

# CODESRIA

## Bulletin

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## Executive Secretary's Note

In 2018, the Council set out to address three challenges. This was on top of organising the 15th General Assembly. The first was to consolidate

scientific and administrative operations after an internal reform process spearheaded by the Executive Committee. The second was to complete a smooth leadership transition with the arrival of a new Executive Secretary in mid-2017. The third, and perhaps most pressing, was to reaffirm relations with partners and enter into new partnerships as a strategy of scaling up funding for our scientific programmes. These tasks were all achieved.

At the programme level, a new framework for mobilising research supported by the Council, the Meaning-Making Research Initiative (MRI), was introduced while all Training and Fellowship programmes were undertaken as scheduled. We successfully held the 15th General Assembly, the apex of the Council's intellectual and governance work, and hosted a stellar team of keynote addresses, including His Excellency Thabo Mbeki, Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, Harvard University Professor Ousmane Kane and award-winning author Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor. The General Assembly renewed our focus in the Council and sharpened our intention going into 2019.

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This quarterly Bulletin is distributed free to all social research institutes and faculties in Africa to encourage research co-operation among African scholars. Interested individuals and institutions may also subscribe. Contributions on theoretical matters and reports on conferences and seminars are welcome.

We are happy to note that the momentum for engagement with existing partners was renewed while bringing on board new partners. A significant number of outstanding issues with partners, especially those revolving around programme and financial reporting, were also resolved. The Council shifted to the use of new accounting software and has established fresh mechanisms of engaging the CODESRIA constituency. In particular, work on clearing the publications backlog continued apace and our outputs, especially this Bulletin, will constitute a new basis for further engagement with the CODESRIA membership and community.

In 2019, we sought to build on these modest achievements in our reforms and continue a path charted out in 2017–18. First, more focus has been on ensuring success in programme implementation, expanding some programmes while exploring new terrains for research. Better and more effective strategies for dissemination of research outputs including laying the ground for a programme on reflections on policy, have been firmed up. The programme reconceptualises the idea of policy engagement and reframes it as a process rather than a one-off event convened at the end of a research cycle.

The Council announced the results of the 2018 MRI Research applications for 2018. We noted that the number of applicants to all our activities, including the MRI, increased in 2018. This, of course, reaffirms the centrality of the Council in nurturing a new generation of academics on the continent. In 2018, for example, the Council received more than double the number of MRI applications received in 2017. It is notable that there were more female applicants in the pool. Most of the applications were judged by an external team of peer reviewers to be of high quality. We therefore decided to fund double the number of proposals budgeted for in 2018, thus covering up to the 2019 cycle. Hence, the Council did not advertise some of the core MRI programmes in 2019. Instead, the double selection for 2018 was reconstituted into a 2018–19 cohort of MRI grants.

Our commitment to reinforcing both feminist and gendered approaches to our research received a major boost. In 2018, the Council introduced a new MRI grant for female researchers, in an effort to increase the number of female academics participating in the Council's activities. We have opened up discussion with two partners to put more resources, first into female academics within our community, and second into gendered and feminist approaches in our research. While we appreciate the importance of gender as a social relation involving men and women, we need to

re-emphasise that our current strategic plan identified generations as a cross-cutting issue and this will provide us the opportunity to focus our work on women and girls. The Council will continue to support work that grew the cohort of female researchers in 2019. Funding is being sought to focus on bolstering the academic writing and publication skills of early career female academics as part of this effort.

Resource mobilisation remains an area of need in the Council and we intensified our efforts in this direction in 2019. This is designed to increase the annual budget of the Council and also expand on programmes to cover areas that need urgent attention but which we scaled back because of financial constraints. Areas that the Council will give renewed focus to include academic freedom, peace and security, economic justice, trade and health. Also, from a disciplinary point of view, an emphasis on history and the Pan-African anchoring of regional integration initiatives demand more attention, in view of recent moves at the African Union and among regional organisations to rethink institutional architectures and advance integration. Further, investment in interdisciplinary conceptual thinking through our methodology training will continue.

The Council will continue with internal reform initiatives, focusing on enhancing efficiency and oversight. We will ensure that Secretariat processes enhance the capacity of the Council to serve the community of African scholars efficiently while ensuring judicious use of Council resources. By judicious, we mean that a significant percentage of our resources will go towards the execution of scientific activities of the Council.

Finally, better service to the CODESRIA community must become the cornerstone of the work of the Council. We will continue reaffirming this position going forward. The Secretariat will improve the quality of its engagement with the community as an end in itself but also as a strategy to grow the number of active members in good standing. In turn, we will keep our membership fully engaged with the Secretariat. An electronic database of African scholars interacting with the Council is now operational and we would like to hear from you regarding your concerns and achievements in 2019. We want to share your achievements with the community. More work will be done to improve our communication and dissemination processes by launching a new website, digitising most of our operations and uploading our outputs to enhance circulation of books and journals.

**Godwin R. Murunga**  
Executive Secretary

## Note du Secrétaire exécutif

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**E**n 2018, en plus d'organiser la 15e Assemblée générale, le Conseil s'était donné trois défis. Le premier était la consolidation des opérations scientifiques et administratives à la suite d'un processus de réforme interne mené par le Comité exécutif. Le second était de parachever une transition harmonieuse avec l'arrivée d'un nouveau secrétaire exécutif en juin 2017. Le troisième, et peut-être le plus pressant, était de réaffirmer les relations avec les partenaires et de conclure de nouveaux partenariats dans le cadre d'une stratégie d'élargissement du financement de notre programme scientifique. Ces tâches ont toutes été réalisées.

Au niveau programmatique, un nouveau cadre de mobilisation de la recherche, soutenu par le Conseil, l'Initiative de recherche pour la construction de sens (MRI en anglais), a été introduit, tandis que tous les programmes de formation et de bourses ont été réalisés conformément au calendrier préétabli. Nous avons, avec succès, tenu la 15e Assemblée générale, culmination du travail intellectuel et de la gouvernance du Conseil, et proposé une programmation éblouissante de conférenciers avec Son Excellence Thabo Mbeki ; le lauréat du prix Nobel de littérature, Wole Soyinka ; le Professeur Ousmane Kane de l'Université de Harvard, et l'auteure primée Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor.

Nous sommes heureux de noter que la dynamique d'engagement avec les partenaires existants a été renouvelée tout en accueillant de nouveaux partenaires. Un nombre important de problèmes (antérieurement) non résolus avec les partenaires, en particulier ceux ayant trait aux rapports financiers et de programme, ont trouvé des solutions. Le Conseil utilise dorénavant un nouveau logiciel de comptabilité et a mis en place de nouveaux mécanismes d'engagement des membres du CODESRIA. En particulier, le travail pour l'élimination des retards de publication s'est poursuivi et nos publications, notamment ce Bulletin, constitueront une base nouvelle de notre engagement avec les membres et la communauté du CODESRIA.

En 2019, nous avons cherché à nous appuyer sur ces modestes réalisations dans nos réformes pour continuer sur la voie tracée en 2017-2018. Tout d'abord, nous avons surtout veiller au succès de la mise en œuvre des programmes en élargissant certains d'entre eux tout en explorant de nouveaux terrains de recherche. De meilleures formes de diffusion des résultats de la recherche, y compris la préparation du terrain pour un programme de réflexion sur les politiques ont été également développées. Ce programme reconceptualise l'idée d'engagement politique et le reformule comme un processus plutôt qu'un événement unique organisé à la fin d'un cycle de recherche.

Le Conseil vient d'annoncer les résultats des candidatures de recherche MRI de 2018. Nous avons noté que le nombre de candidats à toutes nos activités, y compris le MRI, a augmenté en 2018. Ceci, peut-être, réaffirme le rôle central du Conseil dans la formation d'une nouvelle génération d'universitaires du continent. En 2018, par exemple, le Conseil a reçu plus du double du nombre de demandes de MRI qu'en 2017. Il est également important de noter qu'il y avait plus de candidatures féminines. Une équipe externe de pairs examinateurs a jugé que la plupart des demandes étaient de grande qualité. Nous avons donc décidé de financer le double des propositions prévues dans le budget 2018 couvrant ainsi l'année 2019. De ce fait, le Conseil n'a pas lancé pas d'appels pour certains des programmes MRI en 2019. En lieu et place, la double sélection en 2018 sera reconstituée en cohorte 2018-2019 de subventions MRI.

Notre engagement à renforcer nos approches féministes et sexospécifiques a bénéficié d'un élan majeur. En 2018, le Conseil a créé une nouvelle subvention MRI pour les chercheuses afin d'accroître le nombre de femmes universitaires participant aux activités du Conseil. Nous avons entamé des discussions avec deux partenaires pour investir davantage de ressources, en premier lieu, en faveur des femmes universitaires de notre communauté et en faveur, en second lieu, des

approches sexospécifiques et féministes dans nos recherches. Nous reconnaissons l'importance du genre en tant que relation sociale impliquant des hommes et des femmes, mais nous nous devons de redire que notre plan stratégique actuel a défini les générations comme une question transversale, ce qui nous donnera l'occasion de centrer notre travail sur les femmes et les filles. Le Conseil poursuivra les efforts qui permettront la participation de plus de chercheuses en 2019. Dans le cadre de cet effort, des fonds sont recherchés pour renforcer la recherche académique et les compétences en matière de publication des femmes universitaires en début de carrière.

La mobilisation des ressources reste un besoin au Conseil et nos efforts ont été instensifiés en 2019. Cette initiative vise à augmenter le budget annuel du Conseil et à étendre les programmes à des domaines qui nécessitent une attention urgente, mais pour lesquels nous avons réduit nos activités à cause de contraintes financières. Les domaines auxquels le Conseil accordera une attention renouvelée incluent la liberté académique, la paix et la sécurité, la justice économique, le commerce et la santé. En outre, d'un point de vue disciplinaire, l'accent mis sur l'histoire et sur l'ancrage panafricain des initiatives d'intégration régionale appelle une attention accrue compte tenu des récentes actions de l'Union africaine et des organisations régionales visant à repenser les architectures institutionnelles et à promouvoir l'intégration. De plus, nous continuerons d'investir dans la pensée conceptuelle interdisciplinaire par le biais de notre formation en méthodologie.

Le Conseil poursuivra ses initiatives de réforme interne afin d'améliorer l'efficacité et le suivi. Nous veillerons à ce que les processus au Secrétariat améliorent la capacité du Conseil à servir efficacement la communauté de chercheurs africains, tout en garantissant une utilisation judicieuse des ressources. Par utilisation judicieuse, nous entendons qu'un pourcentage important de nos ressources ira à la mise en oeuvre d'activités scientifiques.

Enfin, un meilleur service à la communauté du CODESRIA doit demeurer la pierre angulaire des actions du Conseil. Nous continuerons de réaffirmer cette position. Le Secrétariat améliorera la qualité de son engagement avec la communauté et la traitera comme une fin en soi, mais également comme une stratégie pour accroître le nombre de membres actifs. En retour, nous maintiendrons nos membres pleinement engagés avec le Secrétariat. Une base de données électronique d'interaction entre les chercheurs africains et le Conseil est maintenant opérationnelle et, nous aimerions connaître vos préoccupations et réalisations en 2019. Ainsi, nous partagerons vos réalisations avec la communauté. Davantage de travail sera effectué pour améliorer nos processus de communication et de diffusion par le lancement d'un nouveau site Web, la numérisation de la plupart de nos activités, et le téléchargement de nos produits pour améliorer la circulation des livres et des revues.

**Godwin R. Murunga**  
Secrétaire exécutif



## Possibilities of Afrikology

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It is an immense honour to be able to respond to Professor Lansana Keita's review of *Dani Nabudere's Afrikology: A Quest for African Holism* in *Africa Review of Books*, Volume 15, Number 1 2019. Professor Keita's article is obviously more than a mere review, as it discusses in great detail the intellectual antecedents of part of what we now consider to be Western philosophy. It also notes the significance of Kemetian and pre-Kemetian philosophical traditions which are often not discussed in philosophy departments and courses in most parts of Africa.

V. Y. Mudimbe, the accomplished Congolese philosopher, is also concerned with the protohistorical orientations of philosophy as are Cheikh Anta Diop, Dani Nabudere and Keita. However, the difference between Mudimbe and the latter group of philosophers is that the former does very little in accentuating the presence of the African voice. In other words, Africa is presented through a Eurocentric lens and therefore is invariably silently ensconced within a Eurocentric voice that also tends to speak for the continent. Put differently, Africa remains caught in a ventriloquist's snare.

The radicalism of Diop and Asante stems from locating the vibrancy and agency of the African voice and also the identification of an alternative path in African philosophy. Unfortunately, this path remains largely unrecognised within the analytic bastions of African philosophy that have been dominant on the continent. Diop, Asante

### Sanya Osha

Institute for Economic  
Research in Innovation  
Tshawane University  
of Technology  
Pretoria/South Africa

and Nabudere clearly all advocate a different orientation in African philosophy in which a rich and dense historicity is favoured and explored to accomplish more conceptually interesting outcomes. Arguably, Professor Keita is quite intrigued by what those outcomes might be.

At this juncture, I am not about to summarise my entire book on Dani Nabudere. Instead, what I shall do is to re-state Nabudere's main positions, as Professor Keita has already undertaken the task of interrogating not only the central arguments of the book but also the implications thereof. By this, I mean apart from examining the dimensions of Nabudere's, Diop's and Asante's projects, he has started to imagine the possibilities for a philosophy of protohistory in contemporary times. This kind of approach seems to be unusually appealing. While wholly supporting this project in this brief article, I will return shortly to Nabudere's initial impetus which is the bedrock of this spectrum of deliberations.

African discourses on Egyptology are becoming more firmly established and often seek to counter the common Eurocentric bias that Africa had no history or culture worth discussing. African scholars

of Egyptology, in addition to some North Atlantic intellectuals, claim that Africa is in fact the Cradle of Humanity and hence the foremost vehicle of civilisation. Increasingly, research is deepening in this respect. But the works of Dani Nabudere, the eminent Ugandan scholar who passed on in 2011 take the project further. Rather than stop with the task of proving the primacy of the Egyptian past and its numerous cultural and scientific achievements, Nabudere attempts to connect that illustrious past with the African present. This, remarkably, is what makes his project worthy of careful attention. And this is essentially what his philosophy of Afrikology entails: tracing the historical, cultural, scientific and social links between the Cradle of Humankind and the contemporary world, with a view to healing the disruptive severances occasioned by violence, false thinking, war, loss and dispossession in order to accomplish an epistemological and psychic sense of wholeness for Africa's collective self. Of course, this proposition has considerable importance as a philosophy of universalism and not just as an African project. Afrikology intends to transcend the dichotomies inherited from Western epistemology (and culture as a whole) that maintain a divide between mind and body, or heart and mind, and revert instead to an earlier conceptual tradition perfected in ancient Egypt that conceives of knowledge generation as a holistic enterprise where the fundamental binary of the Western universe does not readily apply.

Nabudere's work not only foregrounds the significance of Egypt as a cultural fountainhead. Other parts of ancient Africa, such as Ethiopia, contributed to the eventual flowering of Egypt as a beacon of civilisation. The common ancient practices of worshipping kings as gods, establishing and maintaining pantheons of gods, and elaborate ceremonies for the dead are all practices that first began in Ethiopia and which were carried on by the ancient Egyptians. Also, sign language was in existence in the hinterlands of Africa such as among the Pygmies and the Khoi-San of Southern Africa, and parallels or even predates the representations of totemism, fetishism and the Egyptian hieroglyphic script.

Nabudere points out the groundbreaking impact of Egyptian hieroglyphics as being the essential backstory for European and Asian myths, legends and fairytales. Aryan philologists did not have the appropriate knowledge to unearth the connections between the Egyptian hieroglyphic script and the European appropriation of them. This failing created a blind spot in the Western conception and generation of knowledge. As such, it resulted in the tendency for the Western mindset to individualise the perception of natural phenomena. Nabudere re-reads Carl Gustav Jung's work on the formation of archetypes and supports the view that they were first conceived in the hinterlands of Africa before they found their way into ancient Egypt and then, eventually, to other parts of the world. In several instances, Nabudere makes this sort of claim: that many cultural and symbolic representations found in Egypt were in fact created in the hinterlands of Africa. Jung had a reading of the ancient Egyptian world that was contrary to those

typical of Western Egyptologists. He was of the view that in order to understand the Western notion of the *collective unconscious*, Western scholars had to look towards ancient Egypt and other parts of Africa. The founding elements of the Western psychoanalytic text, such as ceremonies of rebirth, the pantheon of gods, divine animals, ancient myths and symbols, the sanctification of the tomb, the wonders of the pyramids, elaborate burial rites and the entire spectrum of the Egyptian collective unconscious are all dimensions of Egyptian accomplishment that Jung deeply respected. Indeed, Egyptian civilisation which lasted for two thousand years provides the basis for understanding just how complex human societies can be.

In ancient Egypt, there occurred a quest never before experienced by humanity to establish a new approach to knowledge creation and generation. Pharaoh Shabaka of the twenty-fifth dynasty (770–657 BC) carried out what has been termed a 're-memorisation' of the past by appropriating and codifying ancient Memphite traditions; a project that eventually resulted in *Memphite Theology*. In a related vein, Memphis was adopted as the capital of Egypt – as the site of a thoroughgoing cultural renaissance. The restoration of Memphis as the capital of ancient Egypt carried far-reaching connotations. It sought to establish Egypt as the Cradle of Civilisation, apart from having profound architectural, intellectual as well as religious implications.

Nabudere also explains how the fundamental differences between Western and African epistemologies occurred. In ancient Egypt, the creation of the universe is attributed to Ptah who was self-created. In addition, Ptah is responsible for the creation of other gods. However, in

the cosmology of ancient Greece from which the West draws much of its inspiration for its epistemological foundations, the cosmos was created out of the pendulum between nothing and nothingness. Herein lies the telling difference between ancient Egypt and ancient Greece. Greek philosophers, such as Plato, through the Theory of Forms instituted an abstract kind of thought system that did not quite exist in the more holistic ancient Egyptian approach to knowledge generation. Under the influence of Plato, a dichotomisation of perception in relation to natural phenomena occurred, that is, a separation between things and forms or between the written sign and the thing itself. This epistemic separation led to much of the sort of dialectical thought to be found in Western philosophy.

In ancient Egypt, after the creation of the universe by Ptah occurred, Thoth (or Tehuti) the Egyptian god of the tongue created the hieroglyphic script and, in so doing, developed an intimate relationship between the tongue and the heart. In other words, thought springs from the human heart and the tongue articulates what the heart thinks. Here, no binarisation of natural phenomena occurs as in Western dialectical thought. Instead, a wholeness in thought and enunciation is maintained, and it is on this basis that Nabudere advances his philosophy of Afrikology which is not merely a re-memorisation of the ancient Egyptian past, but also a programme for a sustainable basis for knowledge generation in the contemporary world.

Much of the above can be found in Nabudere's earlier work – *Afrikology, Philosophy and Wholeness: An Epistemology* (2011). In what follows, I will give a much closer and detailed reading of the

text in order to: 1) give some idea as to the viability of Afrikology as an epistemological approach; 2) situate Nabudere's work within a tradition of similar African epistemologies; and 3) generally provide an outline by which to interrogate the strengths and weaknesses of Nabudere's propositions.

Nabudere cites Charles Taylor in alluding to the current malaise within epistemology. This in turn has placed contemporary society under tremendous strain as evidenced in disturbing forms of alienation, violence and fragmentation. The dissolution of epistemology can be traced back to the misrepresentation and misunderstanding of ancient Egyptian civilisation by scholars of ancient Greece. Nabudere urges a return to the initial locus of the misunderstanding, and this proposition forms a key component of his notion of Afrikology. Apart from its role as an epistemological construct, Afrikology is also meant to provide a therapeutic function in healing chronic societal dysfunction and fragmentation. Hence, rather than perceiving knowledge through a materialist lens, it needs instead to be viewed as serving an unambiguous cultural and spiritual role. As mentioned earlier, Nabudere constantly stresses the point that most of the cultural traits or archetypes commonly associated with ancient Egypt – such as the cult of gods, the offering of sacrifices and the place of divinity in everyday life – can in fact be traced to ancient Ethiopia.

