquisition and Ship Building Fund simply collapsed. The Japanese mercantile marine developed nonetheless with the concurrent development of a virile shipbuilding industry. In the circumstance, Japan was capable of successfully capturing and retaining her coastal shipping and even edged out competitors from the regional liner shipping. Not only does Nigeria not have the capacity to compete with the big Western operators, she has a tiny share of her coastal shipping. The recent Cabotage Law designed to make local players take over the coastal shipment of crude oil is yet to register a positive impact on the Nigerian maritime sector and the wider economy. Its prospects are blighted by, among others, the lack of an indigenous fleet.

In all, this comparative study has shown the leading role of maritime economic nationalism in the development of both nation's maritime economy. Shipping in both nations has had to contend with competition from Western lines and the recognition of the advantages of an indigenous fleet, at least to conserve foreign exchange, motivated their respective maritime policies. Again, the overwhelming role of the government was abundantly demonstrated and fully justified. But it is also clear from the foregoing that this intervention could be good or bad, depending on the vision and sincerity of national leadership, and its ability to coordinate relevant policies, an important ingredient in the remarkable success of Japan.

A striking issue that is highlighted by this study is that Nigeria, unlike Japan, missed many golden opportunities. While the latter took advantage of the material rewards of its military successes against Formosa (Taiwan), China, Korea and Russia between 1874 and 1905, the openings created in the Asian market by the First World War and its militarism in Asia in the subsequent period, and, even the Korean War of the early 1950s, Nigeria mismanaged the resources, openings and goodwill that accrued from the oil boom of the 1970s and the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2004–2005, the UNCTAD policy on shipping and the Shipbuilding Fund of the 1990s. What can be concluded, then, is that the differential fortunes of Nigeria and Japan in maritime economic development derived from human and natural forces, which the latter had been able to harness to greater advantage.

Notes

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2. The comparative study in Olukoju (1996b) did not cover the mercantile marine and shipbuilding and did not take the analysis beyond 1994.

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Commentary: A Comparison of Comparisons

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Abstract

This commentary on the articles collected in this issue confirms that they illustrate effectively the main approaches to historical comparison for Africa in recent centuries. The essay reaffirms A.I. Asiwaju's introductory statement of the crucial importance of comparative work in advancing studies of African history, and amplifies this argument by asserting that comparative and global frameworks each have their place, and that each can be employed as a tactic or strategy in historical analysis. The discussion continues with exploration of three articles that explore the rules for and results of historical comparison; three articles comparing cases that overlap and interact with each other; and three articles comparing discrete cases. The essay concludes by summarizing the ways that the comparisons, in the various studies, have clarified narratives and have documented historical processes. Overall, it appears, the articles are effective in showing how comparisons can advance understanding of what Professor Asiwaju has called 'the history of man in Africa'.

Résumé

Ce commentaire des articles contenus dans ce numéro spécial confirme qu'ils illustrent bien les principales approches aux comparaisons historiques en Afrique, ces derniers siècles. Cette contribution réaffirme les propos de A.I. Asiwaju sur l'importance critique du travail comparatif pour les études de l'histoire africaine, et développe cet argument en suggérant que les cadres comparatif et global jouent chacun leur rôle analytique, et que chacun peut être employé comme tactique ou stratégie d'analyse historique. La discussion continue avec l'exploration de trois articles qui concernent les règles et les résultats de la comparaison historique ; trois articles comparant des cas empiétant l'un sur l'autre, et interagissant l'un avec l'autre ; et enfin, trois articles comparant des cas distincts. L'essai conclut en résumant la façon dont les comparaisons de ces études ont permis de clarifier des récits et documenté des processus historiques. Enfin, les articles montrent bien la façon dont les comparaisons permettent d'avoir une

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meilleure compréhension de ce que le professeur Asiwaju appelle «l'histoire de l'homme en Afrique».

Comparison in African History

The historical study of Africa was late to develop as a professionalised discipline within the modern academy. Yet the field has made extraordinary advances in the half century since it formed. Applying both conventional and interdisciplinary methods, historians of Africa have expanded the amount of available source materials many times over. They have drawn on these sources to assemble an impressive set of narratives, and have given attention to a wide range of viewpoints in their narrative. They have chronicled debates among historical figures and interest groups in the African past, and have conducted their own historiographical debates.

