Methodology of Integration Between Cognitive Systems and Comparative Studies

Since it was established in 1973, CODESRIA has been a serious cultural and scientific project. This has brought the Council a great deal of independence, and led many cultured people and competent scientists to cooperate with it. Its seriousness has also attracted young researchers who aspire to pursue serious research.

For a while, CODESRIA has been interested in the methodology of integration between cognitive systems and comparative studies on a continental level. Paying attention to meeting of generations and to gender is a very important element to earn the respect of collaborators, donors and international organizations. It is also important to mention that more involvement and cooperation with outside organizations and outside sources of funding, in conducting research vis-à-vis the African agenda, is also worth considering.

CODESRIA pays much attention to addressing the major issues that face the African nations and issues that have international implications. This point should be kept in consideration. Such issues include:

- Facing the mechanisms of hegemony on the socio-economic level, the so-called structural adjustment policies, conditionality and the concepts of democracy; and

- Paying attention to how nations face the conditions and mechanisms of globalization. This is done through

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studying the activities of national sovereign conferences, as well as studying the collapse of the racist regimes and its impact, human rights issues, African conceptions of gender, and social and political consequences of pauperization policies.

It is worth noting that CODESRIA has to pay attention to general issues that could be considered the 'essence' of plans and strategies rather than just being parts of research. These issues are in different areas and include:

- The Pan-African Movement, and the current political debate about it;

- The factual tendencies and policies toward pan-Africanism in vast regions like West Africa, and the possibility of their occurrence after the Abuja Peace Agreement, etc;

- Islamism and Islamophobia in the Arab North Africa, not to mention the religious heritage itself and its impact on social and political issues;

- The ongoing crisis in The Horn of Africa (North-East Africa), and the collapse of state in Somalia;

- Post-apartheid in southern Africa;

- Cultural considerations that impact

politics and social development in many ways;

- The new protest movements in response to impoverishment and despotic regimes across the continent.

Thinking about future plans does not mean that we should dispose of much of the previous plans. Yet, as we plan for a new phase, we should focus on the new issues that have become urgent priorities due to the unstable situation in Africa. We should also develop new methods to follow up global events. In this concern, we should stress the following:

- Political Thought: This is active now by the rapidly-changing reality concerning pan-Africanism. The light should be shed on the future of these movements on the continental or regional level which is not predictable, as well as their impact on the current different political stances which came from new territories (North and West Africa for example).

- Social, Economic and Cultural Human Rights: This concept has expanded to include issues related to citizenship, minorities, hegemony, social exclusion and its effect on immigration and the situation of women, children, retirees, the disabled and foreigners.

How does all of this relate to social thought about comprehensive change and reform? This point is also related to studies on the efficiency of social move-ments and

protest movements in acquiring social rights, apart from political organizations.

Background Issues

Obviously, the following issues will assist CODESRIA in effectively ordering its priorities in the new research agenda:

- Some phenomenon are more common in a region than another within the continent, such as Arabism and Islam in the North, the Anglophonic and Francophonic conflicts or completion in western Africa, immigration within Africa and to Europe, and water in the Nile basin.

- From the political dimension, there are certain issues related to the situation and definition of political parties, democracy, political and social powers. Is the political opposition only displaying democracy? What about the local communities, sub-languages, and the excluded rural areas in the democratic process?

- The impact of the growing influence of new big powers in Africa, especially with the shift in the course of globalization after the world economic crisis, and the impact of all that on the national, regional and international policies of the continent (the growing influence of China, Japan, Malay, Turkey, Russia, etc).

- The cooperation between Africa, Asia and Latin America, and how it impacts the independence movement in Africa, and the ability of its nations and peoples to have a significant weight on the international level).

Necessary Mechanisms

Besides the important research studies, books and reports which CODESRIA publishes, and besides the specialized summer institutes, the following are recommended for inclusion in CODESRIA's new priorities:

- Focusing more on regional meetings, and their scientific and cultural product and public influence (that is, to study and track regional activities more closely;

- Issuing an African Strategic Report, which will lead to better under-standing between countries. This will enhance the role of the institutes and conferences organized by CODESRIA. Besides covering all the relevant phenomena, the report will cover the activities, cultural product and the abstracts of research studies on different regions. The report should be published in these regions in their respective languages.