Carl Jung explains that in order to understand his definition of what he calls 'the collective unconscious', which he claims is manifest within the entire spectrum of humanity, we only need to turn to the archetypes of ancient Egypt such as 'the divine kingship, the festival of renewal, the gods, the divine animals, the symbolism of

the tomb, the evolution of burial customs, the Temple, the ancient Egyptian psyche and experiences of the species, the pyramids and the texts in the Temples'.<sup>1</sup> However, some Eurocentric Egyptologists have sought to undermine the position of ancient Egypt as the Cradle of Humankind and instead attempted to push Asia into greater prominence. External factors – the intervention of foreign forces – also sought to undermine ancient Egypt as prime locus of archetypes until Pharaoh Shabaka of the Cushite (Nubian and Ethiopian) dynasties instigated what is regarded as the first African renaissance. The renaissance was aimed at cultural and intellectual retrieval, as contained in the *Memphite Manifesto* which became available in 716 BC. Memphis became the capital of ancient Egypt. This period is equated with the birth of consciousness, the beginning of the notion of political organisation and the re-memorisation of the past.

In this elaborate project of cultural retrieval, it was re-discovered and re-affirmed that:

Ptah, the primordial deity, is self-created and is also a creator of the other gods. He is ... the ruler over the unified Kingdom and King of Lower and Upper Egypt and its renewed unification in the hands of Horus. Thus, for the Egyptians, unlike the Greeks, the Cosmos was not suspended between nothing and nothingness, nor did it emerge from nothingness. It was a self-created universe from the oneness that was continuous.<sup>2</sup>

It is from this elemental context that the question of knowledge, its generation and dissemination ought to be understood. The *episteme* of ancient Egypt made no distinction between the mind and the body. Instead, knowledge and language were perceived as corporeal

phenomena. The heart formulates a concept or unit of knowledge which it then releases to tongue for proclamation.

Thoth is the ancient Egyptian god of the tongue as well as the hieroglyphic script. The question of knowledge generation involved both conceptual and phonetic dimensions. Written signs represented precisely what they were supposed to. However, in ancient Greece, things and what they represented (forms) were quite distinct; hence the introduction of abstract dialectical thought in the Greek *episteme*. It is also believed that Thoth was in fact a human being with mystical properties. Thoth was subsequently appropriated by both the Greeks and Romans and named after their own gods. In Greece, he was called Hermes, son of Zeus, the foremost messenger of the gods and the god of oratory.

The Romans referred to Thoth as Hermes Trismegistus, which means 'Hermes the thrice great', 'the great one', 'the greatest', and 'the Master of Masters', 'the author of astrology, magic and alchemy'.<sup>3</sup> Thoth is ascribed the invention of writing, medicine, chemistry, law, rhetoric, applied mathematics, astronomy, astrology and metaphysics. In addition, he is credited to have written 1,100 books and published 20,000 works in various fields of intellection. However, this prodigious intellectual production is devoid of individualism and is instead a product of the collective knowledge amassed by ancient Africans. Hermeneutics, which is the practice of interpreting a variety of texts, is also associated with Thoth. Being a messenger that operates in the divide between men and gods, Thoth was deemed a skillful interpreter of messages. The art of interpretation is also central to the practices of chicanery which attempt:



to go beyond the traditional culture and the limits of divination itself by using hermeneutics to interpret these practices and ideas connected with them. Hermeneutic intervention here includes not only the interpretation of recorded historical consciousness, but also the interpretive process to enter the realm of 'symbolic interpretation' and 'double-thinking' which ... is a mode of 'shifting yet discriminating definitions and fluid associations that underlie the Chicane practice.<sup>4</sup>

Individualism in intellectual fields such as alchemical studies began with the Greeks, which provides a contrast to African forms of orality where individualised authorship continues to be somewhat foreign. As Nabudere reminds us, a Kiganda proverb of modern Uganda states: *amagezi ssi goomu*, which means knowledge (wisdom) is not the property of a single individual.<sup>5</sup> Scholars such as Samir Amin have claimed that Plato misunderstood the knowledge systems of ancient Egypt and in so doing developed processes of thought based solely on reason. Aristotle, on his part, developed a classificatory grid based on the Platonic model. It has been propounded that Plato's *Republic* is an Athenian reformulation of the Egyptian caste system. This reformulation had profound consequences on the history of epistemology. As such, it was noted:

Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle are correctly blamed for having created a false hierarchisation of principles arising out of their search for 'perfect' knowledge due to their inadequate experiences in Egypt. Plato, in particular, is blamed for having created a hierarchisation and distinction between ideas, or *forms* and *things*, and between *outside* and *inside* of things – and hence between *virtue* and

*knowledge*. From now on in the Greek understanding, the *thing* and its *form* (the idea) were no longer organically linked.<sup>6</sup>

This in turn led to the binarisation of epistemic phenomena and hence the dichotomy between appearance and reality, the conditioned and the unconditioned, the absolute and the relative, the subject and the object, and so on. This epistemic development is often traced back to Plato who misread *Memphite Theology* in providing a large part of the foundations of Greek philosophy, thus advancing the essential impetus for Western thought as a whole. According to Nabudere, this dual mode of reflection – in which the thing is separate from the ideal – is known as the dialectic.

The Greek misrepresentation of ancient Egyptian systems of thought was not itself a wholesale rejection of those systems. Indeed, as Cheikh Anta Diop has argued, Greek philosophy is drawn primarily from Egyptian cosmologies. For instance, the Greek philosophical concept known as *logos* (whose employment is attributed to Heraclitus and Plato) actually originates from the ancient Nubian word *Ra*. Just like Diop, Nabudere argues that the fragmentation of knowledge forms can only be reversed if the momentum and dominance of Platonian-Cartesian epistemology cease. A number of times, Nabudere mentions the work of the Copenhagen school of quantum mechanics and physics, with its admission of multiple conceptions of reality as a way out of the impasse inherent in the Western epistemological model. As such, a transdisciplinary conception of reality, encompassing the gains of quantum mechanics, is also recommended as an alternative to Cartesian epistemic culture.

Nabudere also argues that the practice of divination and shamanism espouses a transdisciplinarity capable of not only improving but also transforming contemporary epistemology. Shamanism is present in many cultures but, in contemporary times, it is commonly associated with religion or quasi-religious rites even though shamanic practices had in the past been associated with immunology and psychobiology. We are urged to appreciate that

the shaman operates by using techniques of ecstasy and the power to leave his body at will during a trancelike state. In cultures where shamanism occurs, sickness is usually thought of as a soul loss and it is thus the shaman's task to enter the spirit world, capture the soul and reintegrate it in the body. A person becomes a shaman either by inheritance or by self-election. Thus, in shamanism or divination, there are no boundaries between the spirit, the mind or the body.<sup>7</sup>

Shamanism is based merely on religious faith but carries within it an elaborate epistemological system that has deep and ancient foundations in human existence itself. The passage below captures what being a shaman entails:

At the heart of shamanic practice is the active pursuit of knowledge. This take many forms: through calendarial study, divination and prophecy, Shamans seek knowledge of the future; and through recitations of myths, epics, charms, spells, songs and the genealogies of previous Shamans, they pass along knowledge of the past and of the spirit world. And since Shamans everywhere seek to know more than they have experienced in their everyday waking lives, they may extend their wisdom through dream journeys that provide a thousand years of human living into a single day.<sup>8</sup>



Shamans as such do not conform with the accepted linearity of time and instead strive to meld with universal consciousness.<sup>9</sup> They possess the powers to control random events, heal the ill, cure stress and anxiety and bring about healthy community relations. These general therapeutic functions lead to wholesome deliberations within the community and reduce instances of despondency, psychic tumult and alienation.

Widespread social fragmentation is believed to have been caused by the fundamental divide that exists between the mind and the body in Western culture, and the reluctance or inability to conceive of the spirit world as being embedded within the condition of the human.<sup>10</sup> Disciplines such as postcolonial theory emphasise the presence of multiple knowledge forms and traditions as opposed to mainstream Western scholarship which tends to view such repressed forms as being relativist and essentialist.

Just as is to be found in practices of chicane, the shaman is believed to possess a double personality like a trickster. In addition, a duality of consciousness straddles both the material and the immaterial worlds. The resilience of the trickster tradition was evident in the slave plantations of the New World where captive slaves were able to find solace in sorcery, magic, mystical invocations and the enchantment of the spirit world in the face of the daily brutalities of slave existence. Through the agency of memory, the inversions of mimicry and the invocations of the spirit world, slaves in American plantations were not only able to establish and maintain some degree of psychic equilibrium, but perhaps more importantly were able to create modern African-American culture as we know it. Furthermore,

this resistance against Western hegemony formed the basis for the emergence and development of the ideology of Pan-Africanism.

There are reasons to believe that shamanism is making its way into mainstream culture through sometimes remarkable means. Harry Smith, an American archivist, artist and experimental filmmaker, was commissioned by the record label Folkways to produce an anthology of American folk music which would otherwise have been lost in the frenzy of World War II. Smith delivered 84 songs along a system of ordering based on ancient Egyptian cosmology. Ballads were classified as green/water, social music came under the heading red/fire, and songs with the rubric blue/air. The cover art carried a 17th-century engraving of the celestial monochord which represented Pythagorean music theory. The anthology was released in 1952. Smith's archivist mind also organised his anthology, using ideas drawn from hermetic philosophy and especially the work of Robert Fludd, an Elizabethan philosopher and author of *History of the Macrocosm and Microcosm* (1617). Shortly afterwards, a cult grew around Smith's anthology that went on to influence the folk boom in the United States in the 1960s that produced figures such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Jerry Garcia and John Fahey in the process. In this way, Smith's work found its way into influential artistic circles and most especially the counterculture in the United States, beginning from the 1950s. Eventually, Smith ended his days as a shaman-in-residence at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

Ancient rock art reveals much about shamanism. Formerly, Western interpretations of ancient African rock art state that the forms evident in the practice were in fact stylised human beings. However,

recent research ascribes the forms found in rock art to hallucinatory experiences of shamans as opposed to being literal representations of the material world. Apart from being representations of hallucinatory and spiritual states, rock art contains 'the shamanic roots of modern religion'.<sup>11</sup> Shamans of advanced age were unable to endure the rigours of all-night-long sessions in trance-accomplished states of heightened consciousness with the aid of psilocybin, or magic mushrooms, as it is more commonly known. The trance-like states were akin to spiritual journeys in which shamans consulted with deities and the departed on account of their communities. They then returned to the material world with renewed psychic energies with which they healed the infirm, restored communal harmony and brought random elements under control.

One of Nabudere's central arguments is that African cosmologies and epistemologies can be harnessed within the context of postmodernity for a new cultural synthesis as a panacea for the current existential malaise that afflicts the contemporary world. He further states that if recourse to the cultural accomplishments of ancient Greece has been possible, the same should be true about ancient inner Africa. In his view, postmodern rationality has failed and in order to address this failure, an existential symbiosis between humankind and nature would have to be re-discovered as had happened in pre-Athenian times. Under the Greek epistemological model, abstract rationality became the basis for the construction of knowledge, and experience was subsequently undervalued. Kant's critique of pure reason is a continuation of the ancient Greek model and found acolytes in Johann

G. Fichte, Friedrich Schelling, Friedrich Schleiermacher and G. W. F. Hegel. But this model is now being challenged by advances in quantum mechanics and physics which are highlighting the interconnectedness between humankind and nature. Nabudere argues that there are fallacies in Western traditions of rationality stemming from Plato's misunderstanding of ancient Egyptian cosmologies:

It follows that the Greeks' attempt to philosophise without an adequate understanding of Egyptian sources was bound to be misleading to their successors. Since their lack of understanding of the source of knowledge in its origin was fatal in their own context, it was also bound to pass on the weaknesses to their European successors. This is made clearer when referring to Diop's reflection on the Greeks' emulation of the African philosophy. Indeed, as Diop has demonstrated, the Greek scholars had embraced ancient Egyptian wisdom, but later abstracted aspects of that knowledge to develop their own system of 'reasoning' as ... in the case of Plato.<sup>12</sup>

The Greek dialectical method draws much from the cosmological forms of inner Africa in which creation is believed to be founded on a dual mode. Ra, the Egyptian deity, is believed to have created two divine pairs: *Shu* and *Tefnu*, *Geb* and *Nut* and in this combination we find the four elements (air, water, earth and fire) that are central in the corpus of the pre-Socratic philosophers: Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides and Anaxagoras.<sup>13</sup> The original African model that provided the basis for this framework occurs in pairs: *Osiris* and *Isis*, *Seth* and *Nephthys*.

Having criticised the epistemological tradition developed by Platonian-Cartesian-Kantian thought for causing much of the fragmentation

and alienation in the contemporary world, Nabudere urges a return to an ethos of Nubian interconnectedness and complementarities. He is aware that this project of cultural retrieval would be an arduous task: 'a return to the ancient Egyptian or "inner Africa" system of ancient times is not possible in its pure form'.<sup>14</sup> The Platonian-Cartesian-Kantian model on which much of Western thought is based, in Nabudere's view, is deeply flawed; and in order to overcome its shortcomings and also to discern the antecedents of the crisis of contemporary reason, we are urged to return to the being of language. In this particular instance, the languages of Africa are offered as a beacon that possesses the wholeness and interconnectedness inherent in pre-Socratic existential relations and epistemic frameworks. Scholars of inner Africa believe that the heart is the locus of reason; but when Platonian epistemology separated things from their forms, a dialectical method of reasoning emerged and created a profound division between humankind and nature, thereby leading to chronic fragmentation, the sterility of dialectical thinking, meaningless hierarchisation and epistemic absolutism.

Not all of Nabudere's proposals about the return to an ethos of wholeness and interconnectedness are convincing. He mentions the employment of African languages as a possible way of attaining that goal but has very little to say about the logistic requirements involved in such a project: 'It follows...that it is through languages, and traditions based on those languages, that humanity can dialogue with one another and come to a consensus about a new future. Hence, the recognition and development of African languages, through which the overwhelming masses of the African people are able to

communicate, are the preconditions for bringing about a true human understanding and discourse with other cultures and civilisations.'<sup>15</sup> Obviously, this proposal involves numerous daunting practical concerns that Nabudere is silent about. Also, we need more evidence on the ravages of 'the paradigm of oppositionality'<sup>16</sup> on which most of the contemporary traditions of rationality are based.

But there is a progressive element about Nabudere's work. Once again, he reaffirms that invaluable contributions of scholars such as Cheikh Anta Diop<sup>17</sup> and Théophile Obenga whose problematisations and interrogations of origins of African thought systems have demonstrated that there is much depth to be discovered in those traditions. When this approach is juxtaposed with the work of African philosophers such as Peter O. Bodunrin, a superficiality and artificiality become evident in the latter's thought. African philosophers of the analytic school adopted wholesale the Cartesian model of analysis, thereby contributing to the excesses of dialectical thought. On his part, Nabudere believes the hermeneutic approach can lead to 'the recovery of knowledge' as well as constitute an antidote to the paradigm of oppositionality in which most of the canons of rationality are mired. Also by adopting a hermeneutic approach, the centrality of Thoth as an interpreter of mystical messages is again brought to fore just as the value of shamanic and trickster traditions are reasserted. The repressed histories of those traditions are likely to enrich the common fount of our humanity. Indeed, the consequences of Nabudere's propositions are bound to be far-reaching. He advocates a re-ordering of the Western epistemological model; in fact, what his argument amounts to is indeed a

destruction of the entire model. Of course, this is easier said than done. Perhaps it would be more feasible to construct a parallel universe based on his holistic epistemological approach. The baggage of Western intellectual culture is much too entrenched and entangled in the history of humanity as a whole that it is certain that its destruction may constitute a destruction of most of the archive of human intellectual culture itself. Nabudere unearths some quite interesting aspects of ancient African systems of thought. But his advocacy of a return to those forms as an existential priority poses numerous logistical challenges.<sup>18</sup> As mentioned earlier, the point would be to build a parallel universe away from the debunked Cartesian structure and then wait and see how it thrives.

What has become apparent in the work of Nabudere, Diop, Asante and Keita is that a thoroughgoing reconsideration of the study and practice of philosophy in Africa is required. Such a wide-ranging re-examination would entail the incorporation of pre-Athenian African holism in the apprehension of multiple forms of phenomena which would involve a radical transformation of our institutions, agricultural practices, socio-economic systems and epistemological traditions; in short, the entirety of both our material cultures and our diverse forms of consciousness together with the non-subjective languages and infrastructure that mediate them. In sceptical and antagonistic circles, this would be perceived as an assault on Western epistemology and the very concept or project of modernity itself in favour of Nubian or Kemetic mysteries, and by extension, a lost or submerged form of ancient African holism. Such a radical stance is inherent

in the thought of Nabudere and all the major Afrocentric thinkers mentioned in this article.

Nabudere is not the most lucid of thinkers in terms of realising the aims and objectives of Afrikology. However, he is clear in stating that the overriding conceptual framework of contemporary epistemology is both misshapen and misguided, and so a total transformation is required for Afrikology to work. But how do we accomplish this almost insurmountable task if African institutions of higher learning, economic systems and even contemporary spiritualities are controlled and dominated by Eurocentric sensibilities? This and closely related others are serious questions that need a wide range of incisive and productive responses, responses that also need to be deep, broad, radical and subtle, immediate and long-term in relation to their effects and objectives.

Nonetheless, the Afrikological vision of philosophy in a decidedly Afrocentric world is exciting and filled with lambent futuristic allure. This allure can often seem pure and uncomplicated when situated in a field of possibility. But the African socio-political landscape is something else entirely, speckled as it is with violent transitions, political upheavals and unending cycles of economic turmoil, dispossession and, paradoxically, potentials for unimaginable hope and renewal. In such an unstable landscape, the pure futuristic allure of Afrikology might seem simplistic except when bolstered by the coarse terror and atavism of a particular kind of nativism which ultimately might appear to undermine the very credentials and potentialities of Afrikology.

Another obvious challenge to the possibilities of Afrikology

is the wide social disconnect with protohistorical pursuits and orientations that is evident everywhere. There seems to be a basic lack of interest even when the development of a Nubian consciousness would seem to be empowering; in other words, those Nubian fumes would appear to be impossibly distant and perhaps even unattainable. Nonetheless, thinkers such as Nabudere are convinced that this very distance can also become the *raison d'être* for our existence.

## Notes

1. Dani W Nabudere, *Afrikology, Philosophy and Wholeness: An Epistemology*, Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2011, p.10
2. Ibid. p.18
3. Ibid. p.22
4. Ibid. pp. 47-48
5. Ibid. p.24
6. Ibid. p.27
7. Ibid. p.40
8. B. Tedlock cited by Dani W. Nabudere, 2011 p.43
9. For more on shamanic practices visit <http://shamanism.wordpress> and <http://shamansdrum.org>
10. Dani W, Nabudere, 2011, p.45
11. Ibid. p.60
12. Ibid. p.76
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid. p.71
15. Ibid. p.90
16. Ibid. p.103
17. See for instance, Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization*. Mercer Cook trans. Connecticut: Lawrence Hill and Company. 1974.
18. Kwasi Wiredu *Philosophy and an African Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980; Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996; Sanya Osha, 'Kwasi Wiredu: Philosophy in the African Way' (September-October) 2005; Sanya Osha, *Kwasi Wiredu and Beyond: The Text, Writing and Thought in Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 2005.



## *Dani Nabudere's Afrikology:* An Interview with Sanya Osha

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Sanya Osha is a philosopher, poet, novelist and author of several books, including *Kwasi Wiredu and Beyond: The Text, Writing and Thought in Africa* (2005), *Postethnophilosophy* (2011) and *African Postcolonial Moder-nity: Informal Subjectivities and the Democratic Consensus* (2014). He is also the author of the critically acclaimed novel, *Naked Light and the Blind Eye*. His fictional work, *Dust, Spittle and Wind* won the Association of Nigerian Authors' prize for prose in 1992. In 2000, he was a recipient of Prince Claus Award. He lives in South Africa and has worked at the Universities of Ibadan, Nigeria, KwaZulu-Natal and UNISA; he is a fellow of the African Studies Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands.

**I**tibari M. Zulu (IMZ): Thank you for this interview concerning your book titled *Dani Nabudere's Afrikology: A Quest for African Holism* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2018).