The challenges of the 1950s were the apparent shortage of data and willingness of other scholars to deny the historicity of African societies and the validity of African identity. Our convenor argues that these challenges have been overcome, and that it is time to address what he sees as the challenge of our own time: articulating larger-scale interpretations and linking them across space and time. Professor Asiwaju notes pointedly that locally focussed expertise which still dominates African historiography, can also be called a 'closet mindset'. More gently but more analytically, he suggests a move from the study of 'Africans' to the study of 'man in Africa'.

To address the study of man in Africa, Asiwaju calls for the application of 'explicitly comparative research designs'. Such an approach, he argues, will enable analysis to escape the search for uniqueness that has pervaded Africanist monographs. Structured comparison provides a device for addressing the great quantities of data now available, and will enable historians of Africa to enter into discourse with Africanist social scientists and with historians of other regions.

The method he proposes involves specifying the units of comparison and the levels of analysis in a study, and developing internally consistent terminology within each study. This leads to less emphasis on place and more on historical problems; it generates thematic and synchronic analysis rather than chronological accounts. All in all, Professor Asiwaju confirms his place alongside Michael Adas, the historian of Southeast Asia, as an effective advocate of structured comparison in history.¹

We may say that comparison can be a tactic or a strategy of the historian. Every historian uses comparison as a tactic: even with the isolated case study, the historian must compare all the pieces of the case to construct a narrative; this is all the more true for global studies. But Asiwaju is proposing comparison as a strategy, as the principal axis of analysis. Furthermore, the

call for explicitly comparative research design alerts us to the reality that there are more steps to completing the design than announcing it as comparative. For instance, it is quite different to compare two isolated cases (such as Taiping and the Aladura churches) than to compare cases in interaction, such as the political communities of Freetown and Monrovia.

Asiwaju's own work began with comparing borderlands of colonial and national units, which led him into the interactions and processes generated by borders, and on to comparison in general.² He notes with favour the work of William Miles, who has published a number of comparative national and territorial studies, beginning in Africa, and then extending to territories throughout the tropics.³ Asiwaju is precise in identifying comparison as 'one of the new approaches to African historical scholarship that one would like to see ... expanded'. Another is the global approach, encompassing individual cases or pairs of cases under comparison in larger contexts and multiple scales of analysis. In commenting on the specifics of the essays I will introduce some remarks in global perspective as well as highlighting comparative methods.

Rules and Results of Comparison

Three of the essays in this collection focus on the rules and logical results of historical comparison. Gareth Austin has chosen a problem for analysis: that of 'Conceptual Eurocentrism'. Where does the historian get his or her ideas? Interpretive bias, he argues, is reduced if one compares both ways, analysing two regions, each in the mirror of the other. Thus, he advocates and explicates the technique of 'reciprocal comparison', a term borrowed from the work of Kenneth Pomeranz.⁴ It seems that this exercise requires applying extra-continental theory to Africa, and that the author must then locate or develop an African-based theory to apply to other areas. Austin finds African-based theory in economic history in the work of Jack Goody and Stefano Fenolteaga; perhaps Esther Boserup might be added to the list.⁵ Then he proposes additional African-based insights that could be applied within and beyond the continent: (i) that intensive agriculture is not necessarily more productive; (ii) that one should rethink the land/labour ratio and its relationship to economic growth; (iii) that property may not be restricted to land and objects; (iv) and that Africans have achieved economic growth outside states. Seen from this vantage point, we find that comparison requires conceptualisation.

Michal Tymowski finds that comparing what are known as 'empires' in pre-colonial Africa shows inconsistent patterns, and recommends that the term 'empire' be applied in a much more restricted fashion in Africa. I would argue that two factors have contributed significantly to the inconsistent attribution of the term 'empire' to African states. First, Africanist historians,

playing catch-up in both historiographical and ideological terms, were anxious to find empires in Africa with which to elevate the political position of African states vis-à-vis those elsewhere. Second, the term ‘empire’ is used loosely everywhere, and across a time-span of three thousand years. Empires have not been theorised and scrutinised as social formations in the way nations have for the past two centuries. Eisenstadt’s beginning at analysis, to which Tymowski refers, needs to be followed up in much more detail.⁶ Meanwhile, Tymowski’s critique clears the way for a more realistic analysis of long-term changes in African political orders.