**Sanya Osha (SO):** Many thanks for granting me this wonderful opportunity.

**IMZ:** In your preface, I read that you juxtapose the corpus of Dani Nabudere and those of Cheikh Anta Diop, Molefi Kete Asante and Wim M. J. van Binsbergen as they intersect with many of Nabudere's preoccupations. I had not learned of Wim van Binsbergen, an anthropologist working on the theory and method of research on cultural globalisation in connection with virtuality, Information and Communication Technology, ethnicity and religion, with a project on 'Africa's Contribution to Global Systems of Knowledge: An Epistemology for African Studies in the Twenty-First Century' that links his research at the African Studies Centre, Leiden in the Netherlands. As I read, I don't see much discussion of him, but I see him well placed in your references. Is he

**I**tibari M. Zulu  
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someone we should be following, and in short, what has been his best contribution to the discussion on intersection with the work of Nabudere?

**SO:** Wim van J. Binsbergen is truly a phenomenon in that he is not fully understood or appreciated in the academic world. He trained initially as an anthropologist, speaks five different African languages and has conducted extensive ethnographical research in virtually all the regions of the continent, namely, Southern, Northern, Western and Central Africa. He began his fieldwork in the late 1960s and his first daughter bears a North African name. Another interesting part of his intellectual practice is that he is, unlike most other Western anthropologists, uncomfortable with the positionality of anthropologist as the sole participant or even arbiter of the knowledge-making process. So,

there is a constant interrogation/problematisation of the subject/object or the knowledgeable observer and passive/inactive observed dichotomy. These problematisations and self-critiques are integral to his knowledge-making practice, sometimes at the cost of agonising private disclosure.

He is also a *sangoma* and he became one after his training in Botswana in the 1980s. Now, how many highly trained Western or European anthropologists are also *sangomas*? Very few, if any at all. Toward the end of his academic career (he retired from university service in 2012), he delved with his customary single-minded concentration into the study of comparative linguistics, the history of religions, classical studies and a host of other ancient and contemporary academic specialties in order to plot a broad trajectory of global intellectual history, and most amazingly, he arguably has succeeded in this objective. In today's parochial academic environment, such a maddeningly broad intellectual adventure would be vehemently discouraged, and he was able to accomplish his central aims with very little institutional support.



Finally, the part of his multifarious projects that borders on Nabudere's work is the specialty of protohistory. Nabudere is concerned with the intellectual accomplishments of ancient Nubia, ancient Ethiopia and ancient Egypt; and so, I wanted to offer different but related vistas to the topics Nabudere is concerned with.

**IMZ:** Also, in your preface you mention that Nabudere made contributions to the broad field of African scholarship and his stature in African scholarship; towards the final segment of his career, he was solely preoccupied with Afrikology, which marks a major advance in his development as a conceptual thinker. What do you think happened and what do you think we can learn from that scenario?

**SO:** I cannot proffer a precise answer but can only speculate in view of the tenor of Nabudere's strident critiques of Western imperialism. Nabudere had condemned Western interference in the Great Lakes Region (GLR), the socio-political turmoil and mayhem caused by the Western powers and shady Western actors in the mineral rich regions of Africa, particularly in the GLR. He had argued that plans were afoot to re-colonise Africa and there were evident strategies of what may be termed 're-colonisation' in which Africa as a whole was being vilified in order to justify her plunder and (re)dismemberment as had occurred after the Berlin Conference of 1884.

Afrikology could be seen as an intellectual as well as a psychological shield against the onslaughts of 're-colonisation' and justifications for (re)dismemberment of the African continent at the practical level but of course the concept can be, and is being, deployed for other objectives as well.

**IMZ:** It is interesting that you write that Nabudere's work prior to his elucidation of the concept of Afrikology can be characterised by an absence of theory or, at best, half-hearted forays in search of a theory. But you write that with the conceptualisation of Afrikology, he came into his own; a voice discovered or, more appropriately, rekindled in the scalding ashes of postcolonial critique and the reoccurring realities of postcolonial malaise. That is an interesting assessment, and perhaps an evolutionary process of intellectual de-colonisation. Do you think that may be the case or perhaps it was something else; or if it was the case, do you think it is a general phenomenon in African intellectual discourse?

**SO:** As I have mentioned, it is easy to detect Nabudere's anger at the shameless plunder of the GLR by shady Western cabals and unscrupulous speculators who have absolute disregard for the peoples and future of the region. This cast of deplorable characters is motivated by pure avarice and an absolute disregard for the interests of the peoples concerned. It is not too difficult to read racism as being part of the reason behind such enormous contempt. And as I have pointed out, Afrikology provides the appropriate resources to counter all forms of racial and socio-economic injustice and abuse. It also advocates for the invaluable virtues of self-sufficiency in virtually all spheres of life – be they agriculture, political organisation, culture or history.

**IMZ:** Continuing, you mention that it seems impossible for Afrocentricity to compose itself without its mirror – Eurocentrism – because it requires its conceptual twin to breathe, and without which it would appear difficult to sustain an independent existence of its

own. Such an argument is not supported by Asante; he writes that Afrocentricity, unlike Eurocentrism has never worked to gain hegemony, hierarchy power or dominion, so there is a flaw in the argument. What is your take on this dichotomy?

**SO:** True, I argue in support of Asante that Afrocentricity doesn't work to gain hegemony but that it had to emerge out of the constant violence wreaked by Eurocentricism. Blacks (I hope this is an appropriate term for contemporary times) are usually unapologetically black when talking to other blacks (unless one is to conclude that unprecedented levels of self-hate and self-denial have surfaced, but at least in my corner of the world, we fully embrace our blackness). And so, when speaking exclusively to one another, blacks do not need to proclaim their Afrocentricity except when there is an explicit or implicit threat posed by Eurocentricism or other racialised attitudes or challenges. In a similar manner, following Wole Soyinka, the tiger does not need to proclaim its tigritude, it merely pounces.

**IMZ:** As I weave through your biography of Nabudere, you write that he demonstrates his unambiguous anti-imperialist stance to argue that globalisation is just another guise for colonial exploitation. I think such an observation or conclusion is part of a consciousness raising education in politics, especially for the African intellectual, a process shared by Kwame Nkrumah, the first Prime Minister and first President of Ghana, Cheikh Anta Diop, and poet, politician, cultural theorist (and the first President of Senegal), Léopold Sédar Senghor.

Do you agree, or are there some other elements involved, for example, in Nabudere's case?

**SO:** I am glad you make this particular observation which, for the most part, rings true. I am sure that in time, Nabudere would be viewed as being in that illustrious company of African liberators and thinkers who fought tirelessly for the emancipation of the peoples of African descent the world over.

**IMZ:** After much discussion on war and politics in Africa via Nabudere, it was refreshing to turn to his adoption of the concept of Afrikology when you quote him saying that ‘Afrikology seeks to retrace the evolution of knowledge and wisdom from its source to the current epistemologies, and to try and situate them in their historical and cultural contexts, especially with a view to establishing a new science for generating and accessing knowledge for sustainable use’, and from the problematic to you mentioning Afrikology being meant to provide a therapeutic function in healing chronic societal dysfunction and fragmentation. Do you believe Afrikology can currently provide a therapeutic function in healing chronic societal dysfunction and fragmentation, as articulated by Nabudere, or is there something else that may ‘turn the tide’?

**SO:** I think the ‘therapeutic function’ of Afrikology is self-evident. Asante writes about the lost-ness and loss-ness experienced by peoples of African descent all over the world. Black people in the diaspora who are drawn to vibrant black African cultures and traditions invariably speak of this lost-ness, the feelings of being violently yanked off one’s traditions by slavery and colonisation. Afrikology can definitely re-establish a more wholesome sense of self, a more balanced reading of history and therefore a more robust and versatile set of psychological resources to work with. Afrikology

is about reclaiming what was lost in our heritage as black people. Surely, this is therapeutic in view of the recurrent agonies of lost-ness.

**IMZ:** In working to understand the contributions of Nabudere, I learned that he agreed with Diop that the fragmentation of knowledge forms can only be reversed if the momentum and dominance of Platonian-Cartesian epistemology cease. In your research, did you discover if they had an actual meeting to discuss this topic, or others?

**SO:** I am not aware of any such meeting but they were definitely working within the same epistemological and ideological framework, and so could be considered as intellectual soul-mates. Nabudere also makes extensive use of Cheikh Anta Diop in pursuing his own work. How could he not have? Diop is truly a giant of African intellectual liberation, he was also a more rigorous scholar than Nabudere was.

**IMZ:** First, the science of the origin and development of the universe is not abstract to Africa (cosmologies), and second, the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge, especially with reference to its limits and validity (epistemologies). And interestingly, as you write, ‘one of Nabudere’s central arguments is that African cosmologies and epistemologies can be harnessed within the context of post-modernity for a new cultural synthesis as a panacea for the current existential malaise that afflicts the contemporary period’, and he further states that if recourse to the cultural accomplishments of ancient Greece has been possible, the same should be true about ancient inner Africa. Were you surprised to read this, or was it expected in reference to Nabudere’s overall evolution; and if you were surprised, why?

**SO:** I was not surprised. Rather, I was more impressed by the boldness of this stance. I was gratified by the thought that another world, an entirely new epistemological paradigm, was indeed possible. Nabudere’s total belief in the value and project of Afrikology was almost akin to religious faith and he constantly sought the intellectual support and affirmation of like-minded Afrocentricists.

**IMZ:** Additionally, as you write, Nabudere urges a return to an ethos of Nubian interconnectedness, aware that this project of cultural retrieval would be an arduous task, and thus, ‘a return to the ancient Egyptian or “inner Africa” system of ancient times is not possible in its pure form’. Such logic seems to border on concerns with abstract thought or subjects such as existence, causality, or truth, hence, the metaphysical. However, as you stated, not all Nabudere’s proposals about the return to an ethos of wholeness and interconnectedness are convincing, because he suggests that the employment of African languages is a possible way of attaining that goal, but has very little to say about the logistic requirements involved in such a project. The return to an African ethos of wholeness and interconnectedness is indeed an ideal, but how was his assessment received overall, among his peers?

**SO:** How is Nabudere received? It is difficult to say. Outside his home country of Uganda, he is well-respected but within Uganda, that is another matter entirely. Upon the publication of the book, I wrote to a couple of Ugandan intellectuals but I received no response. So, I don’t get the feeling that he is as revered in his country as in the manner that Soyinka or Chinua Achebe are revered in Nigeria. It is often said that colonialism

severely affected the intellectual traditions of Uganda in which scholars and writers were once compelled to package and present indigenous Ugandan traditions in a manner that colonial censors would find readily digestible, which of course would amount to a form of mutilation, silencing and erasure really. In other words, that couldn't have been a healthy situation. However, there were thought-provoking writers such as Okot p'Bitek emerging from Uganda who were prepared to confront the silences and repressions of colonial historiography. As for Nabudere, he may have been too radical for your average ivory tower-based scholar.

**IMZ:** Interestingly, and good in the context of Nabudere's experience, he (as you wrote), reaffirms the 'invaluable contributions of scholars such as Cheikh Anta Diop and Théophile Obenga, whose problematisations and interrogations of origins of African thought systems have demonstrated that there is much depth to be discovered in those traditions', a profound scholarly understanding that I think many don't capitalise on, and thus, a domain for the astute scholar. Perhaps scholars in Afrikology are making those links today, but I suspect they are quietly done within the conservative hall of the academy. Are you aware of such Nabudere, Diop and Obenga linkages today that advance Afrikology?

**SO:** There are currently powerful sites of Afrikology all over the world but academic institutions, both in the West and in Africa, are largely Eurocentric in outlook. Evidently, people of colour have to build their own institutions, networks and platforms to advance Afrikological agendas, orientations and initiatives. There are opportunities to spread the gospel of Afrikology and we must

continue to explore and disseminate those opportunities.

**IMZ:** I also read that Nabudere 'suggests attempts should be made to connect that illustrious past with the African present', a point you said 'makes his project worthy of careful attention' because it is 'essentially what his philosophy of Afrikology is about, the tracing of the historical, cultural, scientific, and social links between the Cradle of Humankind and the contemporary world, with a view to healing the seismic severances occasioned by violence, false thinking, war, loss, and dispossession to accomplish an epistemological and psychic sense of wholeness for Africa's collective self'. Hence, you wrote that 'of course, this proposition has considerable importance as a philosophy of universalism and not just as an African project', and thus, 'Afrikology intends to transcend the dichotomies inherited from Western epistemology (and culture as whole) that maintain a divide between mind and body or heart and mind and revert instead to an earlier conceptual tradition perfected in ancient Egypt that conceives of knowledge generation as a holistic enterprise, where the fundamental binary of the Western universe does not really apply'. I agree with your assessment and think the transcending of dichotomies inherited from Western epistemology is necessary for African liberation everywhere. Yet, many have held on until human consciousness and conditions give way to actions like the 2015 Rhodes Must Fall protest movement in South Africa, originally directed against a statue at the University of Cape Town commemorating Cecil Rhodes that received global attention, which sparked a wider movement to decolonise education across South Africa. Do you

think Afrikology (as defined by Nabudere or others) can transcend consciousness in perhaps similar ways? If so, why, and if not, why not?

**SO:** Definitely for the captive, colonised African consciousness, Afrikology provides a balm, an entirely new approach to history, culture, memory and existential orientation – in the age of fake news and fake history – that is empowering and self-liberating, that furnishes all that is dignifying and therapeutic in matters relating to Africanity. Ngugi wa Thiong'o had described (de)colonisation as one vast epistemological project. It definitely has multiple ramifications and dimensions. For me, Afrikology is a significant advancement on the idea of Pan-Africanism because it provides us with multi-pronged conceptual tools that confront the injuries of trauma, elemental loss, the disorientation and superficialities of the present and the deep-seated scepticism or even nihilism embedded in contemporary human consciousness. Afrikology possesses a depth and a capacity to generate reflection, optimism and positive action in what some have described as a post-human world.

It's good that you mention the Rhodes Must Fall protests that occurred in the University of Cape Town. Francis B. Nyamnjoh has written an interesting book on the affair which tells us how fractious and traumatising decolonisation processes continue to be. While Eurocentric circles might choose to view Cecil John Rhodes as a great empire builder, colonised peoples caught in the sometimes polarising throes of decolonisation are livid with anger caused by feelings of socio-economic dispossession and the ever-present sense of psychological loss.



**IMZ:** In reading the book, I see that Nabudere was making connections between theory and applied situations, and thus ‘attempts to establish a connection between restorative justice and Afrikology’ via a transdisciplinary methodological approach that ‘rejects the traditional divisions between academic disciplines while advocating a more holistic strategy toward knowledge production’; as he posits that ‘knowledge itself emanates from the heart, which processes the sensations and experiences derived from the five senses’; and ‘the word is the vehicle through which knowledge is transmitted and human communities function on the basis of the correlation between themselves’. Here the brilliance of Nabudere comes to light to illuminate, as you wrote, ‘that justice can only make sense if it stems from the lived experiences of the people(s) concerned and if it acts as a glue between disparate cultures [and] in this way, the greatest possible understanding can be derived’. And furthermore, ‘justice, as such, should not be conceived and implemented as a rigid set of societal injunctions to punish infringements upon the law in a manner that is removed from the pulse, aspirations, and failings of society’ wherein ‘restoration and reparations, it is argued, are also vital to a holistic understanding of justice’. I am impressed, when discovering this content, how did it move you?

**SO:** I think it is a considerable advancement in Afrikological thought. Here, Nabudere is demonstrating how Afrikology is necessary for contemporary African existence, and also that it is an approach with which to deal with the complexities and shortcomings of (post)modernity. We are offered a critical lens through which to

critique modernity as active agents rather than as uncritical consumers.

**IMZ:** You also wrote that ‘Nabudere goes a step further to advocate a transdisciplinary approach encompassing as many multidisciplinary perspectives as possible’, and thus, ‘society can become more manageable and equitable if the monopoly of power and violence enjoyed by the state is relinquished’, with him also arguing ‘that the contemporary democratic state is no different from feudal regimes in the manner in which it controls and determines the nature of violence’. The thinking and reasoning of Nabudere seem to be ‘on point’, and today, we may be pressed to find a peer. But who would you suggest, given the time of his passing, and today?

**SO:** Obviously, one would have to mention Molefi Kete Asante, Toyin Falola, Maulana Karenga, Wade Nobles and some other Africanist activists/scholars outside the academy working in areas of aesthetics, healing and divination. The latter category of workers (such as Luisah Teish) may not always get the attention of the academy but they are vital in spreading the word in everyday communities all over the African diaspora. Increasingly, in the age of internet, more and more believers in Afrikology, Afrocentricity and other African-centred movements are becoming visible. What it means is that most forms of Western media and vast colonialist-minded sectors of the media in the Africana world have ignored Afrikological movements for reasons best known to them, and this is a great pity. We are now seeing an almost inexhaustible plethora of Africana forms of cultural expression, cosmologies that are rich, life-affirming and that are in fact often richer than similar cultural forms outside the Africana world.

**IMZ:** Nabudere, as you write, says that: 1) ‘a transdisciplinary consciousness is required to return human society to a considerably more wholesome state, and for this transdisciplinary approach to knowledge production to be useful, humankind must find much deeper ways in which to reconnect with the ancient sense’; 2) transdisciplinarity is the most appropriate way to transcend the chronic limitations of monodisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinarity, a reality filtered through a multidimensional lens as opposed to being fractured as if through a prism, while African cosmologies reflect on the uni-dimensionality of reality (hence, Nabudere identifies a convergence between the ideas of Nicolescu and Diop attesting to the multi-referentiality of existence); 3) a primal link connects humankind, vegetation, the animal world, and the galaxy, which Cartesian rationality and scientific knowledge have ruptured; therefore, he urges for a ‘reconvergence’ that would restore a ‘oneness’ to the procedures of knowledge making. This melody of human connections rooted in the consciousness of Afrikology, a philosophy by which Nabudere says ‘humankind can overcome the multiple problems of contemporary society’, represents a metatheory, hence, a theory devised to analyse a theory. Do you see this as significant? If so, why, and if not, why not?

**SO:** Nabudere is unveiling the more intellectually challenging and rigorous aspects of Afrikology. Just as Diop and later Asante had done, Afrikology has got to be developed on unassailable intellectual foundations even when there is an undeniable activist element in its ‘strategies of conversion’ to employ a somewhat awkward term. I often think Pan-Africanism, a terribly important idea, offers



only feel-good sentiments without always employing the appropriate intellectual armour in relation to the full realisation of its political potentials which have always been immense. Afrikology, for me, goes much further, and in spite of the challenges, has immense possibilities for intellectual rigour and analysis.

**IMZ:** Your presentation on Nabudere based on the above, and more of what you record, cause one to ask: how and why did he originally conceptualise his Afrikology? Hence so many things readers wish to learn when Nabudere argues that: 1) knowledge is characterised by epistemological dualisms and hierarchies that splinter and dichotomise in a broadest sense, while transdisciplinarity is mediated by hermeneutics to provide a panacea; 2) there is a need for the adoption of a holistic approach to knowledge making that would entail a keen consideration for language, mores, customs, and other related repertoires found in a particular culture; 3) a critique of dominant science allows for the inclusion of Afrikology as an alternative epistemology, ‘an epistemology of knowledge generation and application that has roots in discarded forms of knowledge that unquestionably define the meaning of “human”’; 4) philosopher and professor Valentin-Yves Mudimbe and professor Kwame Anthony Appiah have failed to ‘adequately demonstrate the validity of indigenous African systems of

thought about which they seem to be uncomfortably apologetic’, hence, they are concerned with questions arising out of the possible exteriority of African philosophy motivated by Western anxieties as the manner in which the authors attempt to frame the foundational problematic in African philosophy as indelibly indebted to a Western paradigm, which in any case, at best, ignores African cultures, and at worst, denigrates them; and 5) that orality should be at the centre of African epistemic projects.

**SO:** As I mentioned earlier, Nabudere reflected, wrote and acted very powerfully on issues pertaining to the African predicament. It is obvious that he found it necessary to develop an intellectual approach to African problems from a holistic and deeply historical perspective, and hence the reason for the emergence of his notion of Afrikology as a conceptual tool. One would not argue at this point that it has proven to be a perfect tool but at least it grants us some perspective on how to view Africa. What we have, in no unambiguous terms, is an immense possibility of the critical lenses through which we perceive African historical development with a view to re-drawing how Africans see themselves in history, the present and their potentials for future growth.

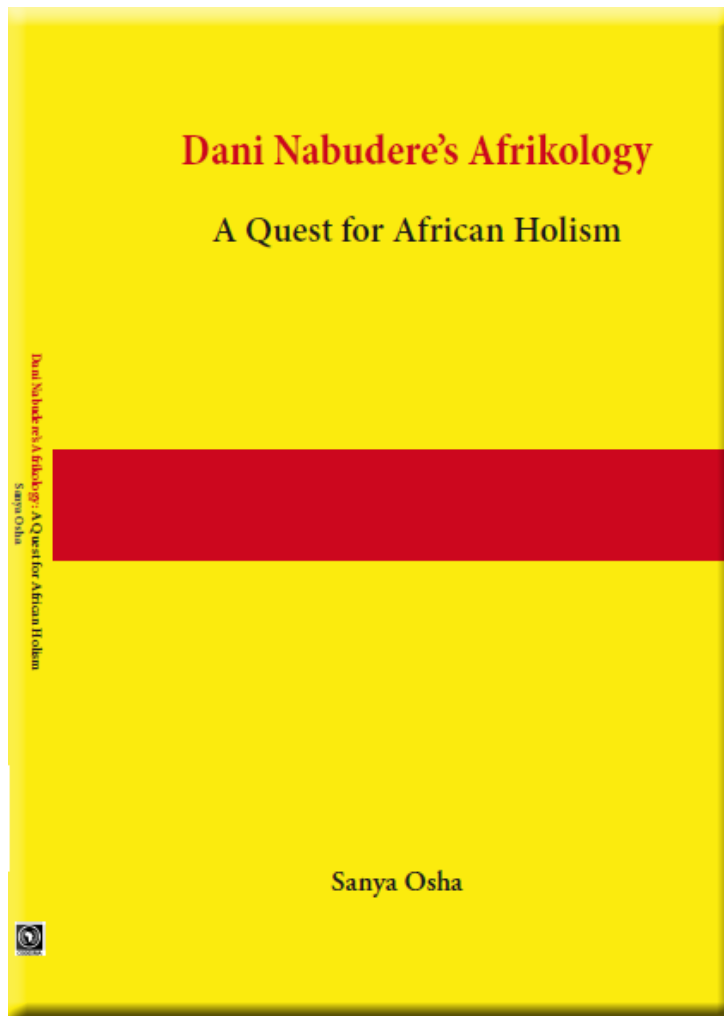
**IMZ:** In the comprehensive intent of Nabudere, as you outlined, he fashioned Afrikology as a ‘guiding philosophy to overcome the dichotomies, contradictions,

and disconnect between mind and body caused by the perceived irrelevance of Cartesianism and Western thought generally to African issues’. In this construct, do you think his intent has been realised, if so how, and if not, why?

**SO:** It is difficult to admit that Nabudere’s intentions have been realised. We struggled daily with subjugation, denigration and neglect of African cosmologies and epistemologies. And this is why the project of Afrikology is really essential. Afrikology provides Africans and peoples of African descent with an unfiltered vehicle through which to speak to ourselves about our pain, sense of loss, hopes and aspirations without an excess of anxiety and self-consciousness; we are also able to speak truthfully to our issues with a sense of rootedness and pride, thereby raising the bar on our conversations and reflections, purging ourselves of unwarranted feelings of shame, guilt and abjection; in this manner, we feel emboldened and nourished with rich and vivid speech, rigorous thought and robust and self-validating historiography.

**IMZ:** Thank you for writing this book, and for agreeing to this interview.

**SO:** Once again, I thank you for this incredibly important and wonderful opportunity for reflection and sharing.



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**Molefi Kete Asante**  
Department of Africology and African American Studies  
Temple University

## An African Feminist Decolonial Disability Studies

Despite the history and ubiquity of disability in Africa, there is little data or research on disability. Globally, more than a billion people live with a disability and 80 per cent of people with disabilities are in the global South (World Health Organisation 2011). Due to ageing populations, conflict, exploitative labour conditions, inadequate healthcare, chronic lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and the numerous effects of a geopolitics that has normalised structural violence, this number is increasing. The United Nations estimates state that 40 per cent of Africans have some form of disability.<sup>1</sup>

Disability disproportionately affects vulnerable populations (Goodley 2011). Disability prevalence rates are higher in the global South. The categories of people who are at most risk in becoming disabled are the poor, blacks, women and then men in that order are at most risk of becoming disabled (WHO 2011). People *with* disabilities (PwD) are further at risk in conditions of structural violence. In racist, hetero-patriarchal, capitalist societies, PwD tend to be stigmatised and subjected to harrowing conditions. People who do not conform to societal or cultural ideals of embodiment (e.g. sensory impairment such as blindness, or physical impairment such as paraplegia), or have chronic psycho-affective impairments (such as mood disorders) or are neurodiverse (e.g. autism) may experience violence and varying forms of exclusion.<sup>2</sup>

### Kharnita Mohamed

School of African & Gender  
Studies, Anthropology &  
Linguistics  
University of Cape Town  
South Africa

Whilst there is variation on the continent on how disability is viewed from different cultural vantage points (Reynolds-Whyte and Ingstad 1995), most research on disability comes from the global North (Connell 2011; Grech 2015; Meekosha 2011). Research on disability from Africa too relies heavily on Northern theories (Meekosha 2011). In settler colonial societies where Southern theories and calls for decolonial disability studies are emerging, disability theorisation frequently retains patriarchal and/or settler colonial epistemologies that overlook the intersections of race, class, ethnicity and gender. Or worse, where there is cognisance of cultural difference, ethnocentric analyses of the intersection of disability and culture are produced. Many analyses are ahistorical, rarely disarticulate disabilities on the basis of class, race, gender, sexuality, religion, nationality and sometimes not even on the basis of different types of disabilities.

One of the most egregious effects of research emerging from a tiny percentage of the global population has been the normalisation of the

conditions which cause disability. The effects of epistemic coloniality (Mignolo 2000; 2009), where a minute portion of the global population are thinking about solutions and social dynamics from their contexts (Connell 2011), as we well know, are multiple. The implications of the dearth of research on disability within the global South, the reliance on Northern theories and settler colonial epistemologies are that the prevention of predatory geopolitics (and internal colonialisms) is rarely advocated for and the ways in which structural violence borne of coloniality produces, exacerbates, and normalises disabling conditions are ignored (Meekosha 2011). Globally, Africa is enmeshed in a geopolitics that has normalised inadequate forms of legal and actual protection and care of people whose bodies and psyches are as fragile and vulnerable as people living in the global North. Wars, extractive and exploitative political economies where labourers, states, citizens, and the environment are damaged by predatory forms of global capital and statecraft in the global North, produce disability.

The ways in which the global political economy produces disability is sketched by Helen Meekosha (2011) and expanded on by Dan Goodley (2011). People working in mines and industrial processing zones for meagre pay in places that have limited healthcare and very few of the necessities for living a flourishing life become

disabled or experience debilitating modes of embodiment across their life course. PwD, whether congenital or produced by an uncaring political economy where labourers are disposable, then further pay exorbitant amounts to the Northern disability industry for technological supports, e.g. assistive devices like wheelchairs or software programmes. People who experience warfare that supports the global arms trade and is frequently waged to extract resources for the global North become disabled. Populations undergoing conflict also experience interruptions of social services, such as healthcare and social supports that would alleviate psycho-affective distress. Interruptions or the destruction of medical services means the lack of routine vaccinations (e.g. polio vaccinations that prevent cerebral palsy) produce disability and people who have chronic conditions not receiving care leading to further disablement. What is more, inadequate state protection and a global economy where the global North treats Africa (and the rest of the global South) as a space of experimentation and where violences may be unleashed without consequence means also subject to unfettered medical, arms, social, technological and economic experimentation which has disastrous effects. Africa is also treated as a dumping ground for old medicines and undesirable foods and goods. We then are reliant on aid programmes that emanate in the global North as part of the NGO-industrial complex which (re)produces disabling relations of dependence and differential and hierarchical modes of being. These are a fraction of the ways in which the global North is implicated in producing unequal geopolitics that have consequences for bodies and psyches.

Settler colonials within racialised political economies (Jaffee 2016) such as South Africa also produce and/or ignore disabling living conditions for black or indigenous populations. Unequal labour relations that produce persisting and enduring precarity and inequality for the majority of the population not only place burdens on under-resourced healthcare systems but also have epigenetic effects. Structural violence is frequently normalised. Unequal educational systems combined with food insecurity create debilitating intellectual and physical inequalities. Historically, the continent has inherited incalculable amounts of trauma from the violence of colonial subjugation. What are the afterlives of King Leopold's cutting off hands and feet in the Belgian Congo? What are the psycho-affective and intergenerational impacts of families torn apart by the North Atlantic slave trade or circular migration between their homes and South Africa's goldmines?

Gender-based violence and patriarchal complicities also produce disability (see Erevelles 2011). Where masculinity is founded on the capacity to mobilise violence against other men and women, as well as in enactments of heteronormative masculinities that target the bodies of non-binary people whose sexualities are not recognised and socially legitimated, disability ensues. Violence is gendered in numerous ways: sexual violence, assault and battery in domestic violence, psychological violence such as the infantilisation of women, and the negation of women's agency. These all have debilitating and disabling effects.

Whilst many disabilities are congenital, and the result of

accidents and natural disasters, disability in the global South is largely a materialisation of social inequality. The discussion above merely plots a few connective points. If you were to think about the effects of inequality on the bodies and psyches in the continent, not abstract subjects but people who are raced, gendered, classed (and on and on), instances of disability as a materialisation of violence will be almost unbearable.

Disability is an important social category for thinking about violence. It is crucial for us, on the continent, to engage in conversations about disability and proliferate and shape the discourse. As an example of why it matters for African scholars to engage with this theoretical gap, the WHO in its important text on disability notes that conflict produces disability, but nowhere does it advocate for the end of conflict or geopolitical solutions that dismantle predatory and violent social structures. A decolonial feminist disability studies approach in Africa will allow us to engage with the ways in which coloniality continues to narrow the possibility for living flourishing lives, analyse how patriarchy and violent masculinities wound and create untenable lifeworlds, and make visceral the materialisation of inequality and injustice.

## Notes

1. 'Disability in Africa', 15 June 2008, available at <https://www.ascleiden.nl/content/webdossiers/disability-africa>, accessed 19 December 2018.
2. Most theorisation about what it means to be a human come from the global North. The terms for describing human diversity and categories of impairment emerge from Northern ontologies. The use of these terms, for explanatory purposes here, does not indicate how these modes of life are understood across the continent.





This is part of the problem, as the reliance on theory from the global North has ontological, epistemic and methodological effects.

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## Narratives of the Liberation Struggle in Guinea-Bissau: Women’s Trajectories and Emancipatory Pathways

I believe that Professor Aminata Diaw Cissé was not only a distinguished African philosopher who contributed in a relevant way to the debate on Africa’s place in knowledge production but also an academic who stood out for her commitment concerning the place of women in this production. In this article, I will be talking about women and their perceptions of the emancipation and liberation process in Guinea-Bissau.

Nation building in Guinea-Bissau, marked by a long duration of armed struggle of extreme violence, would not have been possible without women’s unquestionable contribution. However, given the complexities of the process, what kind of emancipation are we talking about in this case? What has been women’s perception of emancipation? How far has the ‘revolution’ gone as an effective

**Patrícia Godinho Gomes**  
 Post Graduate Program on  
 Ethnic and African Studies  
 Federal University of  
 Bahia/UFBA  
 Brazil

liberating experience? Various sources, although relatively scarce, have shown that the posthumous discourse about the incontestable leadership of Amílcar Cabral made relatively invisible the immense number of men and women who actively participated in the process of independence. My case study on the ‘other voices’ in the liberation struggle, methodologically oriented in oral history, seeks to understand to what extent the construction of a historical narrative from individual trajectories can be helpful in filling historiographical gaps, and specifically, in discussing African

decolonial perspectives on gender studies.

In my analysis, three important issues emerged: the relevance of women’s role in the liberation struggle, the invisibility of their perspectives in the official narrative, and the non-recognition by the society (generally speaking) of women’s participation in the nation building process.

In this sense, the effort to bring these women’s voices into the academic debate can have transformative potential, since it can lead to new historical readings and reflections, be it in terms of their partaking in political power or in terms of the reconfiguration of gender relations in the context of the armed struggle.

This methodological orientation based on oral history can allow individuals to emerge as historical subjects.

On the other side, African perspectives have been questioning the scope of some concepts and theoretical formulations to understand different realities of the continent. As the Nigerian sociologists Mary Kolawole and Oyeronké Oyéwùmí have demonstrated, the problem of gender in African studies is, above all, epistemological; as the concept in its origin, constitution and expression is based on Western experiences. According to the authors, one of the main limits of 'gender' as an analytical category, considering African contexts, concerns the definition of the 'nuclear family' centred on the subordinated wife, patriarchal husband and children, where there is no room for other adults/individuals.

In several interviews that I have conducted in Guinea-Bissau, the relative irrelevance emerged of the nuclear family model as the founding element of gender as an analytical category to explain social relations and gender inequalities. In my case study, as suggested by Bibi Bakare Yussuf, narrative constructions break with the perspective which essentially presents women as subordinate to men or, alternatively, as a homogeneous group without any kind of tensions and/or conflicts.

Mamae Barbosa,<sup>1</sup> a doctor and former combatant on the south front, explains how she experienced the years of armed struggle. The first daughter of her mother in a polygamous family, she tells about the difficulties of an 'itinerant' life in the context of war:

It was in our village that I started school, in Ganafa. It was there that one learned the 'abc'. And when the attacks became more intense, in 1966, they took

us to the bush and when the attacks ended, we went back to school .... My father had four wives ... when the situation got complicated, he took my mother, the other wives and children to the village where I already lived with my grandmother .... Sometimes there was resistance in allowing girls to go to school, but little by little it was getting better.

From this narrative comes the resilient side of communities and of women in particular. It also shows the ideological force of the liberation movement. Mamae Barbosa not only attended primary and secondary schools in that context but also had the opportunity to obtain a scholarship to study medicine abroad. As she stated, 'I studied because my family encouraged me, my mother in particular, but also my father ... But this was possible because of the mobilisation of the Party that facilitated girls' education'.

Indeed, there were several tensions and contradictions inherent in the process. In this regard, Ana Maria Gomes Soares,<sup>2</sup> a former combatant on the north front, stated:

There are those [women] who are never mentioned, among whom the very first Amilcar Cabral sent to China, such as Nhima Dabo, Carlota Sanca, Aua Cassama

... it is important to know these figures and to know what they have done and, perhaps one day, to honour them with names of streets or squares. And for our young people to know who they were and what they did.

Women's movements in Guinea-Bissau have been an important instrument of struggle, both in the past and in the present. In this regard, Ana Maria Gomes Soares related that Guinean-Bissau women needed to create organisations

that could be representative of the majority. As she stated, 'I see [UDEMU] as a women's organisation fundamentally supported by Amílcar Cabral. He [Cabral] thought that women should emancipate themselves but in an organised way Cabral was very devoted to women and defended their rights. But [the] PAIGC women's organisation has not evolved, in my opinion. 'You know', Mandinga says, 'If you find a bundle and you understand that you can carry it, then put it in your head and take it; but if you see that you are not able to carry it, you will realise by simply looking at it, leave it where you found it. It is necessary to put competent people leading institutions and organisations'.

It was possible to understand from the narratives of former combatants, that the discourse of the liberation movement on women's emancipation and liberation was one thing, another thing was women's own perceptions of what liberation and emancipation were about.

In the Guinean-Bissau case, political and ideological discourse 'imagined' a kind of society that built women in a specific way. My empirical research has allowed me, so far, through the discourses and practices of women who participated in this process, to show that this discursive construction did not always correspond to the experiences lived by women. It seems that two contradictory realities coexisted: on the one hand, the perception that the struggle for independence and nation-building allowed the emergence of new spaces for political action and social mobilisation in an emancipatory perspective; and, on the other hand, these spaces reverted into places of practices that denounced the sexist side of the same process.

Coming to my final remarks, my question is: to what extent has Guinea-Bissau's liberation struggle fully promoted women's emancipation? That is the question calling for an adequate and actual solution. I believe women's contribution has to be documented and made part of our national history. Our children need to be told the correct history and this can only be told by us. This is also what, in my opinion, Professor Aminata Diaw Cissé fought for.

## Notes

1. Mamae Barbosa was born in 1958, on the Island of Bolama, south of Guinea-Bissau. She attended the Liberation Movement School/ Escola Piloto in Conakry and studied medicine in Romania. She got a degree in general medicine and holds a master's degree in Public Health as well as a post-graduate degree in tropical medicine from the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Lisbon. Interview with the author, Bissau, 26 April 2017.
2. Ana Maria Gomes Soares was born in 1951, in Cubucaré, south of Guinea, previously named Caolac. She is the daughter of Mandajaco peasants from the central north of the country, who in the years of armed struggle had migrated to the south in search of better living conditions. Interview with the author, Bissau, 23 April 2017.

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## L'épidémie à virus Ebola : quels enseignements pour L'Afrique ?

*Je dédie cet article à la mémoire de ma sœur et camarade Aminata Diaw Cissé, philosophe de formation, esprit libre et bel esprit, s'il en fut, combattante émérite sur tous les fronts de la cause africaine, qui n'est autre que celle de toute l'humanité.*

L'histoire naturelle de la maladie à virus Ebola s'est révélée riche d'enseignements au double plan biomédical et socioculturel, jetant une lumière singulière sur l'état réel de l'Afrique et du monde contemporain.

Il s'agit du principal représentant d'une nouvelle famille taxonomique de virus à ARN, les Filoviridae, dont le prototype est apparu dès 1967 à Marburg (Allemagne) et Belgrade (Yougoslavie), dans un laboratoire de fabrication de vaccins contre la poliomyélite. Ce virus dit de Marburg a provoqué la toute première épidémie humaine de fièvre hémorragique mortelle liée à un filovirus. Isolé à partir d'une colonie de singes verts importés d'Ouganda (qui finira intégralement euthanasiée), il demeure l'unique espèce identifiée de son genre et sera responsable par la suite de près d'une dizaine d'autres épidémies sporadiques, en Afrique orientale et centrale essentiellement.

Le virus du genre Ebola, quant à lui, ne sera découvert que près d'une décennie plus tard, en 1976, à l'occasion d'une sévère épidémie ayant éclaté quasi simultanément à Yambuku (RDC) et à Nzara (Soudan du Sud), avec des centaines de cas, dont plusieurs dizaines de morts. Depuis lors, entre le dernier quart du XXe siècle

**Dialo Diop**  
Faculté de Médecine  
Université Cheikh Anta Diop  
(2016)  
Dakar/Sénégal

et la fin de la première décennie du XXIe, plus d'une vingtaine de poussées épidémiques de fièvres hémorragiques dues au virus Ebola ont été enregistrées en Afrique dite subsaharienne ; au-delà des deux Congo et du Soudan, en Ouganda, au Kenya et au Gabon principalement, mais non exclusivement. Il faut en effet signaler l'apparition d'un cas humain unique et non mortel en Côte d'Ivoire, dans le parc national de la Forêt Tai (1994), ainsi que la survenue d'une épidémie animale à Reston en Virginie (USA), au sein d'une population de singes macaques importés des Philippines (1990). Si cette souche de laboratoire dite Reston est réputée non pathogène chez les humains, la virulence des sous-types dits Zaïre et Soudan pourrait varier entre 40 et 90 pour cent de taux de mortalité, tandis que la pathogénicité de la souche appelée Forêt Tai reste indéterminée. Enfin, au courant des années 2000, un dernier sous-type nommé Bundibugyo a été isolé et identifié lors d'épidémies humaines

en Ouganda et au Congo. Soit, pour l'instant, cinq sous-types distincts reconnus dans le genre Ebolavirus.