John Philips addresses most explicitly the history of man in Africa through a search for a consistent terminology. Through an exercise in conceptualisation, he prepares the ground for discussion of ‘slavery’ that enables fruitful comparisons among social situations even when they do not involve precisely the same sort of ‘slavery’. After posing the dilemma of choosing between definitions of ‘slavery’ based on property or on kinlessness, he turns for help to new developments in psychology, arguing that the affect of shame underlies the control over individuals that has led in sequence to several sorts of slavery. Philips’s wide-ranging comparisons in setting up the problem of slavery correspond to what I have labelled elsewhere as ‘exploratory comparison’—that is, considering a wide range of possibilities in order to define the borders of a study. This is a step preliminary to the modelling and structured comparison of organised data sets.⁷

Comparison of Overlapping Cases

Four essays in this collection address multiple cases in political history. In each, the various cases overlap or otherwise interact with one another—usually through geographical contiguity, but also through subjection to a common colonial power. Barhu Zewde analyses ethnicities, languages, and national units on the Horn of Africa. Concisely and clearly, he identifies the elements of his analysis. He compares pre-colonial states, Islamic heritage, colonial legacies, and postcolonial struggles—for Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Djibouti. He develops a concept of ‘embattled identity’ to unify the comparisons, and concludes that the degree of ethnic differentiation is no clear key to fractionalisation of politics. When he makes a policy recommendation—regional confederation—it emerges out of the context of his analysis. Pierre Kipré uses the term ‘national question’ to label what Zewde has called ‘embattled identity’. He labels his narrative of Francophone and Anglophone West Africa as ‘a long crisis of collective identity during the last two centuries’. His dense and reflective narrative, more synthesis than comparison, proposes hypotheses that can be tested with systematic comparison. He concludes with a critique of colonial conquests and

postcolonial states for their mishandling of the tension between the needs for safeguarding public welfare and defending individual liberty. Nicodemus Awasom traces the postcolonial history of the Senegambia confederation and its collapse, as compared with the Cameroonian federation and its precarious survival. While his subtitle emphasises the influence of contrasting Anglo-Saxon and Gallic values in the difficulties of these federations, I found more convincing the explanation in his description of the structural political problems of each federation. Underneath the frustrating recurrence of political disunion in Africa, Awasom shows how shifting political coalitions made union of Anglophone and Francophone territories attractive and successful at some times, and unsustainable at other times. Giampaolo Novati compares Monrovia and Freetown in the last half of the nineteenth century. Drawing on the rich documentation of the two settlements, he emphasises both formative processes and vigorous debates, and implicitly accepts the framework of others in this group, taking the past two centuries as a time frame for political analysis. Together, these four essays converge in proposing an agenda for comparative research into African politics, with a time frame of about two centuries. Thus, the division of Senegal and Gambia, the foundation of Sierra Leone and the Sokoto Caliphate go back 200 years; the fragments of Cameroon go back over 100 years.

Comparison of Discrete Cases

Three more essays in the collection involve comparison of discrete cases, which do not interact directly with one another, thus changing the nature of the comparison. In each instance, one case (or set of cases) under study is based in Africa while the other is outside the continent. David Lindenfeld explores the results of encounters with Christian missionaries for the single case of Taiping in China and for four overlapping Aladura churches in Nigeria. In so doing he introduces the theories of Weber and Jung. Gareth Austin would suggest balancing the application of Weber and Jung with an articulation of analyses developed from Nigerian experiences. Indeed Lindenfeld, while he has developed a largely Weberian analysis of charismatic authority and routinisation, sets it in the framework of Robin Horton's vision of change in African religion. He then adds his own notion of concentration of spirituality to address the purging of indigenous religious practices among Christian converts, and parallels it to an argument of Jung. He thus shows that pursuing the path of 'reciprocal comparison' can lead to the posing of yet more types of comparison. Olufunke Adeboye compares Pentecostal movements of two nations, and finds both parallels and contrasts such as the abstention of Nigerian Pentecostals from politics while those in Brazil entered politics actively. The first great Pentecostal wave began with the Los