Ainsi, entre 1976 et 2012, l'apparition, au cœur du continent africain, d'infections à virus Ebola évoluant sur le mode d'épidémies récidivantes aura provoqué près de 2 000 cas, dont plus de 1 100 décès, si l'on ne prend en compte que les flambées ayant entraîné au moins cent cas dûment diagnostiqués. Réputée jusqu'alors être confinée aux seules régions forestières de l'Afrique équatoriale, cette fièvre hémorragique virale de type nouveau, malgré son évidente gravité et sa forte contagiosité interhumaine, ne va susciter d'intérêt, au-delà bien entendu des populations et autorités sanitaires des pays concernés, que parmi les experts de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) et autres organismes de recherche spécialisés, tels que le Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) d'Atlanta (USA), l'Institut Pasteur de Paris (France), le Medical Research Council (MRC) de Cambridge (GB) ou le National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) de Johannesburg (Afrique du Sud), entre autres.

Ce relatif manque d'intérêt des responsables de la santé publique et des multinationales de l'industrie



pharmaceutique, venant s'ajouter à la nouveauté de cette famille de virus épidémique dépourvue d'insecte vecteur, et donc différente des arboviroses mieux connues, locorégionales (fièvre jaune, Chikungunya, vallée du Rift) ou mondiales (dengue), explique au moins en partie les difficultés constatées dans la prise en charge diagnostique et thérapeutique de cette maladie infectieuse émergente. Citons, à titre d'exemple, les errements observés dans la détermination du réservoir de virus animal (d'autant plus importante du point de vue épidémiologique qu'il s'agit d'un agent pathogène à transmission non vectorielle) que l'on a imputé tout d'abord aux petits ou aux grands singes, puis aux rongeurs, avant de l'attribuer finalement aux chauves-souris frugivores, identifiées comme les seuls porteurs asymptomatiques du virus Ebola. En outre, du fait de son extrême dangerosité, la culture de ce type de virus, pourtant indispensable à son étude approfondie, nécessite un laboratoire de biosécurité maximale (niveau 4), dont il n'existe que trois ou quatre unités civiles officiellement répertoriées dans toute l'Afrique. D'où les retards accumulés autant dans la recherche de médicaments et/ou de vaccins que dans la mise au point de tests sérologiques relativement simples, et le recours obligatoire aux techniques diagnostiques moléculaires, réservées à quelques rares laboratoires spécialisés dits de référence, situés dans les villes et donc fort éloignés des zones rurales où sévissent habituellement ces épidémies. Un *statu quo* pluri décennal, dont tout le monde semblait plus ou moins s'accommoder...

Jusqu'à la survenue, totalement inattendue, d'une épidémie sans précédent en Afrique de l'Ouest, qui

va marquer un tournant majeur dans l'histoire naturelle de la maladie à virus Ebola. À partir d'un cas index apparu en décembre 2013 dans un village de la zone forestière de Guékédou, s'étendant aux districts de Macenta et de Nzérékoré (République de Guinée), va éclater une épidémie de grande ampleur, d'abord rurale puis urbaine, qui va progressivement se répandre par contiguïté aux pays voisins, dans les districts de Kenema et Kailahun (Sierra Leone) et le district de Lofa (Libéria).

Ainsi, au cours de l'année 2014, sur un total de 67 districts dans ces trois pays, 43 seront atteints par l'extension de l'épidémie, avec plus de 90 pour cent des cas confirmés, probables ou suspects recensés dans 14 districts seulement. Pire, dès le mois de juillet, la poussée va gagner d'autres pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest, avec des cas importés entraînant des cas secondaires mortels, au Nigeria d'abord et au Mali ensuite, tandis qu'un unique cas d'importation non mortel atteindra le Sénégal... Pourtant, il faudra attendre le 25 mars 2014, soit près de quatre mois, pour que l'OMS déclare officiellement l'existence d'une « épidémie de fièvre hémorragique à virus Ebola en Afrique de l'Ouest ». Et ensuite, quatre mois supplémentaires, le 8 août 2014, avant que ses dirigeants ne proclament « la maladie à virus Ebola, une urgence de santé publique de portée internationale » ! Il est vrai qu'entre-temps, le 2 août précisément, l'apparition de quelques cas isolés, mais exportés hors d'Afrique, car frappant le personnel expatrié d'assistance médicale et paramédicale (deux aux USA et un en Espagne), avait suffi à provoquer une peur panique dans l'opinion occidentale... et une réaction instantanée de ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler la « communauté internationale ».

Toujours est-il qu'au 22 septembre 2014, le bilan cumulatif de l'épidémie ouest-africaine établi par l'OMS avançait 5 843 cas et 2 803 décès, le personnel soignant étant sévèrement touché avec 337 cas, dont 181 mortels. Ces chiffres vraisemblablement sous-estimés, de l'aveu même des experts africains et étrangers, témoignent néanmoins d'une progression fulgurante par rapport au précédent bilan d'étape qui, le 16 août, faisait état de 2 240 cas confirmés, probables ou suspectés, dont 1 229 décès.

Preuve ne saurait être plus flagrante de la règle, non écrite mais invariable, du « deux poids, deux mesures », qui prévaut en matière de droit à la santé comme pour tout autre droit fondamental de la personne humaine, en Afrique comme dans le reste du monde. En atteste éloquemment le cas emblématique de notre dévouée consœur sierra-léonaise, le docteur Olivet Buck, contaminée par ses patients et décédée à la suite du refus de son évacuation sanitaire vers l'Allemagne, au mépris de la requête pressante du président de la République de son pays<sup>1</sup>.

De nombreuses manifestations de l'inégalité et de l'iniquité dans l'accès aux soins, la mobilisation et la gestion des ressources appropriées, ou les niveaux d'information vont apparaître, tant dans l'alerte que dans les modalités de la riposte à cette menace à potentiel désormais pandémique. Nous n'en relèverons ici que certains des aspects les plus significatifs.

En effet, à la suite de cette annonce spectaculaire, l'OMS va enclencher une série de réunions d'experts internationaux à Genève, entre août et septembre 2014, en pleine période d'expansion de l'épidémie. Il était jusqu'alors communément admis que l'on ne disposait

d'aucun traitement, ni curatif ni préventif, contre la maladie à virus Ebola ; les seules interventions possibles étant palliatives, à visée purement symptomatique. L'issue de chaque cas dépendait donc fondamentalement, comme pour toute infection virale, du degré de compétence du système immunitaire du sujet face à la densité et la virulence de l'inoculum contaminant et, accessoirement, de la précocité et de la qualité du traitement d'appoint.

C'est dire quel fut l'étonnement, sinon l'écœurement, des spécialistes africains en apprenant, à l'issue de la première grande rencontre d'experts au siège de l'OMS, qu'il existait non seulement près d'une demi-douzaine de drogues actives contre le virus Ebola et, dira-t-on, au stade encore expérimental (certaines ayant atteint ou dépassé les phases d'essais cliniques), mais que l'on disposait de surcroît d'au moins deux candidats vaccins en cours d'évaluation ! Ainsi donc, une gamme thérapeutique quasi complète, préventive et curative, produite par les secteurs public ou privé de la recherche pharmacologique des pays du Nord (USA, Japon et Canada, entre autres), était bel et bien disponible (quoiqu'en quantités parfois limitées et depuis une période indéterminée), mais surtout à l'insu des premiers concernés, à savoir les populations et les autorités responsables de la santé publique dans les pays africains atteints...

Mieux, l'on ne tardera pas à annoncer, courant 2015, la mise au point de tests de dépistage rapide de l'infection humaine à virus Ebola, rendant possible sur place un diagnostic sérologique aisé quasiment instantané, supprimant ainsi les contraintes de conservation et les délais

de transport des prélèvements qu'imposait auparavant le recours aux techniques diagnostiques moléculaires. Reste, bien sûr, à en déterminer le coût réel et non le seul prix affiché par les fournisseurs.

Un dernier résultat de cette cascade tardive de réunions internationales de l'OMS consacrée au virus Ebola aura été l'œuvre d'« experts en bioéthique », qui vont autoriser le recours immédiat à des « traitements expérimentaux », y compris des vaccins recombinants, sans respect des rigoureuses procédures d'homologation habituelles, et ceci au nom de l'« urgence sanitaire mondiale » ! Un autre phénomène mis en évidence par cette explosion épidémique du virus Ebola aura été le peu de fiabilité et même l'invalidité des prédictions sur l'évolution probable de l'épidémie proposées par les experts occidentaux, euraméricains en particulier<sup>2</sup>. Autant de projections catastrophistes fondées sur des modélisations mathématiques à prétention scientifique, qui se sont révélées fausses, car simplement infirmées par la réalité des faits. Des chiffres qui vont pourtant donner lieu à diverses projections hasardeuses et autres extrapolations fantaisistes, ayant pour effet d'entretenir la peur, de semer la confusion et d'aggraver l'isolement des pays victimes. Ce qui, soit dit en passant, n'aura guère surpris les observateurs attentifs ayant suivi antérieurement les prévisions apocalyptiques de « dépeuplement de l'Afrique », complaisamment colportées par la presse spécialisée et les mass media, au plus fort de la pandémie du VIH-SIDA, à la fin du XXe siècle...

Nous voici donc en présence d'un virus très fragile dans le milieu extérieur, mais d'une extrême contagiosité interhumaine directe,

par le biais des liquides corporels (sang, selles, urine, salive, sperme, larmes, etc.) et surtout doté d'un fort potentiel épidémique lié au fait qu'un unique cas non détecté ou un seul contact non identifié peut suffire à initier une nouvelle chaîne de transmission, d'évolution imprévisible. Par la suite, les études ont montré que l'isolat viral responsable de cette épidémie ouest-africaine d'une ampleur inégalée était identique, à quelques variations près, à la souche mère initiale (Zaire). Même si sa virulence semble moindre en termes de taux de mortalité, il est permis de s'interroger sur la période et les itinéraires de sa migration hors d'Afrique centrale et de sa pénétration en Afrique occidentale ; une question à laquelle l'épidémiologie moléculaire n'a pas encore clairement répondu. D'autant qu'il est à présent établi que le virus peut persister dans le sperme et les sécrétions génitales des sujets infectés plusieurs mois après leur guérison clinique apparente ! Par ailleurs, plusieurs faits passés sous silence laissent perplexes : l'on sait par exemple que la toute première épidémie humaine à virus Ebola s'est déclarée à Yambuku (RDC) après l'ouverture et la mise en exploitation d'une nouvelle mine d'or dans cette zone de forêt équatoriale. De même, la région transfrontalière du Mont Nimba que partagent les trois États membres de l'Union du fleuve Mano principalement atteints est réputée pour ses énormes richesses minières, non seulement diamantifères et aurifères, mais aussi en métaux ferreux et non ferreux, en voie de « mise en valeur ». Quand on apprend, de surcroît, l'existence secrète dans ces mêmes pays de plusieurs laboratoires de recherche engagés dans le « programme de défense biologique » du gouvernement US,

basé à Fort Detrick (Maryland), initié par le Pentagone avant même la fin de la Guerre froide dans le cadre de la Loi antiterroriste contre les armes biologiques (1989), financé par l'USAID sous le couvert du CDC ou du National Institutes of Health (NIH) de Bethesda (USA), le doute fait place à la perplexité. Même si certaines de ces unités de guerre microbiologique bénéficient d'une coopération civile officielle avec l'Université Columbia à New York, l'Université du Wisconsin-Madison, ou encore l'Université de Winnipeg au Canada. Et ceci, en totale violation de la Convention internationale sur les armes biologiques de 1988. De plus, après l'éclatement de l'épidémie en Sierra Leone, la décision de fermer (définitivement ?) le laboratoire de Kenema (biosécurité de niveau 4, lié à l'Université Tulane de New Orleans, en Louisiane) est annoncée par le ministère de la Santé, tandis que, peu après, le président Obama en personne va déclarer publiquement : « notre politique officielle est d'arrêter désormais ce type de recherche » ! Signalons au passage que le Centre international de recherche médicale de Franceville (CIRMF) au Gabon dispose également d'un laboratoire de biosécurité de niveau 4, où des spécialistes français poursuivent depuis des années des travaux sur les chauves-souris réservoirs du virus Ebola<sup>3</sup>.

Le trouble devient franche inquiétude lorsque c'est dans les colonnes du Washington Post qu'un professeur de microbiologie évoque tranquillement l'hypothèse d'une mutation spontanée du virus Ebola susceptible de le rendre transmissible par voie aérienne, amplifiant ainsi son pouvoir de contamination sur le modèle de la souche Reston de l'Institut de recherche médicale de l'armée

US pour les maladies infectieuses (USAMRIID). S'agit-il de pure spéculation théorique ou plutôt d'un conditionnement psychologique de l'opinion en vue du résultat attendu d'un programme de manipulation génétique virale en cours ? Les faits ne devraient pas tarder à élucider cette funeste énigme. Quoi qu'il en soit, ce n'est que le 29 décembre 2015 que l'OMS, considérant que dorénavant la maladie à virus Ebola ne représentait plus une « urgence de santé publique de portée internationale », va lever ses recommandations temporaires pour l'épidémie d'Ebola, fondées sur les « règlements sanitaires internationaux » (2005), mais au terme d'une hécatombe ouest-africaine qui aura duré plus de deux ans et provoqué au moins 11 300 décès pour environ 28 000 cas.

En tout état de cause, interrogée sur les raisons de l'exceptionnelle gravité de l'épidémie ouest-africaine de ce virus précédemment contenu par des mesures classiques de quarantaine et les règles d'hygiène universelle, malgré l'absence de médicament et de vaccin, la directrice générale de l'OMS, Mme Margaret Chan, a invoqué une cause majeure, « la pauvreté » ! Un doux euphémisme pour désigner la misère qui sévit dans cette région carrefour du golfe de Guinée. À la faiblesse, voire l'absence totale de structures sanitaires dans ces zones reculées, viennent s'ajouter non seulement les séquelles de deux terribles guerres civiles (Libéria et Sierra Leone) et d'une non moins terrible dictature militaire (Guinée), avec la corruption structurelle qu'elles entretiennent, mais aussi la perte d'une fraction significative des personnels de santé, eux-mêmes victimes au premier chef de l'épidémie. Et c'est sur ce terrain meurtri que vont venir se greffer les « interventions

militaro-humanitaires » des ex-puissances coloniales, chacune dans son ancienne possession, selon des voies et moyens qui vont entraîner leur rejet violent par les populations censées être les bénéficiaires de telles opérations. De fait, les méthodes policières de recherche des sujets-contact et les procédures quasi carcérales de mise en quarantaine dans les « centres de traitement Ebola », surajoutées aux interférences autoritaires dans les traditions culturelles et culturelles locales (interdiction des aliments à base de gibier – stigmatisés comme « viande de brousse » – ou des rites funéraires avec contact du corps du défunt, etc.) ont pu parfois provoquer des destructions de structures sanitaires, allant jusqu'à des agressions mortelles contre des agents de la santé ou de la presse, dans les trois pays visés. D'ailleurs, dans son enquête de terrain, le socio-anthropologue Cheikh Ibrahima Niang n'a pas manqué de souligner à quel point ces actes de défiance psychologique et de résistance culturelle ont favorisé l'extension de l'épidémie et retardé le contrôle et l'élimination de la maladie. À la misère et à l'inefficacité du système de santé publique, il faut associer un troisième facteur explicatif de l'ampleur de la dernière épidémie : il s'agit de la peur entretenue et aggravée par l'ignorance. En effet, seule la panique permet de comprendre certaines propositions insensées formulées au plus fort de la crise sanitaire, telles que la mise en quarantaine de quartiers, et même de villes entières...

Il en va de même des mesures de fermeture intempestive des voies de communication physique, brutalement imposées par des pays du Nord, et surtout par certains États africains, tel le Maroc ! À ce propos, il faut saluer la conduite à la fois fraternelle et responsable de



deux pays voisins, secondairement touchés par l'épidémie. À l'inverse des pays situés à l'épicentre du fléau où la faillite des systèmes de santé a favorisé l'expansion de l'épidémie, les résultats spectaculaires de contrôle et d'éradication de la maladie au Nigeria et au Mali méritent d'être soulignés. Autant pour la rapidité et l'efficacité de la prise en charge de l'épidémie, dès la détection des premiers cas importés, que pour la rigueur, la vigueur et la justesse des mesures prises pour contenir, puis éteindre la menace, sans enfreindre les valeurs traditionnelles de solidarité, ni contrevenir aux recommandations pertinentes de la Commission de l'Union africaine (UA), demandant à tous les États membres de s'abstenir de fermer leurs frontières avec les pays frères atteints et insistant sur la nécessité de lutter tous ensemble contre l'extension de l'épidémie virale. Un conseil pourtant allègrement ignoré tant par la Côte d'Ivoire que par le Sénégal, qui vont successivement fermer leurs frontières terrestres, aériennes et maritimes avec la Guinée, malgré l'inexistence du moindre cas confirmé d'Ebola endogène dans leurs pays respectifs. Ces deux contre-exemples attestent de l'influence nocive et déstabilisatrice de facteurs d'ordre politico-économique et diplomatique, qui ont pour conséquence d'accroître l'isolement, l'anxiété et la détresse de populations déjà accablées.

Un ultime rappel pour illustrer l'étroite imbrication des données biomédicales, des facteurs politico-économiques et des aspects socioculturels : en pleine poussée de l'épidémie ouest-africaine, à l'occasion d'un débat radiophonique sur la *Deutsch Welle* (La Voix de l'Allemagne), au cours de l'émission « L'arbre à palabre », le Dr Félix Kabange Numbi, ministre de la

Santé de la RDC, alors en partance pour la province de l'Équateur, où la septième flambée du virus Ebola venait d'être déclarée fin août 2014, nous a révélé que lors des toutes premières épidémies de la fin des années 1970, le Pr Jean-Jacques Muyembe, le médecin-virologue congolais, aujourd'hui directeur de l'Institut national de recherche biomédicale (INRB) de Kinshasa, avait suggéré à ses collègues nord-américains du CDC de recourir au sérum des rares convalescents ayant survécu à l'infection pour tenter une sérothérapie de sauvetage sur les malades menacés de mort. Sa proposition s'était alors heurtée à un veto catégorique et indigné des experts étrangers venus d'Atlanta. Cependant, quelques décennies plus tard, le confrère américain contaminé au Libéria et rapatrié aux USA n'a eu la vie sauve que grâce au Z Mapp fourni par le CDC, et qui n'est rien d'autre qu'une préparation d'anticorps monoclonaux anti-Ebolavirus, fabriquée à partir du sérum polyclonal de patients guéris de l'infection ; ce produit dérivé recombinant étant bien évidemment enregistré à l'Office US des Brevets ! Cette anecdote, d'apparence banale, est cependant riche d'enseignements quand on sait que le même Pr Muyembe, par ailleurs découvreur du virus Ebola (même s'il lui a fallu se rendre à l'Institut de médecine tropicale d'Anvers pour pouvoir isoler et identifier ce nouvel agent pathogène) a souligné, au cours d'une visite en 2015 dans les pays frères ouest-africains frappés par le fléau, que l'objectif principal de toute campagne contre Ebola devrait être d'empêcher que l'infection devienne endémique dans notre sous-région. Et joignant l'acte à la parole, la RDC a mis près de deux cents techniciens médicaux et paramédicaux spécialisés dans la lutte anti-Ebola à la disposition des États ouest-africains concernés.

Avec plus d'un an et demi de recul et surtout la survenue de nouveaux cas confirmés dès le lendemain de la proclamation officielle de la « fin de l'épidémie » par l'OMS, tant en Guinée qu'au Libéria et en Sierra Leone, l'on mesure mieux l'importance et la valeur des recommandations tirées de l'expérience vécue par l'expertise africaine. A fortiori si l'on tient compte du nouveau fait clinique mis au jour par l'épidémie ouest-africaine, selon lequel les formes hémorragiques typiques de la maladie se font de plus en plus rares...

## Conclusion

Comme toute crise majeure, l'épidémie à virus Ebola aura été le révélateur, grossissant, mais non déformant, qui a permis de mettre à nu les multiples contradictions caractérisant les sociétés et États du monde contemporain : domination et dépendance politiques, insécurité générale, physique et économique, inégalités sociales criantes, ignorance massive et mépris culturel sinon ethno-racial, spoliation du droit de propriété intellectuelle, fracture entre gouvernants et gouvernés, rupture entre pays légal et pays réel ou encore entre minorité lettrée et majorité analphabète, opposition ville-campagne, etc.

En Afrique, de l'interaction de ces divers facteurs résultent la faiblesse structurelle des États et l'extrême vulnérabilité des populations devant toute menace, quelles qu'en soient la nature et l'origine. Pour s'en tenir au seul secteur de la santé publique, domaine capital s'il en est, il n'y a donc pas lieu de s'étonner de l'ancienneté, de l'ampleur et de la sévérité de la maladie à virus Ebola sur notre continent. L'ensemble des faits recensés ci-dessus démontre



à suffisance que l'émergence d'un tel virus tueur dans un contexte d'extrême pauvreté, doublée d'une faillite provoquée des systèmes de santé publique, ne pouvait qu'engendrer des conséquences catastrophiques pour les populations touchées. Les taux élevés de morbidité et de mortalité rapportés à de banales maladies infectieuses, curables et/ou évitables (gastro-entérites et broncho-pneumopathies, méningites, paludisme ou tuberculose, par exemple) se passent de commentaires. Des indicateurs médico-sanitaires certes accablants, mais au demeurant partagés avec les diasporas africaines des Amériques et de la Caraïbe ! Comment s'étonner, dès lors, des ravages provoqués, ici comme là-bas, par des virus émergents ou ré-émergents, de traitement bien plus délicat et coûteux, tels que le VIH naguère, Ebola aujourd'hui et, qui sait, le Zika ou les prions demain ou après-demain ?

Toutefois, l'expérience accumulée par nos compatriotes d'Afrique centrale et orientale, confortée par les exemples positifs et probants du Nigeria et du Mali, pourtant confrontés à des guerres civiles et étrangères, d'une part, et surtout la tardiveté et la timidité de la « communauté internationale », tant qu'elle ne s'est pas sentie directement menacée par l'épidémie, d'autre part, devraient constituer une source abondante de réflexion

et d'enseignements pour le présent et l'avenir des peuples africains du continent comme de la diaspora.

Cependant, d'ores et déjà, une leçon majeure saute aux yeux : le droit à la santé étant synonyme de droit à la vie, en tant que tel, il est à la fois le préalable et la condition *sine qua non* de l'exercice effectif de tout autre droit humain ; aussi la garantie de ce bien public commun relève-t-elle de la responsabilité principale sinon exclusive de l'État souverain, qui ne saurait ni la récuser, ni l'esquiver, ni la déléguer à une quelconque autre autorité publique ou privée, nationale ou étrangère. Comment, en effet, nier l'évidence que la clef du succès futur dans la lutte contre l'épidémie à virus Ebola, au même titre que toute autre menace sanitaire, alimentaire, sécuritaire, monétaire ou environnementale, réside d'abord dans la volonté politique ferme et résolue de faire face au péril soi-même et en comptant d'abord sur ses propres forces ; et ensuite, dans l'efficacité organisationnelle des décisions et mesures pratiques prises ? Et accessoirement seulement, sur l'aide et le soutien extérieurs, c'est-à-dire extra-africains. Autrement dit, la détermination des décideurs l'emporte sur les choix techniques des experts, l'appui étranger ne venant qu'en appoint.

Il convient, pour finir, de citer l'article premier du Serment des

Chasseurs (1212) qui n'en compte que sept et deviendra la Charte du Manden en 1222 :

Toute vie (humaine) est une vie.

Il est vrai qu'une vie apparaît à l'existence avant une autre vie.

Mais une vie n'est pas plus « ancienne », plus respectable qu'une autre vie.

De même qu'une vie n'est pas supérieure à une autre vie.

Une banalité de base africaine aussi ancienne que futuriste, qu'il s'agit de réactualiser en principe sociétal fondateur pour toute l'humanité !

C'est dire que seule une refondation unitaire et souveraine de nos États, s'accompagnant d'une restructuration égalitaire et solidaire des sociétés africaines, serait susceptible de créer les conditions requises, matérielles et culturelles permettant aux peuples du continent d'affronter efficacement et victorieusement les dangers de toutes sortes qui hypothèquent présentement leur avenir tant collectif qu'individuel, en ce début de troisième millénaire menaçant et inquiétant.

## Notes

1. « Ebola epidemic exposes the pathology of the global economic and political system », PHM Position Paper, (2015).
2. Cf. *New England Journal of Medicine* du 25 septembre 2014.
3. Francis Boyle, 2006, *Biowarfare and Terrorism*, Clarity Press.

## The Ebola Virus Epidemic – What Are the Lessons Africa Can Learn?

*This article is dedicated to our late sister and comrade, Aminata Diaw Cissé, a philosopher by training, and both a free mind and beautiful spirit of the highest order, an esteemed fighter on all fronts of the African cause, which is none other than the cause of humankind.*

The natural history of Ebola virus disease (EVD) has proved to be enlightening in both biomedical and socio-cultural terms, providing new insight into the present state of Africa and the contemporary world.

Ebola is the main representative of a new RNA taxonomic family, the Filoviridae, whose proto-type appeared in 1967 in Marburg (Germany) and Belgrade (Yugoslavia), in a laboratory that produced polio vaccines. The Marburg virus, as it was referred to, caused the very first human epidemic of deadly haemorrhagic fever associated with a filovirus. It was isolated in a colony of green monkeys imported from Uganda (all of which ended up being euthanised) and remains today the only identified species in its genus. It was subsequently responsible for some ten additional sporadic outbreaks, mainly in East and Central Africa.

The Ebola virus genus was not discovered until nearly a decade later, in 1976, when severe outbreaks occurred almost simultaneously at Yambuku in the DRC and Nzara (South Sudan), with hundreds of cases and several dozen deaths. Since then, from the last quarter of the twentieth to the first decade of the twenty-first century, more than twenty outbreaks of haemorrhagic

**Dialo Diop**  
Faculty of Medicine  
Cheikh Anta Diop University  
(2016)  
Dakar/Senegal

fevers caused by the Ebola virus were reported in what is known as Sub-Saharan Africa affecting, in addition to the two Congos and Sudan, mainly Uganda, Kenya and Gabon, but not only. A single, non-lethal human case in Côte d'Ivoire, in the Tai Forest National Park (1994) and an animal epidemic in Reston, Virginia (USA), affecting a population of macaque monkeys imported from the Philippines (1990), should be noted. This laboratory strain, referred to as Reston, is thought to be non-pathogenic for humans, while the virulence of the subtypes, known as Zaire and Sudan, is thought to vary with a case fatality rate of between 40 and 90 per cent. The pathogenicity or otherwise of the Tai Forest strain has yet to be determined. Finally, during the 2000s, another subtype named Bundibugyo was isolated and identified during the human epidemics in Uganda and the Congo. There are therefore five distinct recognised subtypes in the Ebola virus genus.

Hence, between 1976 and 2012, the emergence in the heart of the African continent of Ebola virus infections in the form of recurrent epidemics gave rise to nearly 2,000 cases, including 1,100 deaths, considering only the outbreaks that led to at least 100 properly diagnosed cases. This viral haemorrhagic fever of a new type, which had so far been considered to be confined to the forest areas of equatorial Africa, aroused little interest apart from among the populations and health authorities of the countries concerned, and among World Health Organisation (WHO) experts and other specialist research bodies such as the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta (USA), the Institut Pasteur in Paris (France), the Medical Research Council (MRC) in Cambridge (UK) and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) in Johannesburg (South Africa), in particular.

This relative lack of interest on the part of public health officials and the multinational pharmaceutical corporations, combined with the novelty of this family of epidemic viruses that are not insect-borne and therefore different from the better known arboviruses – both regional (yellow fever, Chikungunya,

Rift Valley) and global (Dengue) – explains, at least in part, the difficulties observed in the diagnosis and treatment of this emerging infectious disease. One example are the meanderings seen in determining the animal reservoir for the virus (particularly important from an epidemiological standpoint since the transmission of the pathogen is non-vector-borne) initially ascribed to small and large apes, then to rodents, before finally being attributed to fruit bats, identified as the sole, asymptomatic carriers of the Ebola virus. Furthermore, because it is an extremely dangerous virus, its culture, which is essential for in-depth investigation, requires the highest bio-security level (level 4, of which there are only three or four civilian laboratories officially recorded for the whole of Africa). As a result, there have been cumulative delays, both in research on drugs and/or vaccines and the development of relatively simple serological tests, which has meant that molecular diagnostic techniques had to be used and this is available only in a very few specialist reference laboratories. In addition, these laboratories are generally located in cities far from the rural areas where the epidemics tend to occur.

For several decades, such was the status quo to which nobody seemed to take exception, or not until the wholly unexpected and unprecedented occurrence of the epidemic in West Africa, marking a major turning point in the natural history of EVD. From the index case that appeared in a village in the Guekedou forest area in December 2013, spreading to the districts of Macenta and Nzérékoré (Republic of Guinea), a huge epidemic erupted, beginning in rural areas but then moving to cities and gradually onwards by contiguity to neighbouring countries in the

districts of Kenema and Kailahun (Sierra Leone) and Lofa (Liberia).

Hence, during 2014, out of a total of 67 districts in these three countries, 43 were affected by the extension of the epidemic, with more than 90 per cent of the confirmed, probable and suspected cases recorded in just 14 districts. Worse still, as early as July, the outbreak spread to other West African countries, with imported cases leading to fatal secondary cases, first in Nigeria and then in Mali, while a single, non-fatal imported case reached Senegal. It was not until 25 March 2014, i.e. nearly four months later, that the WHO officially announced ‘the existence of an epidemic of Ebola haemorrhagic fever in West Africa’. Another four months went by before WHO officials announced, on 8 August 2014, that EVD is a ‘Public Health Emergency of International Concern’. It is true that in the interim, on 2 August to be precise, when a few isolated cases exported outside of Africa involving expatriate medical and paramedical staff (two in the USA and one in Spain) were discovered, a wave of panic gripped Western public opinion, producing an instantaneous reaction on the part of what is customarily referred to as ‘the international community’.

In any case, on 22 September 2014, the WHO’s count for the West African epidemic stood at 5,843 cases and 2,803 fatalities; healthcare staff were severely affected, with 337 cases including 181 fatalities. Although, as stated by African and foreign experts, these figures were in all likelihood underestimates, they showed the disease to be spreading at lightning speed when compared to the previous situation report which, on 16 August, reported 2,240 confirmed, probable or suspected cases including 1,229 fatalities.

This is a patent instance of the application of the invariable unwritten ‘double standards’ rule, which prevails in the area of the right to health as it does to any other fundamental right of human beings, in Africa and in the rest of the world. An eloquent illustration of this is provided by the emblematic case of our devoted Sierra Leone colleague, Dr Olivet Buck, who was contaminated by her patients and died after being denied evacuation to Germany on medical grounds in spite of the pressing request made by her country’s President.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous manifestations of inequality and iniquity in access to care, in the raising and managing of appropriate resources and in levels of information, inter alia, became apparent both in respect of the alert and the response to this threat, now seen to have the potential to become a pandemic. Only some of the more salient aspects are detailed here.

Indeed, following this spectacular announcement, the WHO triggered a series of international meetings of experts in Geneva between August and September 2014 at a time when the epidemic was expanding fast. Until then, it was commonly accepted that there was no treatment, whether preventive or curative, for EVD; the only possible interventions were palliative, aimed at relieving symptoms. The outcome for every case was therefore fundamentally dependent, as for any viral infection, on the patient’s immune competence in the face of the density and virulence of the contaminant inoculum, and to a lesser extent, on the expeditiousness and quality of supportive treatment.

It therefore came as a great surprise to African specialists, not to say a source of outrage, at the end of the first major meeting of experts at



WHO headquarters, to be told that not only were there already nearly half a dozen active drugs against the Ebola virus, but also, albeit at the experimental stage (some having already reached or gone beyond the clinical trials stage), at least two candidate vaccines that were undergoing evaluation. In other words, a nearly complete range of preventive and curative therapies produced by the public or private pharmacological research sectors of Northern countries (US, Japan and Canada, among others) had already been available and had been for some time, although sometimes in limited quantities behind the backs of those primarily concerned, i.e. the populations and authorities in charge of public health in the affected African countries.

Better still, there was soon an announcement in 2015 that rapid diagnostic tests for Ebola virus human infection had been developed, making it possible to perform a quick and easy test producing an almost instantaneous diagnosis on the spot with the effect of doing away with the time constraints and preservation requirements for sending samples associated with molecular diagnostic techniques. It remained to be seen, of course, what the actual cost was and the price the suppliers would announce.

Another outcome of this belated cascade of international WHO meetings dealing with the Ebola virus was produced by the 'bioethics experts' who immediately authorised the use of 'experimental therapies', including recombinant vaccines, thereby circumventing the usual stringent certification procedures, in the name of the 'global medical emergency'. Another phenomenon that came to light through this

epidemic explosion of the Ebola virus is the unreliability and indeed the unsoundness of forecasts on the probable progression of the epidemic offered by Western experts, in particular Euro-American experts.<sup>2</sup> They produced a plethora of bleak projections based on mathematical models claiming to be scientific that turned out to be wrong, simply because they were contradicted by actual facts. Nonetheless, these figures gave rise to various hazardous projections and fanciful extrapolations, the effect of which was to stoke up fear, cause confusion and increase the isolation of the stricken countries. This did not, by the way, come as a surprise to attentive observers who had previously followed apocalyptic predictions of the 'depopulation of Africa' obsequiously peddled by the specialist press and mass media at the height of the HIV/AIDS pandemic at the end of the twentieth century.

Here, we are dealing with a virus that is very fragile in the outdoor environment but extremely contagious by human to human contact through body fluids (blood, faeces, urine, saliva, semen, tears, etc.) and moreover one that has major epidemic potential, deriving from the fact that a single non-detected case or a single unidentified contact can be enough to trigger a new transmission chain whose progression is unpredictable. Studies subsequently showed that the viral isolate responsible for this West African epidemic of unprecedented magnitude was identical, but for a very few variations, to the initial parent strain (Zaire). While its virulence appears to be lesser in terms of case fatality rate, there are questions about when the virus migrated outside of Central Africa and entered West Africa and the routes it followed.

So Far, molecular epidemiology has not clearly answered these questions; particularly since it is now established that the virus can persist in the semen and genital secretions of the infected individuals for several months after they appear to have clinically recovered.

Furthermore, a number of facts that are never mentioned provide food for thought. For instance, it is known that the very first Ebola virus human epidemic started in Yambuku (DRC) when a new gold mine was first opened and began operations in this area of the equatorial forest. Similarly, the cross-border Mount Nimba area shared by the three member states of the Mano River Union that were most affected is famous for its huge mineral wealth, not only diamonds and gold but also ferrous and non-ferrous metals that are being 'developed'. When, additionally, one discovers that in those countries there are several research laboratories secretly engaged in the US government's 'Biological Defence Program' based at Fort Detrick (MD), initiated by the Pentagon even before the end of the Cold War in connection with the Biological Weapons Anti-terrorism Act (1989), and funded by USAID behind the facade of the CDC or the National Institute of Health (NIH) at Bethesda (USA), doubts turn into perplexity. Even though, some of these microbiological war units are engaged in official civilian cooperation with Columbia University, New York, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, or the University of Winnipeg, Canada in complete violation of the 1988 International Convention on Biological Weapons. Furthermore, after the Sierra Leone epidemic broke out, the Ministry of Health announced the decision



to (permanently?) close down the Kenema laboratory (level 4 bio-security) linked to Tulane University, New Orleans, in Louisiana. Soon afterwards, President Obama in person publicly declared: 'our official policy is now to stop this type of research'! It should be noted in passing that the Centre International de Recherche Médicale de Franceville (CIRMF-International Medical Research Centre of Franceville) in Gabon also has a level 4 bio-security laboratory where French specialists have for years investigated the bats that act as Ebola virus reservoirs.<sup>3</sup>

This bewilderment turns into outright distress when a microbiology professor, writing for the *Washington Post*, calmly contemplates the hypothesis of a spontaneous mutation of the Ebola virus that could make airborne transmission possible, therefore enhancing its capability to contaminate consistent with the Reston strain model of the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases.

Is this pure theoretical speculation, or is the aim to condition public opinion psychologically and pave the way for the anticipated result of ongoing genetic manipulation of the virus? This deadly enigma should soon be elucidated by facts. In any case, it was not until 29 December 2015 that the WHO, which now no longer considered EVD to be an 'international public health emergency', lifted its temporary recommendations for the Ebola epidemic, based on 'International Health Regulations' (2005), after the disease had raged through West Africa over a period of more than two years, causing at least 11,300 deaths out of approximately 28,000 cases.

Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the WHO, answered

a question about the reasons for the unusual severity of the West African epidemic of this virus that had hitherto been contained by conventional measures such as quarantine and universal rules of hygiene, in spite of no drugs or vaccines being available, saying that one major cause was 'poverty'! A cute euphemism to describe the misery rampant at this meeting point in the Gulf of Guinea. The weakness and sometimes complete lack of health facilities in these remote areas are compounded by the after-effects of two terrible civil wars (Liberia and Sierra Leone) and by an equally fearful military dictatorship (Guinea) engendering structural corruption. Matters are made worse by the loss of a significant fraction of health workers who are the primary victims of the epidemic. This is the devastated setting where 'military-humanitarian' interventions of former colonial powers come to put down roots, each in its own past possessions, in ways and means that lead to their being violently rejected by the populations that were supposed to benefit from those operations. Indeed, the police methods for tracing contacts, the prison-like procedures for enforcing quarantine in the 'Ebola treatment centres', combined with authoritarian interference in local cultural and religious traditions (the ban on food made from game – stigmatised as 'bush meat' – or burial rites where there is contact with the deceased's body, etc.) have in some cases triggered destructions of health facilities, and even deadly assaults on healthcare workers or the press in the three countries concerned. Indeed, in his field investigations, the socio-anthropologist Cheikh I. Niang underscores how these acts triggered by distrust and cultural resistance facilitated the extension

of the epidemic and caused delay in controlling and eliminating the disease. In addition to extreme poverty and the inefficiency of the public health system, a third factor explains the magnitude of the latest epidemic: fear that is fostered and aggravated by ignorance. Only panic can explain some of the senseless proposals made at the height of this health crisis, such as putting whole neighbourhoods, even whole cities, in quarantine.

The same applies to the brutal closing of physical communication routes suddenly required by countries of the North, and by some African countries such as Morocco. On this topic, the fraternal and responsible behaviour of two neighbouring countries secondarily affected by the epidemic deserves tribute. In contrast with the countries situated at the epicentre of the scourge where the failure of health systems fostered the expansion of the epidemic, the spectacular results in controlling and eradicating the disease in Nigeria and Mali deserve recognition. Both for the speed and efficiency of the management of the epidemic as soon as the first imported cases were detected and for the rigorousness, vigour and pertinence of the measures taken to contain and then extinguish the threat, without infringing the traditional values of solidarity or breaching the relevant recommendations of the African Union Commission, requesting all member states to abstain from closing their borders with their affected sister countries and emphasising the need to fight the extension of this viral epidemic together. This advice was merrily ignored by Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal; they closed their land, air and sea borders with Guinea one after the other in spite of the fact that not a single endogenous case of Ebola was confirmed in

their own countries. These two counter-examples are indicative of the harmful and destabilising influence of politico-economic and diplomatic factors that increase isolation, anxiety and distress among populations that are already overwhelmed.