Angeles mission of African-American Reverend William J. Seymour, 1905–1908, in which visitations of the Holy Spirit were attested by speaking in tongues or glossolalia. Adeboye, in comparing the range of movements in Brazil and Nigeria, shows the remarkable expansion and successive transformations of Pentecostalism since then, including stages of divine healing through mass media and the rise of the prosperity gospel. She shows that structured comparison can be useful for social scientists and also for church policy-makers in determining the direction of change. Ayodeji Olokujo conducts a comparison of Nigerian and Japanese port policies. Here is the case where the differences between the cases make one most tempted to argue, ‘you can’t compare these’. But of course the author has just compared them, and the comparison has been instructive. Nigerian and Japanese port directors faced similar problems and made similar errors, so that each can learn from the experience of the other.

Implications of these Studies

To summarise: What do these essays add to the narrative of African history? To the understanding of processes in African history? To the history of man in Africa?

Narratives. The works of these authors present revised narratives of the cases under comparison, and narratives of larger patterns. Zewde, Kipré, Awasom, and Novati each use comparison to argue that the place of identity in the politics of modern Africa is best analysed over a time frame of roughly two centuries, and that political analysis within shorter time frames risks missing certain fundamental points. This convergence in interpretation, backed up by comparative insights, should be taken seriously. Tymowski challenges a narrative of the rise and fall of empires by challenging the categorisation of empires. Adeboye traces the somewhat parallel transformations of religious movements in two major countries, though without formalising her terminology.

Processes. Austin shows how to seek out processes in economic history for analysis. Philips proposes deeper scrutiny of terminology, and constructs a continuum of social institutions involving hierarchy and oppression. Lindenfeld identifies processes in institutional development of the newly converted. Olukoju shows divergence in experience of Japan and Nigeria in port development, but observes that the underlying problems have been much the same.

History of Man in Africa

Articles based on brief conference papers cannot provide much detail on ‘the history of man in Africa’, but they can indicate clear directions. Austin

shows the way in developing theses in economic history out of African experience and applying them more broadly. Phillips provides a comparative study of definitions as a way to deepen the understanding of slavery. Comparative studies, accompanied by explicit statements of research design, should be high on the agenda of historians of Africa. These include comparisons within Africa and comparisons without; comparisons of Africa with the African Diaspora, emphasising social history; and the more established comparisons with Europe, emphasising politics and economics. Comparisons may be defined geographically, but one may also compare time periods and topics.

Another set of research designs is that of global analysis, focusing on analysis at multiple scales. I pose global studies of Africa not as a substitute for comparisons, but as an alternative and sometimes overlapping frame of analysis. Indeed, part of the work of conceptualising comparative study is to locate the boundaries between it and global study, and to identify the complementarities and the tensions between them. Comparison is always a tactic or tool of historians; in the cases here, it is elevated to the principal strategy for analysis. Conversely, global context can also be used both as tactic and strategy. Even localised case studies draw on global factors as context, and comparative studies necessarily include boundaries set by global context. A fundamentally global study differs from these in its focus on establishing patterns and dynamics that reverberate throughout a system. A strategy of comparison, in contrast, focuses on characterising the experience of the units under comparison, and on developing generalisations about experience at that level.

Certainly the results of these essays suggest that the determined pursuit of a comparative agenda in African history will contribute effectively to expanding the narratives, to debating major themes in the African past, and generally to documenting the experience of man in Africa.

Notes

1. Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements against the European Colonial Order* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c1979); Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Adas, *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).
2. A.I. Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland under European Rule, 1889-1945: A Comparative Analysis of French and British Colonialism* (London: Longman, 1976); Asiwaju (ed.), *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884-1984* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press,

- c1984); Asiwaju, *West African Transformations: Comparative Impact of French and British Colonialism* (Ikeja: Malthouse Press, 2001); Asiwaju, *Boundaries and African Integration: Essays in Comparative History and Policy Analysis* (Lagos: Panaf Pub., 2003).
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 4. Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 8-9. See also R. Bin Wong, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).
 5. Jack Goody, *The East in the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Stefano Fenoaltea, 'Europe in the African Mirror: the Slave Trade and the Rise of Feudalism', (1988 conference paper); Ester Boserup, *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965); Boserup, *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970).
 6. S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (New York: Free Press, 1963).
 7. Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).