One last illustration of the tightly knit relationship between biomedical data, politico-economic factors and socio-cultural aspects: at the height of the West African epidemic, a debate was broadcast on German radio *Deutsche Welle* (The Voice of Germany), during 'The Palaver Tree' programme. During the discussion, Dr Félix Kabange Numbi, Minister of Health for the DRC who was about to leave for Equateur Province, where the seventh outbreak of Ebola disease had just been declared at the end of August 2014, revealed that during the very first epidemics in the late 1970s, the Congolese physician and virologist Prof. Jean-Jacques Muyembe, who is now the Director of the National Institute for Biomedical Research (INRB) in Kinshasa, had suggested to the CDC and to his North American colleagues that they might use the serum of the few convalescing patients that had survived the infection and attempt serotherapy to save patients at risk of dying. At the time, this suggestion was met with a categorical and indignant 'no' from the foreign experts who had come from Atlanta. Nonetheless, a few decades later, the American physician contaminated in Liberia and repatriated to the USA owes his survival to the ZMapp supplied by the CDC. ZMapp is none other than a preparation of anti-Ebola virus monoclonal antibodies, made from polyclonal serums taken from patients who had recovered from the infection. This recombinant derived product has naturally been

registered at the US Patent Office. What might appear to be a trivial detail in fact turns out to be very informative when one considers that the same Prof. Muyembe – who furthermore discovered the Ebola virus (even if he had to go to the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp to isolate and identify this new pathogen) – on a visit in 2015 to the sister countries in West Africa that were stricken by this scourge underscored that the main objective of any campaign against Ebola should be to prevent the infection from becoming endemic in our sub-region. Matching actions with words, the DRC made nearly 200 medical and paramedical technicians specialised in combating Ebola available to the West African states concerned. With the hindsight of over a year and a half, and moreover the occurrence of additional confirmed cases in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone the very next day after the WHO officially announced the 'end of the epidemic', the importance and value of the recommendations based on the experience gained by African experts are made all the more apparent. And even more so if one considers a new clinical fact that has arisen in the West African epidemic, i.e. that the typical haemorrhagic forms of the disease are becoming less and less common.

### Conclusion

Like any major crisis, the Ebola virus disease has brought out into full view the multiple contradictions that characterise the societies and states of our contemporary world, magnifying but not distorting them: political domination and dependence, general physical and economic insecurity, glaring social inequalities, mass ignorance and cultural – if not ethno-racial

– contempt, dispossession of the right to intellectual property, the rift between the governing and the governed, the mismatch between what law sets out a country to be and what the country actually is, or between the literate minority and the illiterate majority, urban versus rural conflict, etc.

In Africa, the interaction between these various factors gives rise to the structural weakness of the state and the extreme vulnerability of the populations to any threat, regardless of its nature or origin. If one considers the public health sector alone, whose role is crucial, it comes as no surprise that the Ebola virus disease has existed for a long time, is widespread and particularly severe on our continent. The facts reported above amply demonstrate that the emergence of such a deadly virus in a context of extreme poverty, compounded by the induced collapse of public health systems, was inevitably going to have catastrophic consequences for the populations affected. The high rates of morbidity and mortality for ordinary infectious diseases that are curable and/ or avoidable (gastroenteritis and broncho-pulmonary diseases, meningitis, malaria or tuberculosis, for instance) speak for themselves. These are undoubtedly damning healthcare indicators shared by the African diasporas in the Americas and the Caribbean. There is hardly reason to be surprised by the devastation caused, both there and in Africa, by emerging or re-emerging viruses, that are far more difficult and costly to treat, such as HIV in the past, Ebola today and, who knows, perhaps Zika or prion diseases tomorrow or the day after?

Notwithstanding, the experience accumulated by our compatriots in Central and West Africa, supported

by the positive and conclusive examples of Nigeria and Mali, in spite of being confronted with civil strife and a foreign war on the one hand, and the sluggishness and timidity of the 'international community's' response up until it felt directly threatened by the epidemic on the other, should provide abundant food for thought and materials from which to draw conclusions about the present and future of African peoples, both on the continent and in the diaspora.

One major lesson is immediately obvious: the right to health is synonymous with the right to life, and as such, it is at the same time a prerequisite and the sine qua non condition for effectively exercising all other human rights. As such, responsibility for guaranteeing this common public good lies prevalently, if not exclusively, with the sovereign state. The latter cannot decline, evade or delegate that responsibility to another public or private authority, be it national or foreign.

Clearly, the key to the future success of the fight against the Ebola virus epidemic, similarly to any other threat in the areas of health, food, security, currency or environment lies primarily in the existence of a firm, resolute political will, seeking to confront the danger from within, relying on its own forces; and secondly, on the organisational efficiency of the decisions and practical measures taken; and also, but in a subsidiary way, on aid and support from outside of Africa. In other words, the determination of the decision-makers prevails over the technical choices of experts, with foreign support acting in a supplemental capacity.

To end, here is a quotation of Article 1 of the seven articles of The Hunters' Sermon (1212) that became the Manden Charter in 1222:

Every human life is a life.  
It is true that a life comes into existence before another life  
But no life is more 'ancient', more respectable than any other  
In the same way no one life is superior to any other

This is a basic African commonplace as ancient as it is futurist that must be reinstated to serve as a fundamental societal principle for the whole of humanity.

This means that only radical reform that achieves the unity and sovereignty of our states, together with the restructuring of African societies on a foundation of equality and solidarity, could produce the material and cultural conditions required to enable the peoples of the continent to effectively and successfully confront the dangers of all sorts that weigh on our collective and individual futures now, at the beginning of this menacing and disquieting third millennium.

## Notes

1. Sanders, D., Sengupta, A. and Scott, V., 2015, 'Ebola epidemic exposes the pathology of the global economic and political system', *International Journal of Health Services* 45(4): 643–56.
2. See *New England Journal of Medicine*, 25 September 2014.
3. Boyle, F. A., 2006, *Biowarfare and Terrorism*, Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press.



**Prof.  
Samir Amin**

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**(1931-2018)**



## Homage to Mwalimu Samir Amin: Africa's Preeminent Radical Economist

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On receiving the news of Samir Amin's death, one of the first thoughts that struck me was that two of my greatest mentors have passed this way: tumours discovered quite suddenly. In the case of Giovanni Arrighi, ten years ago, the tumours were discovered some ten months before his death. Giovanni recalled his grandfather who had always said of his grandson that he never did things in moderation. Giovanni's tumours were many and malignant and therefore incurable, though he lived three times longer than the doctors had estimated upon detecting the cancer. In the case of Samir Amin, it was cancer of the lungs, no doubt related to his years of chain smoking, as my close Kenyan sister (also a socialist and evolving chain smoker) pointed out to me when I began writing this piece. What all this makes me wonder about is the poisonous impact of speaking one's mind and toiling to produce research to make critical arguments, no matter how narrow the space within the intellectual and political discourse.

### **But this is not the way I want to begin my tribute to Papa Samir Amin.**

I want to start like the Namibians: thunderous applause – instead of a moment of silence – to celebrate the life of a loved one moving on to the ancestral world.

**Salimah Valiani**  
University of  
the Witwatersrand  
Johannesburg/South Africa

I want to start with Bakule! Bakule!, part of a West African praise song I first heard in 1998 at one of the many memorials held around the world for Kwame Ture – not unlike the memorials that continue to be held for Samir Amin.

I want to start by evoking how Miriam Makeba came into my life. A copy of a pirate cassette made at Mama Miriam's concert in Guinea-Conakry in 1981. My father had purchased it in Nairobi that year, while trying to bring my ill grandfather (also a chain smoker) to Canada to pass in the home of his son as was his last wish. The same live concert to which I would dance in London (now a CD) with my Sierra Leonean brother Victor, in the mid-1990s. And the same CD I would find again in Johannesburg in 2015, in the music collection of my South African partner, Phumzile.

From his early works on the economic histories of Mali, Guinea, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal; to his work on the Maghreb; to his work on the Congo; to his many works on imperialism and anti-imperialist unity, Samir Amin was a Pan-African internationalist on

a journey to which I have always related, as the Canadian-born child of East Africans who lived through colonialism and saw the early moments of independence.

One of the earliest works I read by Samir Amin was *Empire of Chaos*, in 1991, which for me was among other things a critique of the ahistorical notion of 'globalisation' that was becoming hip around that time. Like Le Duan (Vietnam Workers' Party), Mao Tse-Tung, William Pomeroy, Volodia Teitelboim (Communist Party, Chile), Amilcar Cabral, Samora Machel and Frantz Fanon – all of whom I read in my first and last political science course in 1988 – Samir Amin's questions and vision reflected the South-North worldview and historical underpinnings with which I had been raised. They also took me beyond, to critical socialist imaginaries.

Some years later, while studying economic history, I came across samples of the more academic work of Samir Amin, including *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa*, upon which he likely began reflecting during his time as Advisor to the Ministry of Planning in Bamako. These careful studies of how local class interests interact with external class/national interests through formal colonial and postcolonial periods offer useful analytical tools and demonstrate how to apply

them to generate non- Eurocentric historical materialist understanding. These are important for anyone wanting to understand how we have arrived at where we are today in Africa – whether the instances of outright dictatorship, the lack of multi-party democracy, or the so-called democratic centralism.

In 2010, Firoze Manji – founder of Pambazuka and later, Daraja Press, and another fiercely radical, independent thinker of the African continent – made a call for papers from young African intellectuals in honour of Samir Amin's eightieth birthday. The papers were to expound on 'accumulation by dispossession' in African contexts – a notion of the Marxist geographer, David Harvey, describing dynamics of neoliberal capitalism and arguably building on what Samir Amin has traced historically for the just over 500-year life of world capitalism. Using my updated conceptualisation of Amin's 'unequal exchange' as well as Harvey's 'accumulation by dispossession', the paper I submitted was on the political economy of South–North nurse migration and implications for societies in Africa. The three best papers were to be presented and publicised in three African cities to draw attention to the ideas of critical young intellectuals engaging with the world in the footsteps of Papa Samir. A highlight of the programme was that authors of the papers would meet Samir Amin in person.

But it was only in 2011, after three decades of reading Samir Amin's academic writing, popular books, and articles published in *Monthly Review*, that I finally encountered my mentor directly. On completing my research monograph, *Rethinking Unequal Exchange: The Global Integration of Nursing Labour*

*Markets*, a friend of Ethiopian origin suggested I approach Samir Amin to write a foreword for the book. I initially wrote to Amin at an address I found online, gingerly evoking the world historical approach of my work and my background of studying with some of Samir's good friends, Anibal Quijano, Immanuel Wallerstein and Giovanni Arrighi. Not receiving a response, I wrote a second time, this time in French, having obtained Papa Samir's actual email address through two contacts on either end of the world – Firoze Manji in Kenya and Claude Misukiewicz in New York City – reflecting Samir Amin's reach. My friend had assured me that he was open to such requests and in line with this, Papa Samir's email response was brief, sweet and somewhat old school: 'Friend, I will do it; send the manuscript in hard copy to my address in Paris.'

Reading Samir Amin's foreword to my book was akin to being re-educated in one's own speciality area. In it, he provides the longue durée of global migration, tracing the Americas and later, Australia, New Zealand and parts of South Africa, as the outlet for displaced European peasants which was key to the relative smoothness of urbanisation and industrialisation in Early Modern Europe. Contrasting this with contemporary cities of Africa, Asia and Latin America teeming with unemployed people who can no longer live off the land and do not have a similar outlet, Amin points to landlessness as one of the first impoverishments of historical capitalism, the democratic challenge of which Western European societies were spared.

Also in the foreword, Amin brilliantly quotes Evo Morales to make a point about the hypocrisy of temporary labour migration policies

of rich countries today – something it took me close to an entire chapter of the book to explain. As Morales puts it, 'European immigrants who appropriated lands and embattled indigenous peoples in the Americas did not carry visas.' This exemplifies Amin's agility in the world of ideas: immersing himself in politics, activism, as well as research and analysis, unlike many leftist thinkers of our times who keep themselves aloof in the theories and canons of the proverbial ivory towers.

When we finally met in person in 2012, at a closed workshop in Nottingham on the subject of the historic inability to forge solidarity among workers' unions of the global North and global South, I was taken aback by the concurrent larger-than-life magnitude and down-to-earth essence of this great Mwalimu, Samir Amin. Virtually, the first thing we did together after greeting each other on the first night was smoke some cigarettes. When I saw him pull out a box of matches from a pocket after dinner I ventured to ask, hoping to crack a smile, 'Est-ce que c'est pour fumer des cigarettes?' With a hearty laugh, Papa Samir exclaimed 'Oui!' and we left the room immediately.

The next morning at the workshop, we sat side by side. When I brought out some bags of dates and almonds which I had carried from home in anticipation of the tryingness of English food, I gestured to Papa Samir that he help himself. By noon the bags were near empty, Papa Samir having partaken with the familiarity of a long lost friend, which perhaps is precisely what he was.

\* Samir Amin is arguably mostly known for his work in political economy – among others, his notions of the globalised law of accumulation, unequal development, monopoly,

capitalism (together with Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy), and delinking. But as a historian pointed out at a recent event in Toronto celebrating Samir Amin's life, work and politics, Amin made original contributions to several subjects, including the history of civilisations. His formulation of the tributary mode of production is a corrective of West-centred, historical materialism which entails only three modes: the slave mode, the feudal mode and the capitalist mode. In 'Revolution or Decadence?', what would be one of his last pieces in *Monthly Review* (May 2018), Amin refreshes our memory on the tributary mode. Amin argues that unlike the slave mode – which follows only from extended commodity relations – the tributary and capitalist modes are universal. The establishment and subsequent disintegration of the Roman Empire signified a premature attempt at tributary construction in a context where the level of development of productive forces did not require tributary centralisation. Only following the feudal fragmentation that led to absolutist monarchies did the West approach the complete tributary model of which imperial China is the highest expression. This explanation of the uniqueness of the West – rooted in its relative underdevelopment – is one that counters the Western exceptionalism typically

referenced around the world to this day. More broadly, Amin's formulation of the tributary mode reflects his methodological ability to embrace historical contingency while maintaining a handle on the dynamics of a systemic whole – features of thinking quite foreign to what Amin called 'Marxology', the tone deaf repetition of what Marx wrote of his own times as explanations of the present.

But with his eye on the prize, Amin always tied his transdisciplinary insight back to the political struggle that besieges us. For example, without hesitation, Amin wrote of 'democratisation' as the 'universalist alternative' to capitalist democracy and its 'human rightsish' discourse in a piece titled 'The Democratic Fraud and its Alternative' (*Monthly Review*, October 2011). While including questions of economic management, Amin emphasises that democratisation is an unending and unbounded process involving all aspects of social life. He urges against sanctified formula of 'the revolution', and rather for revolutionary advances and the development of people's powers through mobilisation, organisation, strategic vision, tactical sense, choice of actions and politicisation of struggles.

Unlike most of his peers, Amin published in a variety of spaces, strategically, depending on the

political moment. In March 2016, I was pleasantly surprised to find a renewed rendering of Amin's delinking, echoing principles of *La Via Campesina*, in a note he posted on his Facebook. Searching for a solution to deepening inequality and impoverishment in not only African countries, but all countries of Asia and Latin America with national rural populations exceeding 30 per cent, Amin elaborates a vision of state-led industrialisation driven by the revival and ecologically sound modernisation of peasant agriculture, to the end of national food sovereignty.

### **As with Mama Miriam, always a new 'discovery' with Papa Samir.**

\* We have an aunty in Johannesburg in the public health system who has gone for over a year without a definitive diagnosis of what we believe is a returning cancer. We have another aunty in Johannesburg who has completed treatment for cancer in the private health system in exactly the same time period. As long as such inequality continues for our aunts, uncles, parents and children, Samir Amin's work will be a tool for change in the Cradle of Humankind and the world that has come from it.



## CODESRIA Executive Committee Members, 2018–2021

## Membres du Comité exécutif du CODESRIA, 2018–2021

Professor Casimiro holds a PhD in Sociology (Coimbra), and has interests in History and Development Studies. She has been a researcher at the Centre of African Studies, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique since 1980, teaching graduate and postgraduate courses. Prof. Casimiro also coordinates the Department of Development and Gender Studies.

She has been a member of CODESRIA Executive Committee since 2015 and was elected CODESRIA President at the 15th General Assembly in December 2019. She has been Secretary of the Board of the General Assembly of the International Association for Social Sciences and Humanities in Portuguese Language, AILPcsh, since December 2018. She is also a co-founder of the Women and Law in Southern Africa Research and Education Trust, WLSA Regional (1988) and WLSA Mozambique (1990) and was its national coordinator, 1990–95. She has been WLSA Mozambique Board President since 2015. She is co-founder of Fórum Mulher, and was Fórum Mulher Board President, 1993–2000 and 2006–15. She was a Member of Parliament on behalf of the Frelimo Party, 1995–99. She was Coordinator of the 14th Women's Word Congress, September 2020, Maputo.

Prof. Casimiro has a wide range of publications in her areas of research, including the following single-authored or co-authored: *A Ciência ao Serviço do Desenvolvimento? Experiências de países africanos falantes de língua oficial portuguesa* edited with Teresa Cruz e Silva, CODESRIA (2015); “Peace on Earth,



**ISABEL MARIA ALÇADA  
PADEZ CORTESÃO  
CASIMIRO**  
President / Présidente

est également l'une des fondatrices de Women and Law in Southern Africa Research and Education Trust, WLSA Regional (1988) et WLSA Mozambique (1990) et son coordonnateur national (1990–95). Elle est présidente du conseil d'administration de WLSA Mozambique depuis 2015. Elle est co-fondatrice du Fórum Mulher et présidente du Conseil d'administration de Fórum Mulher (1993–2000 et 2006–2015). Elle est députée du Frelimo (1995–1999). Elle est coordinatrice du Congrès mondial des femmes qui se tiendra en septembre 2020 à Maputo.

La professeure Casimiro est auteure ou co-auteure de plusieurs publications telles que : *A Ciência ao Serviço do Desenvolvimento ? Experiências de países africanos falantes de língua oficial portuguesa* (2015), sous sa direction avec Teresa Cruz e Silva, Dakar, CODESRIA ; « Paz no Terra. Guerra em

Titulaire d'un doctorat en sociologie (Coimbra), la professeure Casimiro s'intéresse à l'histoire et aux études sur le développement. Elle est depuis 1980, enseignante/chercheuse au Centre d'études africaines de l'Université Eduardo Mondlane de Maputo (Mozambique) où elle suit les doctorants et post-doctorants. La professeure Casimiro coordonne également le Département d'études sur le développement et le genre.

Elle est membre du Comité exécutif du CODESRIA depuis 2015 et a été élue présidente du CODESRIA à sa 15e Assemblée générale en décembre 2018. Depuis décembre 2018, elle est Secrétaire du Conseil de l'Assemblée générale de l'Association internationale des sciences sociales et humaines en langue portugaise (AILPcsh). Elle



War at Home”: Feminism and Women’s organizations in Mozambique’ (2004), PROMEDIA, Maputo, republished in Brazil, UFPE, Recife (2014); Women’s Economic Empowerment, Associative Movement and Access to Local Development Funds (2010), with Amélia Neves de Souto, Josina Nhantumbo and Augusta Maíta, Kapicua, Maputo; *African Women’s Movements: Changing Political Landscapes* (2009), with Aili Mari Tripp, Joy Kwesiga and Alice Mungwa, Cambridge University Press, New York.

« casa’Feminismo e organizações de Mulheres em Moçambique » (2004), PROMEDIA, Maputo, réédité au Brésil (2014), Recife, UFPE ; Empoderamento Económico das Mulheres, Movimento associativo e Acesso a Fundos de Desenvolvimento Local (2010), avec Amélia Neves de Souto, Josina Nhantumbo et Augusta Maíta, Maputo, aux éditions Kapicua ; *African Women’s Movements. Changing Political Landscapes* (2009), édité par Aili Mari Tripp, en collaboration avec Joy Kwesiga et Alice Mungwa, New York, Cambridge University Press.

After a Master’s degree in History in Dakar and a PhD in History in Paris, Rokhaya Fall joined Cheikh Anta Diop University (Dakar, Senegal) where she defended a thesis to obtain a Doctorat d’Etat Es-Lettres in History. During a secondment to IFAN-Cheikh Anta Diop, Rokhaya Fall held, from 2008 to 2010, the position of Head of the Human Science Department. Since 2009, she has been managing the Women, Societies and Culture laboratory of the Doctoral School of Humanities and Society Studies (ETHOS) of Cheikh Anta Diop University. From 2015 to 2017, she was the Head of the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Cheikh Anta Diop University (Dakar). Since 2014, she has been Assistant Coordinator of the General History of Senegal project.

Rokhaya Fall’s research has focused on early political history, including ethnic minorities in the ancient kingdoms of northern Senegambia, as well as on issues of settlement and power systems. The study of women in their socio-political environment represents another aspect of her research, as well as issues related to the slave trade and slavery. This has also led to focus on global history and broader research perspectives, including issues of space and identity.



**ROKHAYA FALL**  
Vice-president / Vice-présidente

Après des études universitaires sanctionnées par une maîtrise à Dakar et un doctorat de 3e cycle en histoire à Paris, Rokhaya Fall a été recrutée à l’Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, où elle a soutenu plus tard une thèse pour l’obtention du doctorat d’État ès lettres en histoire. Détachée à l’IFAN-CAD en 2000, elle y a exercé la fonction de chef du Département des sciences humaines de 2008 à 2010. Responsable du laboratoire « Femmes, sociétés et culture » de l’école doctorale « Études sur l’homme et la société » (ETHOS) de l’Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar depuis 2009, elle a aussi été de janvier 2015 à janvier 2017, chef du Département d’histoire de la faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de l’Université

Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar. Depuis 2014, elle participe aux travaux du projet d’histoire générale du Sénégal comme coordonnatrice adjointe.

Les thèmes de recherches de Rokhaya Fall sont orientées vers l’histoire politique ancienne, notamment la question des minorités ethniques dans les anciens royaumes de la Sénégambie du Nord, ainsi que les questions de peuplement et des systèmes de pouvoir. L’étude de la Femme dans son environnement sociopolitique représente l’autre aspect de ses recherches, ainsi que les questions liées à la traite négrière et à l’esclavage. Cela l’a d’ailleurs amenée à orienter ses recherches vers l’histoire globale et depuis quelque temps, ses perspectives de recherche se sont élargies aux questions liées non seulement à l’espace, mais aussi à l’identité.

Professor Ben Fredj obtained his baccalaureat in 1980 from Bardo High School. He is currently professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tunis where he received his PhD in Sociology in 1993. His thesis entitled 'Family and Social Change in Tunisia' was on the Tunisian family. Ben Fredj works with national and international institutions as an expert on family, youth and violence. He is also author of several publications.

In 2014 he was invited by the Department of Sociology and the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Michigan (USA) as a Visiting Professor to give a series of lectures for doctoral school students. He was a member of the CODESRIA Executive Committee for a first term (2015–18).



**SLAHEDDINE  
BEN FREJ**

**Member / Membre**

Le professeur Ben Fredj a eu son baccalauréat au lycée du Bardo en 1980. Il est actuellement professeur au département de sociologie à la faculté des sciences humaines et sociales, Université de Tunis. Il est titulaire d'un doctorat en sociologie depuis 1993 avec une mention très bien dans la même université. Sa thèse intitulée « Famille et changement social en Tunisie » portait sur la famille tunisienne. Expert en matière de famille, jeunesse et violence auprès d'institutions nationales et internationales, le professeur Ben Fredj est aussi auteur de plusieurs publications.

En 2014, il a été invité par le Département de sociologie et le centre des études stratégiques de l'Université de Michigan aux USA comme professeur visiteur pour donner des cours et un cycle de conférences au profit des étudiants de l'école doctorale. Son premier mandat au sein du comité exécutif du CODESRIA était de 2015-2018.

Lyn Ossome is a Senior Research Fellow at the Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR), Makerere University. She received her PhD in Political Studies from Wits University. Her specialisations are in the fields of feminist political economy and feminist political theory, with particular research interests in land and agrarian studies, coloniality, and gendered postcolonial subjects of violence. She is the author of *Gender, Ethnicity and Violence in Kenya's Transitions to Democracy: States of Violence* (Lexington, 2018). She has been a visiting scholar at the National Chiao Tung University and at the University of the Witwatersrand, and Visiting Presidential Fellow at Yale University. She is Associate Editor of *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy* and an Editorial Committee member of the *MISR Review*. She has formerly served on the Scientific Committee of CODESRIA.



**LYN OSSOME**

**Member / Membre**

Lyn Ossome est chercheuse principale à l'Institut de recherche sociale de Makerere (MISR), de l'Université de Makerere. Elle a obtenu son doctorat en sciences politiques à l'Université de Witwatersrand. Ses domaines de spécialisation sont l'économie politique féministe et la théorie politique féministe, avec un intérêt particulier pour le foncier, les études agraires, la colonialité et les sujets genrés sur la violence post-coloniale. Elle est l'auteur de *Gender, Ethnicity and Violence in Kenya's Transitions to Democracy : States of Violence* (Lexington, 2018). Elle a été chercheur visiteur à la National Chiao Tung University et à l'Université du Witwatersrand, et Visiting Presidential Fellow à l'Université de Yale. Elle est éditrice associée de *Agrarian South : Journal of Political Economy* et membre du comité éditorial de *MISR Review*. Précédemment, elle était membre du Comité scientifique du CODESRIA.

Dr S. Mshai Mwangola is a performance scholar/oratorist who holds a doctorate in Performance Studies from Northwestern University (USA), a Master's degree in Creative Arts from the University of Melbourne (Australia); and a Bachelor of Education from Kenyatta University (Kenya). Until June 2016, she was a member of the research and teaching faculty at the African Leadership Centre, where she continues to serve as adjunct faculty. Previously Mwangola worked as an Academic Planning Strategist with the Academic Planning Unit of the (proposed) Faculty of Arts and Sciences (East Africa) of Aga Khan University.



**Mshai S. Mwangola**  
Member / Member

Mwangola's intellectual work is characterised by her practice of performance as a way of making meaning for the purpose of advocacy, research and pedagogy. She has invested in the use of the creative arts, particularly embodied story-telling, as a way of doing intellectual and collective intellectual work. An oratorist also directing and performing in theatre and storytelling as her genres of choice, Mwangola focuses on culture, arts, theatre and performance in her research, teaching and engagement with policy. In 2017, she co-founded The Orature Collective, whose artistic arm, The Performance Collective, offers the free-to-all monthly participatory Pointzero Bookcafé in the heart of Nairobi's Central Business District; as well as The Elephant, an intellectual online media platform. Both seek to support and enhance the intellectual exploration, discussion and debate in the public sphere.

She is a founding member of the Board of Trustees of Uraia Trust (Kenya's largest non-state national Civic Education programme), which she has chaired since 2013; and continues to support civic society in different capacities. As part of the Creative Economy Working Group, she continues to work with other non-state actors in policy initiatives in the cultural sphere; having served two terms on the Governing Council of the Kenya Cultural Centre, the nation's oldest state cultural institution, including as Chair for four years.

Le Dr S. Mshai Mwangola est chercheuse en littérature orale et titulaire d'un doctorat en études sur la performance de la Northwestern University (États-Unis) et d'une maîtrise en arts créatifs de l'Université de Melbourne (Australie). Elle est aussi titulaire d'une licence en éducation de l'Université Kenyatta (Kenya). Jusqu'en juin 2016, elle était membre de la faculté de recherche et d'enseignement de l'African Leadership Centre, où elle continue d'occuper un poste de professeur auxiliaire. Auparavant, Mwangola a travaillé comme stratège en planification académique au sein de l'unité de planification académique de la faculté (projetée) des arts et des sciences (Afrique de l'Est) de l'Université Aga Khan.

Le travail intellectuel de Mwangola se caractérise par sa pratique de la performance comme moyen de donner un sens à des fins de plaidoyer, de recherche et de pédagogie. Elle s'investit dans l'utilisation des arts créatifs, en particulier du récit incarné, comme moyen de travail intellectuel et collectif. Adepte de la littérature orale, elle est également directrice de théâtre et le récit est un genre qu'elle affectionne. Mwangola se concentre sur la culture, les arts, le théâtre et la performance dans ses recherches, son enseignement et son engagement avec les politiques. En 2017, elle a co-fondé 'The Orature Collective', dont le volet artistique, 'The Performance Collective', propose un club de lecture mensuel ouvert à tous au café Point Zero au cœur du quartier central des affaires de Nairobi ; ainsi que The Elephant, une plateforme multimédia intellectuelle en ligne.

Elle est membre fondateur du conseil d'administration d'Uraia Trust (le plus grand programme national non étatique d'éducation civique du Kenya), qu'elle préside depuis 2013. Elle poursuit également, sous différentes formes, son soutien à la société civile. En tant que membre du Creative Economy Working Group, elle poursuit son travail avec d'autres acteurs non étatiques dans des initiatives politiques dans le domaine culturel. Elle a siégé pendant deux mandats au conseil d'administration du Centre culturel du Kenya – la plus ancienne institution culturelle étatique – qu'elle a présidé pendant quatre ans.



Ibrahim Mouiche, from Cameroon, holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Yaoundé, and a PhD in Social Sciences from the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. Professor Mouiche teaches at the Department of Political Science of the University of Yaoundé II. Since 2015, he has been the ISESCO/FUMI Chair for Cultural Diversity at the Institute of International Relations of Cameroon (IRIC) of the University of Yaoundé II.

He is author of several publications with national and international publishers and has been awarded several scholarships in CODESRIA programmes and other prestigious research institutes and foundations, including the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Scholarship for Experienced Researchers in Germany, the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies, and the Five College African Scholars Program of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA. His research interests include ethnicity and ethnic minorities, traditional authorities, local politics, gender, Islam and politics related to democratisation in Cameroon.



**IBRAHIM MOUCHE**

**Member / Membre**

Ibrahim Mouiche est camerounais, titulaire d'un doctorat de 3<sup>e</sup> cycle en science politique de l'Université de Yaoundé au Cameroun et d'un PhD en sciences sociales de l'Université de Leiden aux Pays-Bas. Professeur titulaire au Département de science politique à l'Université de Yaoundé II, il est depuis 2015, titulaire de la Chaire ISESCO/FUMI pour la diversité culturelle de l'Université de Yaoundé II à l'Institut des relations internationales du Cameroun (IRIC).

Auteur de plusieurs publications nationales et internationales, il a été lauréat de plusieurs programmes de bourses du CODESRIA et d'autres prestigieux instituts et fondations de recherche, comme la bourse de la

Fondation Alexander von Humboldt pour chercheurs expérimentés en Allemagne, du Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies et du Five College African Scholars Programme, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, aux USA. Ses recherches portent notamment sur l'ethnicité et les minorités ethniques, les autorités traditionnelles, la politique locale, le genre, l'islam et la politique, en rapport avec la démocratisation au Cameroun.

Brahim El Morchid is Professor of Economics at the Faculty of Law at Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech and a member of the Research and Study Group on Investment and Development (GREID). He holds a PhD in Economics and a university degree in quantitative techniques. His teaching and areas of interest are institutional economics, development economics and public policy. An important part of his research is devoted to the economies of Africa and the Arab world.

Author and co-author of numerous articles published in scientific journals and edited books, he has also contributed to the implementation of several research projects at the international level, specially on the business climate in Morocco,



**BRAHIM EL MORCHID**

**Member / Membre**

Brahim El Morchid est professeur d'économie à la faculté de droit de l'Université Cadi Ayyad de Marrakech et membre du Groupe de recherche et d'études sur l'investissement et le développement (GREID). Il est titulaire d'un doctorat d'État en sciences économiques et d'un diplôme d'études universitaires spécialisées en techniques quanti-tatives. Ses enseignements et ses recherches portent essentiellement sur l'économie institutionnelle, l'économie de développement et les politiques publiques. Une partie importante de ses travaux de recherche est consacrée aux économies africaines et du monde arabe.

Auteur et co-auteur de nombreux articles publiés dans des revues



the reforms, the use of social science research and air transport in the Arab world. From 2011 to 2013, he directed a master's degree in research on: "The transformations and perspectives of contemporary Africa". He is also a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Journal of African Transformation*.

scientifiques et ouvrages collectifs, il a également contribué à la réalisation de plusieurs projets de recherche à l'échelle internationale portant notamment sur le climat des affaires au Maroc, les réformes, l'utilisation de la recherche en sciences sociales et le transport aérien dans le monde arabe. De 2011 à 2013, il a dirigé un Master recherche sur : « Les mutations et les perspectives de l'Afrique contemporaine ». Il est en outre membre du conseil consultatif éditorial de la *Revue des mutations en Afrique*.

Ramola Ramtohul is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Mauritius. She has a PhD in Gender Studies from the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town. Her research interests are in gender, politics and citizenship in multicultural contexts, privatisation in the African higher education sector and high net worth migration and citizenship. Some of her publications are: 'Contested terrain: identity and women's suffrage in Mauritius', *Journal of Southern African Studies* (2016) 42(6): 1225–39; 'High net worth migration in Mauritius: a critical analysis', *Migration Letters* (2016)



**RAMOLA  
RAMTOHUL**  
Member / Membre

13(1): 17–33; 'Divided Loyalties and Contested identities: Citizenship in Colonial Mauritius', in E. L. Hunter, ed., 2016, *Citizenship, Belonging and Political Community in Africa: Dialogues between Past and Present*, Ohio: Ohio University Press; 'Intersectionality and women's political citizenship: the case of Mauritius', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* (2015) 33(1): 27–47; Amri, L. and Ramtohul, R., eds, 2014, *Gender and Citizenship in Africa in The Global Age*, Dakar: CODESRIA; Ramtohul, R. and Eriksen, T. H., eds, 2018, *The Mauritian Paradox: Fifty Years of Development, Diversity and Democracy*, Reduit, Mauritius: University of Mauritius Press. She has also received research fellowships from the University of Cape Town, the American Association of University Women, the University of Cambridge and the University of Pretoria. She is currently co-editor of the *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*.

Ramola Ramtohul est maître de conférences au Département d'études sociales de la faculté des sciences sociales et humaines de l'Université de Maurice. Elle est titulaire d'un doctorat en études sur le genre de l'Institut africain sur le genre de l'Université du Cap. Ses domaines de recherche sont le genre, la politique et la citoyenneté dans un contexte multiculturel ; la privatisation dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique ; la migration de personnes à haute valeur nette et la citoyenneté. Elle a publié notamment : « Contested Terrain : Identity and Women's Suffrage in Mauritius », *Journal of Southern African Studies* (2016) 42(6), p. 1225-1239 ; « High net worth

migration in Mauritius : A critical analysis », *Migration Letters* (2016). 13(1), p. 17-33. ; « Divided loyalties and contested identities : Citizenship in colonial Mauritius » dans E. L. Hunter (Ed.) 2016, *Citizenship, Belonging, and Political Community in Africa : Dialogues between Past and Present*, Ohio, Ohio Press ; Intersectionality and women's political citizenship : the case of Mauritius, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* (2015) 33(1), p. 27-47 ; Amri, L. & R. Ramtohul (Eds) *Gender and Citizenship in the Global Age* (2014), Dakar, CODESRIA ; Ramtohul, R. & Eriksen T. H. (Eds), *The Mauritian Paradox : Fifty Years of Development, Diversity and Democracy* (2018), Mauritius, Université de Maurice. Elle a aussi reçu des bourses de recherche de l'Université du Cap, de l'Association américaine des femmes diplômées des universités, de l'Université de Cambridge et de l'Université de Pretoria. Elle est actuellement co-éditrice du *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*.

Jacques Tshibwabwa Kuditshini holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Kinshasa with a thesis on 'Gender and Gendered Democracy'. He is currently a full professor at the University of Kinshasa's Department of Political and Administrative Sciences where he teaches social science methods, public finance and finance planning. He is also a visiting scholar at the University of Paris 8 Vincennes Saint Denis, at the UMR LADYSS (Social Dynamics and Spatial Re-composition Laboratory). Jacques Tshibwabwa is a former fellow and was resident researcher at the Center of Excellence, the Institute of Advanced Studies of Nantes, during the 2010–2011 session. An active member of CODESRIA, he has published several articles in its journals and other peer-reviewed journals. He has participated in several international scientific meetings. His interests are gender; democratic governance; globalisation processes and socio-political changes, armed conflict and territorial dynamics as well as issues related to the management of natural resources in states plagued by conflict over natural resources.



**JACQUES  
TSHIBWABWA**  
Member / Membre

Jacques Tshibwabwa Kuditshini est titulaire d'un doctorat en science politique de l'Université de Kinshasa et sa thèse portait sur « Le genre et la démocratie sexuée ». Il est actuellement professeur à l'Université de Kinshasa, au Département des sciences politiques et administratives où il assure les enseignements de méthodes des sciences sociales au troisième cycle (programme de DEA et de thèses de doctorat) et ceux de finances publiques et d'aménagement du territoire, respectivement aux premier et deuxième cycles. Il est également chercheur invité à l'Université de Paris 8 Vincennes Saint Denis, à l'UMR LADYSS (Laboratoire dynamiques sociales et re-composition des espaces).

Jacques Tshibwabwa est en outre un ancien Fellow, il a été accueilli comme chercheur résident dans un Centre d'excellence, en l'occurrence l'Institut d'études avancées de Nantes, au cours de la session 2010-2011. Membre actif du CODESRIA, il a publié plusieurs articles dans ses revues et dans d'autres revues scientifiques à comité de lecture. Il a participé à plusieurs rencontres scientifiques internationales. Ses centres d'intérêt scientifique sont : le genre, les problèmes de gouvernance démocratique, les processus de globalisation et les mutations sociopolitiques, les conflits armés et les dynamiques territoriales, ainsi que les questions relatives à la gestion des ressources naturelles dans des États en proie aux conflits des ressources naturelles.

Nana Akua Anyidoho is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana. She holds a BA in Psychology from the University of Ghana and a PhD in Human Development and Social Policy from Northwestern University (USA). She has an interest in the interaction of human lives and policy contexts, and frequently explores themes of agency, participation, and empowerment. Her recent research has been in the area of young people's employment aspirations, transitions and trajectories, with a focus on graduate labour markets and the agrifood sector. She has also published on women's informal work, feminist activism, and policy discourses and practices around women's empowerment. Her approach to inquiry is interdisciplinary, combining training in Social Policy, Developmental Psychology and African Studies, and in qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

Dr Anyidoho has presented her work internationally; held visiting fellowships at Boston University, Penn State University, and the University of Sussex; and has carried out commissioned research for the Government of Ghana, the World Bank, UNECA, DfID, IDRC and Cadbury Schweppes, among others. She is President of the Ghana Studies Association, a cognate organisation of the African Studies Association, and is on the editorial boards of *African Review of Economics and Finance* and *African Affairs*.



**NANA AKUA  
ANYIDOHO**  
Member / Membre

Nana Akua Anyidoho est chercheuse principale et membre de l'Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) de l'Université du Ghana. Elle est titulaire d'une licence en psychologie de l'Université du Ghana et d'un doctorat en développement humain et politique sociale de Northwestern University, (USA). Elle s'intéresse à l'interaction de vies humaines et des contextes politiques. Elle explore l'agentivité, la participation et la responsabilisation. Ses récents travaux de recherche portent sur les aspirations des jeunes en matière d'emploi, de transitions et de trajectoires, avec un accent sur le marché du travail des diplômés et le secteur de l'agroalimentaire. Elle a également publié sur le travail informel des femmes,

l'activisme féministe et les discours et pratiques politiques autour de l'autonomisation des femmes. Son approche de l'enquête est interdisciplinaire, combinant une formation en politique sociale, en psychologie du développement et études africaines, et dans les méthodologies qualitatives et quantitatives.

Le Dr Anyidoho a présenté son travail au niveau international et obtenu des bourses de visite à l'Université de Boston, à la Penn State University et à l'université du Sussex. Elle a réalisé des consultations pour le gouvernement du Ghana, la Banque mondiale, la CEA, le DFID, le CRDI et Cadbury Schweppes, entre autres. Elle est présidente de la Ghana Studies Association, membre de l'Association des études africaines et du comité éditorial de *African Review of Economics and Finance* et de *African Affairs*.



# CODESRIA

## Bulletin

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**Diama Bèye**  
**Yves Eric Elouga**  
**Sériane Ajavon**  
**Alpha Ousmane Dia**

### For contributions and enquiries, please write to:

Council for the Development of Social Science  
Research in Africa  
Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop X Canal IV  
P.O. Box 3304, Dakar  
CP 18524, Senegal  
Tel: +221 33 825 98 22 / 23  
Fax: +221 33 824 12 89

Email: [publications@codesria.org](mailto:publications@codesria.org)  
Web Site: [www.codesria.org](http://www.codesria.org)

### Pour les contributions et informations, prière de s'adresser à :

Conseil pour le développement de la recherche en  
sciences sociales en Afrique  
Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop x Canal IV  
B.P. : 3304, Dakar,  
CP 18524, Sénégal  
Tél : +221 33 825 98 22 / 23  
Fax : +221 33 824 12 89

Courriel : [publications@codesria.org](mailto:publications@codesria.org)  
Site web : [www.codesria.org](http://www.codesria.org)

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